Policy on Academic Policies

Policy Statement

Academic policies that pertain university-wide to students and/or faculty and staff must be endorsed by the pertinent constituent bodies, which include, but are not limited to, the Academic Council (for undergraduate curricular issues), the Graduate Council (for graduate curricular issues), the Faculty Senate, the Council of Chairs, and the Faculty Handbook Committee, and approved by the Provost. Upon approval, information about a policy is to be disseminated through appropriate communication mechanisms to those in the University community that are affected by the policy.

[The Policy Statement is generally two to four short sentences that provide a brief, general description of the University's stance on particular subjects and/or its response to specific situations, including the policy's intent, who must follow the policy, when the policy applies, and any mandated actions or constraints.]

Reason for Policy/Purpose

The Policy on Academic Policies exists to ensure that the development of academic policies follows appropriate approval processes and adheres to the University commitment to shared governance. The Policy also ensures that information about an academic policy is disseminated to those affected by the policy.

[The information in this section answers questions as to why the policy exists. It should state the legitimate interests of all parties, describe the problem or conflict the policy addresses, and cite any legal or regulatory reasons for the policy.]
Who Needs to Know This Policy

- Academic Council
- Academic Deans
- Council of Chairs
- Dean of Students
- Department chairs/School directors
- Faculty Handbook Committee
- Faculty Senate
- Graduate Council
- Gulf Coast Faculty Council
- Office of the Registrar
- Vice President for Student Affairs
- University Counsel
- USM faculty
- USM staff, as appropriate
- USM students

Website Address for this Policy

http://www.usm.edu/provost

Definitions

Academic policy  A policy that affects undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty and other instructional personnel, and/or academic units and involves procedures, requirements and/or expectations within Academic Affairs.

Academic policies include the following:
- Policies included in University bulletins that affect all students covered by a particular bulletin
- Policies that ensure University compliance with SACSCOC Principles for Accreditation, including in particular the University Substantive Change Policy and the USM Instructor of Record Policy
- Policies that pertain to University faculty and instructional personnel in such matters as the delivery of instruction, the evaluation of faculty and other instructional personnel, classroom conduct, and engaging in outside employment or consulting
- University policies for tenure and promotion
- Other policies that might be included or referenced in the USM Faculty Handbook
- Policies to be followed by academic units on a University-wide basis
- Grievance policies regarding any of the above
Policy/Procedures

1.0 Initiation A policy proposal is submitted to or developed by an appropriate university body.

1.1 Proposals for academic policies can be initiated at the following levels: departments, colleges, various standing committees (including the Faculty Handbook Committee), special ad-hoc committees, student government, University Organizational Chart administrative units, the academic deans, Office of the Provost, Graduate School, Executive Cabinet, Academic Council, or Graduate Council.

1.2 Academic policy proposals should be submitted in the form of a memo with all approval levels, as appropriate to the initiating body, clearly identified and with the appropriate signatures. Proposals should follow the approval procedures applicable to the initial review body and include a rationale, the proposed implementation date, and documentation to support that the policy adheres to good educational practice.

2.0 Distribution for Review The proposed policy is discussed by the initiating entity and, if approved by the body, distributed for review and comment to other affected University entities as appropriate.

3.0 Additional Review The proposed policy will undergo additional review by appropriate designated University entities.

3.1 If the proposed policy would affect the academic requirements or procedures for students and be included in University bulletins and/or posted on University websites, it will be reviewed by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and the Office of Institutional Research to ensure compliance with existing policies and procedures.

3.2 If the proposed policy would affect expectations of or requirements for faculty and other instructional personnel, it will be reviewed by the Faculty Handbook Committee.

3.3 If appropriate, the Office of University Counsel will be included in the review and comment phase.

4.0 Provost Action Once reviewed by appropriate constituent and/or review bodies, the proposal will be submitted to the Provost for review.

4.1 The Provost can approve the policy.

4.2 The Provost can choose to return the proposed policy to the originating entity for revisions for resubmission.

4.3 The Provost may choose not to approve the policy.

5.0 Dissemination If approved by the Provost, the Office of the Provost and/or the appropriate University entities will inform those members of the University community affected by policy, and the policy will be published in appropriate documents or websites [e.g., University bulletin(s), Faculty Handbook, Office of the Provost webspace, Academic and Graduate Council Guidelines for Proposals, etc.].

6.0 Revisions Proposals for revising an academic policy can be submitted at any time and should follow the process outlined in Steps 1-5.

6.1 The Office of the Provost is responsible for and has the authority to make routine or minor revisions to an academic policy, such as updating titles or correcting typographical errors.
Review

A Vice Provost or an Associate Provost is responsible for review of this policy every four years. The appropriate constituent group(s) should be consulted during the review.

[Provide the name of the Responsible University Officer responsible for review of the policy and the time period for review. All policies must be reviewed at a minimum of once every four years.]

Forms/Instructions

NA

Appendices

NA

Related Information

Faculty Handbook
  http://www.usm.edu/provost/faculty-handbook
Undergraduate Bulletin
  http://catalog.usm.edu/
Graduate Bulletin
  http://catalog.usm.edu/
Office of Provost webspace (Policies and Procedures)
  http://www.usm.edu/provost
Academic and Graduate Councils Guidelines for Proposals
  https://info.usm.edu/group/849/page/proposals-guidelines

History

Endorsements:
Academic Council      May 2, 2016
Council of Chairs     May 27, 2016
Deans Council         September 12, 2016
Faculty Senate        May 12, 2016
Graduate Council      May 11, 2016

Amendments: Month, Day, Year – summary of changes
Authorization

Title: Policy on Academic Policies [Title of the policy]
Policy number: TBD

APPROVED:  

Provost  

Date