I. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Online Learning Steering Committee shall be to two-fold: To provide consistent leadership for academic units and faculty engaging in the development or implementation of online degrees and coursework at the University of Southern Mississippi and to advise the Office of the Provost on critical matters related to online learning. To this end, the Online Learning Steering Committee will discuss critical topics, develop policies and procedures, and provide recommendations related to online teaching and learning, as well as undertake other duties as assigned by the Provost related to online initiatives and needs. The committee will also serve as a channel for communicating with the university community about any changes in policy and procedures or future directions for online learning.

II. MEMBERSHIP

The Online Learning Steering Committee membership will be such that it can efficiently undertake the tasks listed above with a representative sample of the university community. Membership will include both voting members (15) and non-voting ex-officio members.

A. Voting Members (15) Membership will include a voting representative from: Academic Council, Graduate Council, Faculty Senate, Council of Chairs, each academic college, the Gulf Coast campus (2), and the Office of Online Learning (3). All university faculty members who are part of the Corps of Instruction (as defined by the Faculty Handbook) are eligible for membership on the Online Learning Steering Committee. Each member should represent only one entity rather than serve dual roles (e.g., Faculty Senate and a college). Each member will serve for two years. Unexpired vacancies in Online Learning Steering Committee membership shall be replaced through a special appointment by the academic Dean in the college of vacancy or the chair of the Council with the vacancy.

1. Appointed Members from University Councils: Academic Council, Graduate Council, The Council of Chairs, and Faculty Senate shall appoint one representative from that body to serve on the Online Learning Steering Committee. These appointed members will serve two-year terms, or until their time on the Council/Senate is over.
2. **College Appointed Members**: The Deans of the academic colleges shall appoint one member from the Corps of Instruction in each college to serve on the Online Learning Steering Committee for a two-year term. College appointments will rotate on the following schedule: College of Health (COH), College of Business (COB), and College of Nursing (CON) will provide new appointments to the committee by the end of August of even academic years. College of Education and Psychology (COEP), College of Science and Technology (COST), and College of Arts and Letters (COAL) will provide new appointments to the committee by the end of August of odd academic years. Such rotation will avoid full turnover of the committee in any given academic year.

3. **Coast Campus Appointed Members**: The Associate Provost of the Gulf Park campus shall appoint two members to the Online Learning Steering Committee for two-year terms. At least one of the appointed members should be selected from Faculty Council on that campus. The Faculty Council representative will be appointed by the end of August of odd years while the second coast representative will be appointed by the end of August of even years. The Coast appointees cannot serve as either a council or college appointed member from above categories (in II.A.1. or II.A.2.).

4. **Office of Online Learning Appointed Members**: The Office of Online Learning will appoint three members to represent the multiple responsibilities of the center staff, including marketing and recruitment, faculty training and development, and student success. Representatives from the Office of Online Learning can serve consecutive terms but not all members can change in a given academic year.

**B. Ex-Officio Members (8)** One member shall be appointed each August from each of the following: Office of Compliance, Institutional Effectiveness, Institutional Research, Office of Fiscal Planning and Analysis, Office of Disability Accommodations, Office of the Registrar, an online graduate student, and an online undergraduate student. Ex-Officio members serve one-year terms.

**III. COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP**

The Online Learning Steering Committee shall have three officers, each elected by the Committee at the end of spring term (each year, or every other year, as appropriate). Ex-officio members of the Online Learning Steering Committee may not hold any of the three offices.

**A. Chair** - Responsibilities of the Chair shall include setting the agenda, presiding over meetings, coordinating the work of committee, and working with the Office of the Provost on issues brought forward related to online learning. The Chair will meet no less than monthly
with the Provost or his/her designee in the Office of the Provost. The Chair, once selected, will no longer be serving as the representative for his/her college but may represent a university council. Appointment as Chair is a two-year term.

**B. Chair-elect** - Responsibilities of the Chair-elect shall include coordinating with the Online Learning Steering Committee Chair on various activities, reviewing official minutes, and planning for future or long-term projects. Appointment as chair-elect is a one-year term and shall be appointed in the academic year corresponding to the final year of the chair’s term.

**C. Secretary** – The secretary for the Online Learning Steering Committee will be selected from the membership and is responsible for drafting, distributing, and posting meeting minutes. Minutes will be recorded at each meeting by the Secretary, who will also ensure that agendas and minutes are posted to the Online Learning Steering Committee website. Minutes will be reviewed and approved at the beginning of the next meeting. Appointment as secretary is a one-year term.

**III. ORGANIZATION AND OPERATIONS**

**A. Meeting Schedule:** The Online Learning Steering Committee shall meet monthly during the fall and spring semesters. Special meetings may be called by the Chair, Chair-elect, or by the Office of the Provost.

**B. Quorum:** A simple majority of voting members will constitute a quorum.

**C. Proxy Designation:** On matters requiring votes from Online Learning Steering Committee members, members may designate a proxy by notifying the Chair or Chair-elect in writing before the scheduled meeting time. Proxies may be regular or ex-officio members of the Online Learning Steering Committee. Members may hold no more than two (2) proxies for any given meeting and hold no more than three (3) total votes.

**D. Replacement of Non-Attending Members:** If a regular Online Learning Steering Committee member fails to attend three consecutive regularly scheduled meetings, he or she shall be notified in writing by the Chair of the Online Learning Steering Committee that his or her position will be declared vacant in the event of a fourth consecutive absence. Upon his or her fourth consecutive absence with or without a proxy, his or her position shall be declared vacant by the Chair and filled in the interim by appointment from eligible faculty from the area represented.

**E. Support:** The Office of Online Learning will provide any clerical support needed for committee operations as well as maintain the website for membership listing, agendas, and minutes.
F. Bylaw Changes: These Bylaws can be amended, repealed, or suspended, in part or whole, through a two-thirds majority of those present and voting. These changes would then be sent to the University Committee on Committees for approval.

G. Reporting: An annual report for the committee action will be compiled and submitted to the Office of the Provost by the last day of May of each year.

IV. DUTIES

The Online Learning Steering Committee is responsible for leading online learning at the University and advising the Office of the Provost on relevant matters. Therefore, members will:

1. regularly attend all meetings;
2. engage in small work groups as necessary to support the online learning initiatives pursued by The University of Southern Mississippi;
3. promote campus awareness of the benefits and opportunities provided by online instruction;
4. assist faculty and staff in addressing questions and concerns on online learning; and
5. assist the administration in identifying and addressing policies and procedures that are needed to govern

V. INITIATIVES AND INTERESTS

A. Ad hoc Subcommittees: Subcommittees will be formed as needed to address particular initiatives or concerns. All subcommittees must contain members of the Online Learning Steering Committee and may include other faculty, staff, and students if needed. Subcommittees will submit a written report of work to the chair of the Online Learning Steering Committee.

B. Task Force Appointment: The Chair, in consultation with the Office of the Provost, may also appoint special task forces. At least one member of the Committee (elected or ex officio) shall be appointed to each task force. Additional members shall be selected by the Office of the Provost from the faculty at large in order to ensure wide input from faculty who have an interest in and expertise in the matter to be deliberated.