



THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Office of the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

TO: Rodney D. Bennett, President

FROM: Steven R. Moser, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

DATE: August 16, 2018

SUBJECT: Proposal for Developing School-Level Policies and Procedures

As reported and verified by Academic Reorganization Implementation Committee (ARIC) chair, Jeffrey Wiggins, this initiative has been revised through broad engagement, communication, and feedback from stakeholders, administrators and governing bodies since your initial approval of the proposal framework in February of 2018. FGRC and ARIC have collated, discussed, reviewed and modified the document to achieve compromise between stakeholder responses while preserving the aspirational merits of the original proposal.

This initiative outlines the process whereby school bylaws and other governance documents - School Policies and Procedures - will be created for every new and existing school at the university. The aspirational goal of this initiative is to create a uniform framework of governance to go alongside the school structure that underpins Vision 2020.

As Provost, I have engaged Deans and Academic Leaders in a final review process and adjustments were made to the proposal based on that feedback and my input. The document has been revalidated by the ARIC and FGRC and is ready for your approval.

I recommend that the Proposal for Developing School-Level Policies and Procedures be approved.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Steven Moser", is written over a horizontal line.

Steven R. Moser, Provost
Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Approval:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rodney D. Bennett", is written over a horizontal line.

Rodney D. Bennett, President
The University of Southern Mississippi

8/20/18
Date

Developing School-level Policies and Procedures

INITIATIVE #7

Faculty Governance and Representation

May 29, 2018

Faculty Governance and Representation Committee Members

Chair – Kelly Lester

Complete List of Committee Members: Cindy Blackwell, David Cochran, Sabine Heinhorst, Susan Hrostowski, Joyce Inman, Mary Lux, Scott Milroy, Sarah Morgan, Jerry Purvis, Alan Thompson, Melissa Thompson

STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

Synopsis of Aspirational Aims

This initiative recommends that bylaws and other governance documents (to be collectively referred to as *School Policies and Procedures*) be created for every new and existing school at the university. The organization and content of these documents should follow specific norms and standards arising from the reorganization plan and should be as consistent as possible across all schools and colleges. Over the short term, this will create greater consistency and coherence of governance documents at the university. Over the long term, this initiative will help transform the university into a more flexible institution whose governance frameworks enhance its ability to change with the times, address new challenges, and capitalize on new opportunities. *School Policies and Procedures* should be comprehensive in scope yet general enough to account for department- and program-level diversity that exists within a school. They should define:

- Organizational Structure
 - School Personnel
 - Organizational Structure of the School
 - School Standing Committees
 - School Ad Hoc Committees
 - Representation on College- and University-level Bodies
- Workload Guidelines
- Annual Evaluation Guidelines
- Promotion and Tenure Guidelines
- Statement Regarding Shared Governance

School Policies and Procedures should complement, but not restate or contradict norms and standards approved at the college or university levels, or as stated in the *Employee and Faculty Handbook*. The creation of *School Policies and Procedures* should be an open and inclusive process in which all faculty and staff in the school are represented. Mechanisms should be created in order to provide meaningful input from faculty and staff in the development and approval of these documents. Furthermore, School Directors should facilitate the creation of additional governance documents, as needed, at department or program levels to accommodate externally-mandated requirements for accreditation or other special cases, provided that they do not contradict *School Policies and Procedures* or other governance documents at higher administrative levels at the university. Given that our university is a multi-campus institution with sites both in Hattiesburg and on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, these documents should represent all faculty and staff within the school, regardless of their geographic location. All faculty and staff affiliated with the school should be actively invested in the development and approval of these documents.

This initiative is aspirational in that it seeks to establish norms and standards that will create more consistent school governance documents across the university while preserving academic diversity as much as possible at the school, department, and program levels. It is also aspirational in that it identifies the tasks to be accomplished for schools to become the primary administrative unit of the university and for departments and programs therein to be efficiently and effectively incorporated into the new school structure. Finally, by aspiring to create a system of governance

documents that is consistent across the university and that is hierarchically nested within its administrative structure, this initiative should provide a greater degree of institutional flexibility at the university, which will enhance efficiency and contribute to cost savings over time.

Description of Projected Outcomes and Impacts

This initiative aims to create a consistent framework of school-level governance norms and standards through the development of *School Policies and Procedures*. These documents will be nested within the governance frameworks at the college and university levels and as outlined in the *Employee and Faculty Handbook*. As such, they will contribute to a hierarchical (vertical) standardization within the administrative structure of the university and will ensure consistent governance at all levels of administration. They will also contribute to intra-school (horizontal) consistency, which should introduce a greater level of efficiency with regard to governance across the university. By establishing the governance environments in which departments and programs operate, *School Policies and Procedures* will be instrumental in fostering new organizational cultures across the university and in uniting the faculty of each school behind the reorganization process. As such, it is critical that *School Policies and Procedures* take into account the academic diversity housed within each school while reinforcing broader standards that are agreed upon at college and university levels.

These documents are meant to be descriptive of how schools will govern themselves under *Vision 2020*. They should not be seen as rules-based or prescriptive, which would stifle faculty cooperation, creativity, and involvement. If a department or program in a school is accredited, governance documents must be written in such a way that facilitates rather than hinders the accreditation process. *School Policies and Procedures* must be flexible enough to allow the creation of supplemental documents at the department or program levels (under the guidance and approval of the School Director) to accommodate the externally-mandated requirements of accreditation or professional internships, or to take into account other exceptional cases that should be protected and promoted by the school. *School Policies and Procedures* must also be nested in the governance framework of the college and the university as a whole. Horizontal and vertical consistency of governance documents within the university should also introduce greater administrative flexibility at our multi-campus institution. This will help the university respond more quickly to opportunities and to manage itself more strategically in the face of challenges.

Differences between Proposed Activities and Current Processes

At present, governance documents lack consistency across the university in terms of their nomenclature, content, and applicability. Some schools have developed comprehensive and standardized sets of bylaws, but most have not. The creation of governance documents that are consistent both horizontally and vertically within the university is a necessary step in the process of reorganization. This initiative complements other initiatives developed by the Committee on Faculty Governance and Representation that relate to college governance (“**Uniform College-level Documents**”) and to administrative roles of directors and faculty leads (“**Responsibilities of School Directors and Department Faculty Leads**”). Together, these initiatives will contribute to a greater degree of clarity with regard to governance at all levels of administration and to greater consistency across the university. They will also help to clarify the roles and responsibilities of administrators, staff, and faculty within the *Vision 2020* plan and will provide a governance framework that will help inform revisions to the *Employee and Faculty Handbook*

that arise out of the reorganization plan. The end result will be a more consistent and coherent governance framework than what exists at the university at present.

Future-Oriented Opportunities for Consideration

The creation of new *School Policies and Procedures* will result in a number of possible opportunities for the university. A good framework of governance at the school level will help facilitate mergers of curricula and programs, as well as create new interdisciplinary degrees. This will contribute to removing some of the silos that currently exist among different units, thereby enhancing synergy and strengthening key performance indicators upon which schools will be measured. Consistent and fair school-level governance will also have a positive effect on faculty camaraderie and should increase the potential for research collaborations and creative activities among faculty and staff. In light of the growing emphasis on interdisciplinary research among major funding organizations, good governance within the newly reorganized schools might also help the university become better structured to win external funding if faculty are inspired to work together to a greater degree than at present.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Estimated Time Requirements for Proposed Implementation

New *School Policies and Procedures* should be developed, approved, and implemented as quickly as possible within the established limits of the current timeline of *Vision 2020*. The committee recommends that this process be completed by the end of the 2018 calendar year. During the summer of 2018, the Office of the Provost will provide School Directors with a standard outline of items that must be included in and addressed by *School Policies and Procedures* (See Appendix A). The purpose of this outline will be to guide development of documents as they apply to unique considerations and needs of each school. College Deans, School Directors, and relevant faculty will work together in the development and adoption of these documents. Below is a proposed timeline for developing and approving specific components of *School Policies and Procedures*, which were outlined in bullet form earlier in this document.

Timeline:

Describe in detail the timeline for implementation.

The timeline for this initiative is highly dependent upon other efforts associated with reorganization that must be established and implemented first. Feedback from those who will serve as Directors in the newly created schools strongly indicates a need to obtain clarity on those issues before work can begin on this initiative. Likewise, many faculty members will be out of contract during the summer and unavailable for participating in the vetting process of this implementation plan. Given the need for faculty participation and input in the development of *School Policies and Procedures*, we recommend that schools plan to undertake this work as a priority at the beginning of the 2018-2019 academic year. It might be possible for some schools to form ad hoc groups of program/discipline leads and faculty members to begin the documents this summer, but we expect final drafts of *School Policies and Procedures* will not be ready until the end of the fall 2018 semester. School directors should set goals to have these documents complete by the end of the 2018 calendar year. With this in mind, we recommend the following timeline:

Summer 2018: Where possible, ad hoc committees in each school can begin drafting rough language for further input by other faculty after the beginning of the 2018-2019 academic year contract.

Fall 2018: Faculty contracts for the 2018-2019 academic year begin on August 20. We recommend that faculty in each school begin working on these documents prior to the beginning of fall classes on August 29. All schools will submit preliminary drafts of their Policies and Procedures by a date mutually agreed upon by school directors and the Office of the Provost. Faculty will work with school directors to form ad hoc committees to develop these documents and will participate in their review by faculty members within the school.

End of Calendar Year 2018: All schools will finalize their Policies and Procedures by the end of the fall semester. Final drafts, approved by school faculty and directors, will be submitted to the Office of the Provost prior to the closing of the university for the winter holidays.

Another central concern with regard to the implementation of this initiative is the manner in which the creation of these documents is coordinated across the university and with efforts to revise the *Employee and Faculty Handbook* to reflect *Vision 2020*. Ensuring consistency of *School Policies and Procedures* across all school units with regard to general framework, format, and components will require a top-down initiative originating at the university and college levels. To assist with this process, a draft template was created of the framework that should define new *School Policies and Procedures* at the university (**SchoolLevelDocumentsTemplate.doc**). At the same time, this process will also require bottom-up involvement of faculty and staff who should play a direct role in their creation and approval. Coordination of new *School Policies and Procedures* with the revised *Employee and Faculty Handbook* will require close communication and collaboration between schools and the Faculty Handbook Committee during the summer and fall of 2018.

Personnel Involved in Implementation

It is the responsibility of the Provost, working through the Deans, to ensure that *School Policies and Procedures* are developed through a collaborative process that engages all relevant faculty and staff in accordance with college- and university-level policies and procedures. It is also the responsibility of the Provost, working through the Deans to ensure that *School Policies and Procedures* are regularly reviewed and updated.

The creation, development, and approval of new *School Policies and Procedures* will first and foremost require the open and inclusive involvement of faculty and staff within the school itself. The Director and Associate Director of the school will play a direct managerial role in this process, serving both as liaisons to college- and university-level administrators and as advocates for the faculty and staff in their school. College- and university-level administrators will play a supervisory role in the creation of school governance documents. They will be responsible for initiating the process and defining the broader framework and format of the documents. College- and university-level administrators will also be responsible for ensuring as much consistency as

possible across the university once schools have approved their governance documents. Finally, college and university administrators, in collaboration with school directors, will be responsible for initiating periodic evaluations of new *School Policies and Procedures* in the years after their approval and implementation. This committee recommends that evaluations occur at a frequency of every three years (see **EVALUATION STRATEGIES** below).

All school-level standing committees and governing bodies will be identified and defined in new *School Policies and Procedures*. These bodies should be formed as soon as possible after approval of the governance documents. Every department or program within the school should be represented on school standing committees and governing bodies, although service loads must be carefully monitored to prevent excessive committee responsibilities being placed on faculty and staff as a result of reorganization. School-level standing committees and governing bodies should be granted authority commensurate with the responsibility of their charges. The scope of standing committees and governing bodies should be limited to areas of greatest importance to the overall mission of the school. Required school-level standing committees include, but are not limited to curriculum (undergraduate and/or graduate), personnel (tenure and promotion, annual evaluation), scholarships, research, and graduate admissions. School directors will have the authority to form Leadership Teams made up of faculty leads and program coordinators, office staff, and undergraduate/graduate directors within their schools. Such bodies already exist in the School of Ocean Science and Technology and in the School of Visual and Performing Arts.

To the greatest extent possible, there should be balanced representation on school standing committees and governing bodies with regard to teaching and research faculty, and with regard to faculty and staff (See Appendix B). New *School Policies and Procedures*, in conjunction with the norms and standards of governance at higher levels of administration, should define the extent of school representation and the manner in which it will be achieved for college- and university-level standing committees and governing bodies. With regard to these issues, please refer to other initiatives submitted by the Faculty Governance and Representation Committee (“College-Level Documents” and “Aligning Faculty Governance and Representative Bodies with Vision 2020”).

Short-Term and Long-Term Financial Impacts

The development of a consistent, university-wide set of *School Policies and Procedures* will have a positive financial impact on the university for both short-term and long-term time frames. Much of these gains will come from administrative efficiencies, improved faculty morale and productivity, and better responsiveness to broader societal trends at regional, national, and international scales.

EVALUATION STRATEGIES

Implementation effectiveness and progress will be assessed in quantitative terms by meeting deadlines consistent with the above timeframe. During their meeting with the Provost, School Directors, and Deans will identify a series of reasonable deadlines to complete and submit relevant documents. In addition, implementation effectiveness and progress will be assessed in qualitative terms by the review of draft Policies and Procedures by an ad hoc college-level committee as a means of assessing progress towards the finalization of these documents.

Once all schools have been reorganized and their *School Policies and Procedures* have been developed and approved, this committee recommends that a school-level self-evaluation should be implemented every three years to measure the effectiveness and relevance of the governance documents. The evaluation process must be coordinated and consistent across the university so that evaluation data may be compared across all schools. At the same time, it is critical that the views and experiences of faculty and staff in each school are incorporated within the evaluation process and included in the analysis. As such, a combined top-down and bottom-up approach will be necessary to adequately evaluate the long-term effectiveness of *School Policies and Procedures* that arise from the implementation of *Vision 2020*. Prior versions of *School Policies and Procedures* shall be archived in accordance with university policy (ACAF-LIB-013).

APPENDIX A—Draft Outline of School Policies and Procedures

PART I: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

7. School Personnel: Explain scope of authority and essential function of each role in shared governance. List responsibilities, duties, and authority of each role. Describe to whom each reports. Describe selection and evaluation processes for each role.
 - g. The Faculty
 - h. Director
 - i. Associate Director (where applicable)
 - j. Assistant Director (where applicable)
 - k. Program/Discipline Leads
 - l. Staff Personnel
8. Organizational Structure of the School: Describe constituent departments and/or programs within the school, including attached leadership. Describe intra-school communication processes, including regular meeting patterns for leadership teams and other bodies.
9. School Standing Committees: Explain scope and responsibility of each committee (e.g. committee charge), membership, voting processes, and terms of service.
 - a. Leadership Team (required)
 - b. Curriculum Committee (required)
 - c. Personnel Committee (required)
 - d. Scholarship Committee (optional)
 - e. Research Productivity Committee (optional)
 - f. Graduate Admissions Committee (optional)
10. School Ad Hoc Committees (e.g., Search Committees and others as needed)
11. Representation on College- and University-level Bodies (See IPs: *The Organization and Function of University Committees* and *Uniform College-Level Documents*)
12. Processes for amending and reviewing this document, including required update intervals.

PART II: WORKLOAD GUIDELINES (In alignment with institutional workload policy)

5. General expectations of faculty workload responsibilities
6. Formula for teaching, research, and service loads among faculty in accordance with college and university guidelines
7. Criteria to qualify and apply for sabbaticals in accordance with college and university guidelines.
8. Procedures for modifying faculty workload responsibilities

PART III: ANNUAL EVALUATION GUIDELINES

5. General expectations of faculty productivity on a yearly basis
6. Workload and annual evaluations
7. Annual evaluation procedures and documents
8. Procedures for resolving discrepancies in the results of annual evaluations

PART IV: PROMOTION AND TENURE GUIDELINES

4. Program/Discipline-Specific Criteria for Faculty Productivity
5. Expectations and Procedures for the Pre-Tenure Review
6. Program/Discipline-Specific Criteria for Promotion and Tenure

PART V: STATEMENT REGARDING SHARED GOVERNANCE

3. Statement affirming the principles of shared governance, including transparency and accountability regarding school operations.
4. Statement describing the role of the faculty in selecting and evaluating school leadership.

APPENDIX B—School and College Committee Representation**A: School Standing Committees****Designated membership in School Policies and Procedures Initiative**

Leadership Team	required
Curriculum Committee	required
Personnel Committee	required
Scholarship Committee	in some schools
Research Productivity Committee	in some schools
Graduate Admissions Committee	optional

B: Directors**Committees**

Leadership Team (school)	X
Council of Directors	X
Deans Executive Council	X
College Curriculum Committee	possibly
Standing Committees (university)	possibly
Procedural Committees (university)	possibly

C: School Representatives**Committees****number of reps**

Faculty Senate-representative committee	1
College Curriculum Committee	at least 1
Awards and Scholarships Committee	at least 1
Deans Advisory Council	at least 1
College Personnel Committee	at least 1

D: By College**Appointed**

Standing Committees	9 total--Institutional Diversity Committee, Section 504/ADA Compliance Committee, Academic Calendar Committee, Committee on Services and Resources for Women, Faculty Handbook Committee, Libraries Advisory Committee, Online Learning Steering Committee, Institutional Review Board University Assessment Committee
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Procedural Committees	3 total with faculty reps-Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee Institutional Biosafety Committee, Parking Management Committee – Gulf Park
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E: By College

Elected Committees

Undergraduate Council	varies by college
Graduate Council	varies by college
Grade Review Council	varies by college
University Research Council	varies by college