



THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Office of the Provost

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TO: Reorganization Committees

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

DATE: September 15, 2017

RE: Reorganization Committee Charge

Thank you for serving on these important committees that will guide the first phase of Vision 2020: The Plan for Academic Reorganization. This work represents a unique opportunity for involvement of faculty and staff, who, by thinking broadly about the opportunities opened up by the reorganization, will shape the future of the academy at the University of Southern Mississippi.

The key question we began with more than a year ago is what remains at hand today: **What can we do within our existing resource realities to highlight our strengths, cultivate creativity, and distinguish ourselves as an institution?** To address this question, our process and ensuing discussions have been guided by the core concept we articulated at the outset: *Administrative units will be larger in size and scope, with emphasis on programs rather than departments, to promote collaboration and interdisciplinary teaching and research, to realize economies of scale, to facilitate fluid reallocation of resources, and to reduce duplication in programming and administration.*

Your work, therefore, should be guided by these aspirational goals:

- Design evaluative practices that allow for greater flexibility and innovation as we recognize and expand upon the strengths in our community;
- Increase our ability to respond to changes in the external environment, particularly appropriation rescissions and/or reductions; and
- Attain administrative coherence, consistency in practice across disciplines, and opportunities for collaboration from arts to sciences and in professional programming.

The fundamental change in this organizational model is that the school becomes the primary organizing unit within the colleges, rather than the department. Given this new structure, our next steps are to identify elements that need to be adjusted or created to bring the vision of the reorganization's potential to life. These steps will be guiding by the three primary committees and the steering committee of which you are a part.

Academic Reorganization Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is responsible for guiding the work of the reorganization implementation process. As such, this committee is charged with the responsibility of aligning submissions from the various committees into recommendations. The range of recommendations will be broad, from suggested minimum requirements for annual evaluation documents and unit staffing to the alignment of a Faculty Handbook with

the Employee Handbook and the new guidelines that result from the committee work on governance, promotion and annual evaluation.

Specific charges to this committee for the 2017-18 academic cycle include but are not limited to:

1. Compile and maintain a list of deliverables expected from each committee with expected dates of progress reports and completions;
2. Review, return for revision, and approve deliverables from the 3 implementation committees for presentation to the appropriate administrative groups/processes for approval;
3. Provide minutes or notes, in brief, of the formal committee meetings that describe a summary of items submitted, any edits or controversies, & resolution(s);
4. Maintain a list of items referred to ALC, Deans' Council, Provost and recommendations.

In summary, the charge for the steering committee is to identify key elements of structure, evaluation process, shared governance, and proportionate representation that must be defined or revised with the implementation of the reorganization framework and to review, return for revision, and ultimately recommend guiding principles and structures **to take academic affairs at USM into the future.**

Key questions the steering committee will use to respond to recommendations from the various committees:

- Is the proposal aspirational?
- Does the proposal further distinguish USM?
- Does the proposal advance opportunities for collaboration and innovation?
- Does the proposal highlight existing institutional strengths?
- Does the proposal provide controls and accountability for our strategic future?
- Does the proposal clarify academic leadership structure, roles and responsibilities?
- Does the proposal create some type of efficiency?
- Does the proposal advocate for greater fiscal health and strategic financial decisions?
- Does the proposal advocate for intentional investment in people and programs?
- Is the proposal data-informed?
- Do any of the proposals conflict or are ambiguous?

Committee on Academic Structure and Evaluation

The Academic Structure and Evaluation Committee will address particular evaluative documents and/processes. Specific charges to this committee for the 2017-18 academic cycle include but are not limited to:

1. Define the USM protocol for annual evaluation procedures for the Corps of Instruction;
2. Develop guidelines for the promotion and tenure process under the new school structure;
3. Outline general promotion and tenure expectations with revisions that consider interdisciplinary appointments, student recruitment/retention efforts, online course developments, etc.
4. Clarify the role of non-tenure track faculty in the Corps of Instruction, (e.g. instructors, teaching track faculty) for serving on representative committees; and
5. Develop a Faculty Handbook that is aligned with the USM Employee Handbook.

In sum, the charge for the Structure and Evaluation Committee is to establish university protocols for annual evaluations, promotion and tenure, the Faculty Handbook, and procedural standards within the framework of the reorganized structure. Given new configurations for disciplines, schools, and colleges, the goal is to ensure an aspirational process for evaluation of faculty achievements and progress.

Committee on Faculty Governance and Representation

The Governance and Representation Committee will focus on institutional shared governance. Specific charges to this committee for the 2017-18 academic cycle include but are not limited to:

1. Delineate guiding principles for representation and outline procedures for electing representatives to:
 - a. Faculty Senate
 - b. College Academic/Curriculum Committees
 - c. Academic Council
 - d. Graduate Council
2. Define the protocol or guiding principles for representation for School Personnel and Promotion Committees;
3. Define the protocol or guiding principles for faculty representation for other school, college and university standing committees; and
4. Define the framework for school bylaws or related governance documents.

The Governance and Representation committee will define the guiding principles for faculty composition on key committees and a framework for shared governance.

Academic Reorganization Academic Staff Structure Committee

The Academic Staff Structure Committee will develop recommendations for necessary staff positions under the new school structure. The Committee will focus on the roles that need to be constituted and where they can be positioned for maximum efficiency, service, and productivity.

Specific charges to this committee for the 2017-18 academic cycle include but are not limited to:

1. Develop inventory of work, classified into categories;
2. Identify basic staff roles applicable to all schools, regardless of size or scope; and
3. List potential new configurations/ideas to maximize efficiencies, service, productivity and engagement.

The charge for the Staff Structure Committee is to map out optimum configurations and roles to best serve the needs of the students, faculty, and institution.