



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

ACADEMIC OPERATING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

MEMORANDUM TO: All Holders of Mississippi State University Academic Operating Policy and Procedure Manual

DATE: April 17, 1989

SUBJECT: 13.07 Academic Promotion and Tenure Policies and Procedures

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Academic Operating Policy and Procedure (AOP) is to promote our understanding of both standards and procedures concerning academic promotion and tenure.

REVIEW

This AOP will be reviewed every four years (or whenever circumstances require an earlier review) by the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs (APAA) with recommendations for revision presented to the Provost and Executive Vice President.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

All regulations of Mississippi State University concerning employment, promotion, and the granting of tenure must adhere to the By-Laws and Policies of the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning (1970, with subsequent amendments). Specific attention is called to the section, "Employment and Tenure of Faculties of Institutions of Higher Learning in Mississippi."

Academic tenure and promotions in rank are subject to the general guidelines (shown below) as developed by the University Promotion and Tenure Committee or the Faculty Senate and ratified by the Faculty Senate, recommended to and approved by the President. At the time of the initial appointment the appropriate department head should make the faculty member aware of these general procedures as well as any other guidelines specific to the academic college, school and/or department in which he/she holds a tenure-track position.

RESPONSIBILITIES

<u>Position</u>	<u>Section</u>	<u>Year</u>
<a href="#">Associate Provost for Academic Affairs</a>	Review	2017

AOP 13.07

APPROVED:

<u>/s/ Peter L. Ryan</u> Associate Provost for Academic Affairs	<u>07/25/2013</u> Date
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<u>/s/ Jerome A. Gilbert</u> Provost and Executive Vice President	<u>07/25/2013</u> Date
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<u>/s/ Gerald Emison</u> President, Robert Holland Faculty Senate	<u>07/25/2013</u> Date
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REVIEWED BY:

<u>/s/ Lesia Ervin</u> Director, Internal Audit	<u>08/20/2013</u> Date
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<u>/s/ Joan Lucas</u> General Counsel	<u>08/21/2013</u> Date
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APPROVED:

<u>/s/ Mark Keenum</u> President	<u>08/27/2013</u> Date
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**Note:**

*The following Promotion and Tenure Procedures were approved by the President of the Robert Holland Faculty Senate and the Interim President of Mississippi State University on 6/30/08. The Promotion and Tenure document dated 2008 shown below as Sections 1.0 -12.1.2 will remain in effect until May 15, 2014. Thereafter, the Promotion and Tenure document dated 2013 shown below as Faculty Handbook Section V. Promotion and Tenure Procedures.*

# FACULTY HANDBOOK

## V. Promotion and Tenure Procedures

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Revised and Approved by the Robert Holland Faculty Senate, 12-2-2014  
Signed by Provost and Executive Vice President, Jerome Gilbert, 6-17-2013  
Signed by President Mark Keenum, 6-17-2013

### 1 **A. Scope**

2 This document records Mississippi State University's policies and procedures governing  
3 academic tenure and promotion in rank. These policies and procedures were drawn up  
4 by the Robert Holland Faculty Senate in accordance with the Bylaws and Policies of the  
5 Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) (sections 402, 403, and  
6 404) and have been approved by the Robert Holland Faculty Senate, the provost, and  
7 the university president.

8 This document (Section V.) applies only to faculty members in tenure-track positions.  
9 The appointment and termination of non-tenure-track faculty members is governed by  
10 IHL Board Policy 404.01-404.02, and their promotion is governed by university, college,  
11 school and departmental policies. Such faculty members are not eligible for tenure, but  
12 may apply for open tenure-track positions.

13 Suggested changes and recommendations to this document can originate with the  
14 president, the provost, the University Promotion and Tenure Committee, the Faculty  
15 Senate, and/or tenured and tenure-track faculty. The president of the Faculty Senate  
16 will distribute copies of the suggested change(s) and recommendation(s) to all senate  
17 members and the Faculty Senate will prepare its own recommendation(s). The Faculty  
18 Senate's report on the recommended changes in the promotion and tenure document  
19 will be reviewed at two regularly scheduled senate meetings before a vote on the  
20 recommendations will be held. A copy of the Faculty Senate's decision will be sent to  
21 the University Promotion and Tenure Committee. Final action on the  
22 recommendation(s) will be taken by the president and announced through all  
23 appropriate channels.

24 The procedure outlined in the previous paragraph will be followed, unless some  
25 extraordinary occasion should demand a more immediate change. In all cases,

26 however, the Faculty Senate must vote to approve all changes and the University  
27 Committee on Promotion and Tenure will be a part of the process of consideration.

28 The policies and procedures in effect in any academic year must have been fully  
29 approved by the Faculty Senate and signed by the provost and the president. If the  
30 changes to the university document are approved between May 16 and October 1 of a  
31 given year (calendar year 1), then the changes to the university document will go into  
32 effect May 16 of the following year (calendar year 2). If the changes are approved after  
33 October 1 (calendar year 1) and before May 16 of the subsequent year (calendar year  
34 2), then changes in the university document will go into effect on May 16 of the following  
35 year (calendar year 3). In both cases, all college and department documents must be  
36 revised as necessary no later than the effective date of the revised university document.  
37 Copies of all officially-approved, university promotion and tenure policies and  
38 procedures, including subsequent revisions, together with their dates of approval, will be  
39 kept in the Faculty Senate Office and the Office of the Provost. In addition, an electronic  
40 copy of the current policies and procedures will be posted on the MSU website (at  
41 [www.facultysenate.msstate.edu](http://www.facultysenate.msstate.edu)).

## 42 **B. Academic Rank**

43 A faculty member of professorial rank must have a professional or terminal degree  
44 appropriate to the discipline (or the equivalent in training and experience), a strong  
45 commitment to higher education and to the mission of Mississippi State University, and  
46 a willingness to assume the responsibilities and obligations appropriate to a university  
47 faculty member.

48 Academic ranks at Mississippi State University include:

49 *Assistant Professor:* A faculty member who has met the requirements in the first  
50 paragraph of this section and has the potential to be successful in the areas of  
51 teaching, research and/or creative achievement, and service.

52 *Associate Professor:* A faculty member who has met the criteria for assistant  
53 professor, who has consistently demonstrated an ability to perform at a satisfactory  
54 level in teaching, research and/or creative achievement, and service, and who  
55 excels in at least one of these areas. Based upon the criteria established in the  
56 departmental promotion and tenure documents, an associate professor is  
57 developing a national and/or international reputation, and is showing a potential for  
58 making sustained contributions to the university and to his/her profession, field, or  
59 discipline.

60 *Professor:* A faculty member who has met the criteria for associate professor, who  
61 has consistently demonstrated an ability to perform at a satisfactory level in  
62 teaching, research and/or creative achievement, and service, and who excels in at  
63 least two of these areas. Based upon the criteria established in the departmental

64 promotion and tenure documents, a professor must have a national and/or  
65 international reputation within his/her profession, area of expertise, or discipline.

### 66 **C. Promotion**

67 Promotion is never granted simply for satisfactory performance or for length of service,  
68 but reflects progressively higher professional competence and accomplishment.  
69 Promotion from assistant professor to associate professor, or from associate professor  
70 to professor, will normally only be considered after a faculty member has served at least  
71 five years in rank so that sustained productivity at MSU can be demonstrated.  
72 Applications for promotion prior to that time will be regarded as early action and  
73 considered only for exceptionally strong and well documented cases. Rank should  
74 reflect comparable stature with others in similar disciplines in other university settings.  
75 Professional achievement at another academic institution may be considered for  
76 promotion.

### 77 **D. Tenure**

78 The granting of tenure is a faculty-driven process and is the academic community's  
79 chief guarantee of academic freedom for the faculty member to perform his/her  
80 academic duties without undue or inappropriate external pressures.

81 Definition: *Tenure* is defined by IHL Board Policy 403.01 as “Continuing employment  
82 that may be granted to a faculty member after a probationary period upon nomination by  
83 the Institutional Executive Officer for election by the Board.”

84 IHL Board Policy 403.0104 further provides that a tenured faculty member is protected  
85 from dismissal except under the extraordinary circumstances stated in section *L*.  
86 *Dismissal of Tenured Faculty* of this document.

87 According to IHL Board Policy 403.01, tenure is granted in a department, unless  
88 otherwise designated by the IHL Board.

89 Attainment of tenure at Mississippi State University is by no means automatic, based on  
90 years of service, but is the result of a thorough evaluation of a faculty member's  
91 performance in teaching, research and/or creative achievement, and service. The  
92 proportions of these activities may vary by discipline. Excellence in one area and  
93 satisfactory performance in the others are needed to qualify a faculty member for  
94 tenure.

95 Tenure is granted with the university's expectation that the faculty member will continue  
96 to perform at or above the minimum standards set by the department, school, or  
97 college, and university.

98 Eligibility. Tenure may be granted to professors, associate professors, and  
99 simultaneously to assistant professors upon promotion to associate professor. Faculty

100 members of all professorial ranks in specifically designated tenure-track positions may  
101 work toward tenure. An employee cannot be promoted into a professorial position  
102 unless specified in the original offer letter. Non-tenure track faculty positions cannot be  
103 converted to tenure track positions (IHL section 404.01).

#### 104 **Probationary Period**

105 A faculty member must apply for and be recommended for tenure by the president  
106 during the sixth full contract year of employment in a tenure-track position. Failure to  
107 earn tenure at the end of the sixth full contract year will result in a terminal contract in  
108 the seventh full contract year. The probationary period for tenure-track faculty begins at  
109 the start of the faculty member's first full contract year. A full contract year is defined as  
110 one that starts on August 16 for 9-month employees and on July 1 for 12-month  
111 employees and continues until the next contract period. If the initial contract is for a  
112 partial year, e.g., starts after August 16 for a 9-month employee and after July 1 for a  
113 12-month employee, that time is not included in the probationary period.

114 Up to five years at other universities may be counted in this probationary period, as  
115 determined and agreed upon by the departmental promotion and tenure committee, the  
116 department head or director, the dean, and the faculty member in the letter of offer at  
117 the time of initial appointment.

118 For clearly stated personal reasons (e.g., emergencies related to health, activation of  
119 military service, pregnancy, adoption, childcare, care of parents), a faculty member may  
120 request an extension of up to two years from the first five years of this probationary  
121 period for an approved leave of absence or a modified assignment. Specific aspects of  
122 such an extension must be established by the department head or director, the dean,  
123 the provost, and the faculty member. Such an agreement must be in writing. The  
124 departmental promotion and tenure committee shall be notified in writing of the  
125 extension and the revised probationary period.

126 IHL Board Policy 403.0101 allows a faculty member or an administrative employee who  
127 held faculty rank at the level of assistant professor, associate professor, or professor  
128 and tenure at another institution to be awarded tenure at the time of initial appointment if  
129 recommended by the faculty of the tenuring department, the dean, the provost, and the  
130 president, and awarded by the IHL Board.

131 For faculty members with a shortened probationary period as specified in an offer letter  
132 or an approved extended probationary period, the "third-year review" should be held at  
133 the midpoint of the individual's probationary period.

#### 134 **E. Relationship Between Promotion and Tenure**

135 Faculty members who have met the requirements for promotion, but who have not  
136 fulfilled the probationary period for tenure, may be promoted without tenure.

137 Faculty members who are granted tenure as assistant professors automatically meet  
138 the criteria for promotion to associate professor.

## 139 **F. Performance Standards and Evaluation of Professional Activities**

140 Every faculty member is expected to meet high standards of professional competence  
141 and integrity and to further the goals of his/her department or unit. In every case, a  
142 faculty member's performance in teaching, research and/or creative achievement, and  
143 service will be judged by all participants in promotion and/or tenure decisions on the  
144 basis of specific criteria in written policy statements, developed by the appropriate  
145 academic units. All criteria should be based on the application of the highest  
146 professional standards and are to be in harmony with the following university criteria:

147 *Teaching.* Criteria may include regular classroom and laboratory instruction;  
148 supervision of field work, internships, performances, and fellowships; direction of  
149 theses and dissertations; development of educational materials; conduct of other  
150 academic programs that confer university credit; invited presentation of non-credit  
151 and off-campus lectures and demonstrations; and other teaching activities as  
152 defined by the academic units. Excellence in teaching includes the ability to impart  
153 the knowledge, methods, and standards of the discipline, the ability to communicate  
154 effectively with students by counseling, advising, or motivating them, the ability to  
155 direct students in their own research, and the ability to evaluate student work  
156 accurately and fairly according to prevailing academic standards of the discipline.  
157 Excellence in teaching may be documented by peer reviews, student awards,  
158 student evaluations, student successes, faculty teaching awards, recognition of  
159 teaching excellence, sample course materials, recordings of teaching sessions,  
160 graduate student theses and dissertations, and any other documentary materials  
161 that demonstrate teaching effectiveness on the university campus or at the national  
162 or international level.

163 *Research and/or Creative Achievement.* Criteria may include systematic, original  
164 investigation directed toward the enlargement or validation of human knowledge, the  
165 solution of contemporary problems, or the exploration of creative forms that bring  
166 greater meaning to life. Excellence in research and/or creative achievement must be  
167 established by critical peer evaluation, using standards prevailing in the discipline.  
168 Excellence may be documented by books, articles, or reviews published by  
169 commercial or university presses or in refereed journals of international, national, or  
170 regional prestige; research grants, leading to high quality research, intellectual  
171 property; presentation of papers before professional groups; invited participation in  
172 scholarly conferences; editorial work for professional journals or publishers; or  
173 artistic or humanistic performances, presentations, or shows. Evidence of  
174 substantive progress on long-term projects that meet the criteria above may be  
175 considered as specified by the academic units.

176 *Service.* Criteria may include activities which enhance the scholarly life of the  
177 university or the discipline, improve the quality of life or society, or promote the

178 general welfare of the institution, the community, the state, the nation, or  
179 international community. Thus it includes outreach and extension of academic  
180 knowledge to the public, participation on departmental, college, or university  
181 committees, or on regional, national, or international scholarly committees, boards,  
182 or review panels, or on public boards as a representative of the scholarly  
183 community. Membership or participation in such bodies may constitute satisfactory  
184 service, but excellence requires leadership or initiative leading to substantial  
185 improvements or progress.

186 In evaluating a faculty member being considered for tenure, the appropriate faculty  
187 committees and academic administrators will give adequate consideration to the faculty  
188 member's professional performance as a function of his/her relative academic workload  
189 assignments within the three academic missions of service, teaching/instruction, and  
190 research/creative activities. Adequate consideration of a tenure case consists of a  
191 conscientious review, which seeks out and considers all available evidence bearing on  
192 the relevant performance of the faculty member, and assumes that the various  
193 academic units follow their approved procedural guidelines during the tenure and  
194 promotion review process. Such consideration should be based upon adequate  
195 deliberation over the evidence in light of relevant standards and exclusive of improper  
196 standards (i.e., any criterion not related to the professional performance of the faculty  
197 member). The evaluation of a tenure case should constitute a bona fide exercise of  
198 professional academic judgment.

## 199 **G. Annual Faculty Evaluation and Review**

200 At the time of initial appointment, each faculty member will be informed in writing by the  
201 department head or unit administrator whether the appointment is tenure-track or non-  
202 tenure-track and referred to the Promotion and Tenure Procedures section of the  
203 Faculty Handbook, as well as college and departmental promotion and tenure policies  
204 (e.g. appropriate websites with online versions of these documents). The new faculty  
205 member will agree by signature to the understood and agreed upon terms of  
206 employment.

207 During the probationary period, the department head will counsel each faculty member  
208 annually about progress toward promotion and tenure. This annual evaluation will  
209 comprise a written review of the previous year's progress and a written agreement  
210 about the faculty member's objectives, responsibilities, and expectations for the coming  
211 year, and the department head's or director's assessment of progress toward tenure.

212 The written agreement about the coming year must be consistent with the promotion  
213 and tenure criteria of the department, the school or college, and the university. If the  
214 department head or director and the faculty member cannot reach agreement, the  
215 matter will be referred to the dean.



216 The annual evaluation, signed by both parties, will be sent to the dean. A copy will be  
217 placed in the faculty member's personnel file. The faculty member has the right to attach  
218 a dissenting statement to all copies of this evaluation.

219 No record in personnel files relating to promotion or tenure is to be added, changed, or  
220 withdrawn without the knowledge of the faculty member and the unit administrator.  
221 Personnel files are confidential and are available only to the faculty member and  
222 university officials. Appropriate administrators will make all pertinent information  
223 available to elected promotion and tenure committees and administrators when the  
224 faculty member is a candidate for promotion and tenure. If material from a personnel file  
225 (or other material that is not in the candidate's promotion or tenure application) is  
226 provided to a committee or administrator, then the candidate will be provided a copy of  
227 the material and an opportunity to submit his/her written comments regarding the  
228 material before the material is considered by the committee or administrator. Otherwise,  
229 no additions will be made.

## 230 231 **H. Promotion and Tenure Committees**

### 232 **University Committee on Promotion and Tenure**

233 The University Committee on Promotion and Tenure serves four functions:

234 to advise the provost on promotion and tenure matters, including the review of  
235 criteria, policies, and procedures for promotion and tenure used by schools or  
236 colleges;

237 to hear appeals from faculty members whose nominations for promotion or tenure  
238 have been denied;

239 to review suggested changes in this document; and to hear appeals from tenured  
240 faculty members who have been recommended for termination.

241 The committee consists of one member elected from each academic unit with an  
242 administrative head. Committee members will elect a chair who reports directly to the  
243 provost. Members must be full-time, tenured professors, rank of associate professor or  
244 above. No faculty member functioning as an administrator, department head, or director  
245 of an academic unit will be a member of the committee. Committee members are  
246 elected in the fall by a majority vote of the unit's full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty  
247 members with the rank of assistant professor and above. Members may serve for two  
248 consecutive three-year terms, excluding partial terms. A partial term will be filled by  
249 election, as needed. The committee will annually elect its chair, who will be a full voting  
250 member of the committee.

## 251 **College Promotion and Tenure Committees**

252 Every college will establish and maintain a promotion and tenure committee. Each  
253 college will develop its own criteria for membership on the committee, and the  
254 procedures for electing members to that committee. These criteria and procedures  
255 must be approved by both a majority vote of the college's full-time tenured and tenure-  
256 track faculty and the college dean.

- 257 • Committee members must hold a rank at least as high as the candidate's  
258 aspirant rank to review and vote on each case. For example, an associate  
259 professor can participate in the review of dossiers for tenure and promotion to  
260 associate professor but not on the committee reviewing dossiers for promotion to  
261 professor. Only tenured faculty may vote on a tenure recommendation.
- 262 • The length of terms will be determined by the unit.
- 263 • No member of the committee will consider the application of a relative.  
264 Appearance of conflicts of interest should be avoided.
- 265 • No faculty member functioning as an administrator, department head or director  
266 of an academic unit will be a member of the committee.
- 267 • No faculty member may participate in a candidate's promotion or tenure review at  
268 more than one level.
- 269 • The committee will annually elect its chair.
- 270 • The membership of the committee will be made known to the faculty.
- 271 • An individual will not serve in a year that his/her promotion application is being  
272 considered.

273 The responsibilities of a college promotion and tenure committee will be the  
274 following:

- 275 1. To write the college's promotion and tenure policies and procedures which must  
276 be consistent with university promotion and tenure policies, include the  
277 mechanism for their adoption and revision, describe the procedures that will be  
278 followed if sufficient numbers of members are not available because of  
279 absences, recusal or insufficient rank, and identify the participation of the  
280 different categories of faculty in the college promotion and tenure process.
- 281 2. To approve the promotion and tenure documents of departmental committees  
282 within the college and to ensure that such documents are consistent with the  
283 mission of the university and the college, and the university promotion and tenure  
284 document;
- 285 3. To assist departments in developing procedures for a third-year review of all non-  
286 tenured, tenure-track faculty;
- 287 4. To assist departments in developing criteria for external peer reviews, including  
288 the identification of peer departments or schools at other colleges or universities;

- 289 5. To assist departments in developing definitions of excellence, satisfactory, and  
290 unsatisfactory as it pertains to the evaluation of candidates for promotion and  
291 tenure;
- 292 6. To assist departments in developing definitions of teaching, research and/or  
293 creative achievement, and service consistent with the mission of the department  
294 or school;
- 295 7. To conduct a vote on all dossiers for promotion and tenure, ensuring department  
296 standards are fairly applied and university standards are maintained; and
- 297 8. To approve the departmental promotion and tenure document and policies and  
298 all subsequent changes.

## 299 **Department and School Promotion and Tenure**

300 Every department and school will write a promotion and tenure document, which is  
301 approved by a majority vote of the professorial faculty. In comprehensive departments  
302 with both tenured/tenure-track and non- tenured/tenure-track faculty, the promotion-only  
303 portions of the document will be approved by a majority vote of the professorial faculty  
304 while the promotion and tenure portions of the document will be approved by a majority  
305 vote of the tenured and tenure-track faculty. The department document must:

- 306 1. contain the criteria and procedures for promotion and tenure,
- 307 2. define teaching, research and/or creative achievement, and service,  
308 consistent with the mission of the department or school, including criteria for  
309 developing a national reputation and an established national reputation,
- 310 3. specify criteria for excellence, satisfactory, and unsatisfactory as it pertains to  
311 the evaluation of candidates for promotion and tenure,
- 312 4. determine the structure of the department promotion and tenure committee,
- 313 5. specify the criteria for eligibility of professorial faculty to serve on the  
314 department promotion and tenure committee, and
- 315 6. describe any specifics, including any uniqueness, of the department or school  
316 in which the individual is to be tenured.

317 Every department and school will establish and maintain a promotion and tenure  
318 committee. The department committee may include any category of faculty with  
319 professorial rank. The promotion and tenure procedures must specify the inclusiveness  
320 of the committee composition and clearly establish the eligibility for voting and  
321 participation within the department promotion and tenure process. In comprehensive  
322 departments where there may be non-tenure track faculty of rank serving on  
323 departmental committees along with tenured faculty, it is permissible for all faculty  
324 members on the committee of appropriate rank to vote on promotion to associate  
325 professor or to professor rank. Only tenured faculty members on the committee can  
326 vote on the tenure decision. When a candidate is being considered for promotion to  
327 associate professor or to professor and for tenure at the same time, any non-agreement  
328 of the promotion vote and the tenure vote will be resolved by vote of only the tenured  
329 faculty members on the committee.

330 The faculty of each school or department will determine the structure of its promotion  
331 and tenure committee, subject to the conditions that:

- 332 • The committee consists of at least three tenured members.
- 333 • Committee members must hold a rank at least as high as the candidate's  
334 aspirant rank in order to review and vote on each case. For example, an  
335 associate professor can participate in the review of dossiers for tenure and  
336 promotion to associate professor but not on the committee reviewing dossiers for  
337 promotion to professor.
- 338 • The department promotion and tenure policies shall describe the procedures that  
339 will be followed if sufficient numbers of members are not available because of  
340 absence, recusal or insufficient rank. Only tenured faculty may vote on a tenure  
341 recommendation.
- 342 • Unless a unit uses a committee-of-the-whole, the members of the committee  
343 must be elected. The length of terms will be determined by the unit.
- 344 • No member of the committee will consider the application of a relative.  
345 Appearance of conflicts of interest should be avoided.
- 346 • No faculty member functioning as an administrator, department head or director  
347 of an academic unit will be a member of the committee.
- 348 • No faculty member may participate in a candidate's promotion or tenure review at  
349 more than one level.
- 350 • The committee will annually elect its chair.
- 351 • The membership of the committee will be made known to the faculty.
- 352 • An individual will not serve in a year that his/her promotion application is being  
353 considered.

354 Among the responsibilities of the department and school promotion and tenure  
355 committee are the following:

- 356 1. To establish procedures for a third-year review of all non-tenured, tenure-track  
357 faculty;
- 358 2. To specify a mandatory date by which candidates must notify the department  
359 head of their intent to submit an application for tenure and/or promotion;
- 360 3. To specify criteria for external peer reviews, including the identification of peer  
361 departments or schools at other colleges or universities;
- 362 4. To facilitate all votes related to the promotion and tenure process, including the  
363 vote to approve the original promotion and tenure document and policies and all  
364 subsequent changes;
- 365 5. To conduct a review by the end of the third year of all non-tenured, tenure-track  
366 faculty; and
- 367 6. To conduct a vote on all dossiers for promotion and tenure.

368 College, school or departmental promotion and tenure committees will consider, if  
369 submitted, but are not bound by, the department head's annual review of a candidate's  
370 progress toward tenure or promotion.

371 Prior to the offer of hire, the appropriate promotion and tenure committee will make a  
372 formal recommendation about the initial appointment of a faculty member or  
373 administrator at the rank of associate professor or professor, about the acceptance of  
374 experience as the equivalent of a terminal degree, and about the award of years of  
375 credit at another institution of higher education toward fulfillment of the minimum  
376 probationary period for tenure.

## 377 378 **I. Procedures for Faculty Promotion and Tenure**

### 379 **The process**

380 The decision to recommend tenure to the IHL Board of Trustees is made by the  
381 president. All judgments made at lower levels of the university are recommendations to  
382 the president.

383 A candidate for tenure and/or promotion must notify the department head of his/her  
384 intent to submit his/her application for review on or prior to a date that must be specified  
385 in the department promotion and tenure document. Department heads must inform  
386 assistant professors of this date during the annual faculty review for the fifth year of their  
387 employment contract.

388 The date by which candidates must notify their department head of their intent can vary  
389 between departments and colleges, but it must provide sufficient time to notify external  
390 reviewers and receive their letters of evaluation prior to October 1<sup>st</sup> or any official stage  
391 of application review. The solicitation process for external evaluators will be initiated  
392 when the candidate notifies the appropriate department head or unit director of his/her  
393 intent to be considered for tenure and/or promotion.

394 External letters will be solicited from professionals in the field who can provide an  
395 impartial evaluation of the candidate's work and accomplishments.

396 The external reviewers will generally be tenured faculty at peer to peer-plus institutions,  
397 or peer to peer-plus departments. External faculty reviewers should not include  
398 individuals who have a professional or personal conflict-of-interest with the candidate.  
399 Conflicts-of-interest in general would include but not necessarily be restricted to  
400 previous mentors, previous graduate students, collaborating co-authors, collaborating  
401 co-investigators, or relatives/past-relatives. In disciplines or fields where the general  
402 conflict-of-interest definition commonly does not apply, external reviewers normally  
403 excluded from the process can be utilized if complete and adequate justification is  
404 provided. Definition of what constitutes a conflict-of-interest may be further defined in  
405 the department promotion and tenure document and be in accord with the Policy and  
406 Procedures Document for Conflict-of-Interest and Ethics (Department of Human

407 Resources and Management: Employee Relations Section Mississippi Code of 1972  
408 Sections 25-4-101 through 25-4-105). The candidate, the department promotion and  
409 tenure committee, and department head will each provide a list of names that will be  
410 used to create a master list of potential external reviewers.

411 The department head and department promotion and tenure committee chair will jointly  
412 select the final list of external reviewers from whom letters of evaluation will be  
413 requested and should include faculty names provided by all three sources. Both the  
414 department head and department promotion and tenure committee chair are  
415 responsible for eliminating, to the best of their knowledge, all external reviewers that  
416 have a conflict-of-interest.

417 Dossiers must contain an explanation of the credentials and qualifications of each  
418 external reviewer regarding his/her training/background in addition to the extent of  
419 his/her contact, interaction or relationship with the candidate. External letters of  
420 evaluation must be received from a minimum of four external reviewers for inclusion in  
421 the dossier of the candidate. It is the responsibility of the chair of the departmental  
422 committee or the department head to obtain at least the minimum number of letters of  
423 evaluation from external reviewers who have agreed to function in this capacity. All  
424 letters received from external reviewers must be included in the dossier of the candidate  
425 unless the department head and department promotion and tenure committee  
426 collectively decide to withdraw a letter from the review process if it contains information  
427 that refers to or describes a conflict-of-interest. In instances when substantial  
428 modifications of the application have occurred (e.g. official notifications of accepted  
429 publications or awarded grants) after documentation has been forwarded to the external  
430 reviewers, these achievements can be communicated in a letter written by the  
431 candidate and forwarded to the department head. The letter should be included in the  
432 section of the dossier containing the external letters of review.

433 The identity of the external reviewers will not be revealed to the candidate and  
434 communications must not include any information that might indicate the identity or  
435 location of any external reviewer. Exceptions may include situations as may be required  
436 by law or ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction. The specific procedures  
437 regarding solicitation and use of external letters of evaluation are to be detailed in  
438 school and departmental policies.

439 The candidate makes a formal application for promotion and/or tenure by completing  
440 the MSU Application for Promotion and Tenure form and attaching supporting  
441 documentation. Each unit will specify the format and the level of detail for the supporting  
442 documentation. No additional support material may be added or removed from this file  
443 after a decision has been made at the department level, unless the candidate,  
444 department head and the departmental committee mutually agree. The request will be  
445 made in writing, define what is being added or removed, state the purpose for the  
446 change in the application, be signed by all parties, and be included as part of the formal  
447 application. Letters of recommendation will be added to the dossier at each level of  
448 review. If the candidate submits letters of factual correction for any level of review,

449 those letters and any review-level response (described below) will also be included in  
450 the dossier.

451 A complete dossier for promotion and tenure for the official review process will include  
452 the application submitted by the candidate and at least the minimum of four external  
453 letters of review. Only complete dossiers for promotion and tenure that contain the  
454 application for the candidate and the minimum number of external letters will be  
455 evaluated at the level of the department promotion and tenure committee, department  
456 head, college committee, college dean, or university provost.

457 Except for the candidate's optional letters of factual correction (described below), the  
458 candidate takes no part in the process after submission of the application, unless  
459 requested to do so by those considering the dossier. No discussion of correspondence  
460 relating to the dossier is to be initiated by the candidate with the reviewing authorities.  
461 Deliberation at all levels will be confidential.

462 The department promotion and tenure committee will review the information in the  
463 candidate's promotion and tenure dossier. The committee will make a recommendation  
464 on the question of promotion or promotion and tenure by a single vote evaluating the  
465 three areas (teaching, research and/or creative achievement, and service) as a whole.  
466 The committee's recommendation will be based on a simple majority vote, conducted by  
467 secret ballot. The committee chair will submit a letter of recommendation and rationale  
468 to be included in the candidate's dossier. The candidate will receive a copy of the  
469 committee's letter of recommendation and rationale that is redacted only insofar as  
470 necessary to conceal the identity of external reviewers. The rationale shall characterize  
471 external reviewers' comments that informed the committee's decision. The letter of  
472 recommendation and rationale of the committee will be included in the dossier as it  
473 proceeds through the review process. The chair will notify the department head of the  
474 committee's recommendation.

475 The department head or director will separately and independently review the dossier  
476 His/her recommendations will be based on pertinent evidence documented in the faculty  
477 member's dossier and information in the personnel file that is applicable to the  
478 candidate's performance in professional activities. The candidate will receive a copy of  
479 the department head's or director's letter of recommendation and rationale that is  
480 redacted only insofar as necessary to conceal the identity of external reviewers. The  
481 rationale shall characterize external reviewers' comments that informed the department  
482 head's or director's decision. The letter of recommendation and rationale of the  
483 department head or director will be included in the dossier as it proceeds through the  
484 review process.

485 The candidate may respond to the department promotion and tenure committee's  
486 and/or the department head's or director's letters to correct any factual errors  
487 represented therein within 5 working days of the candidate's receipt of each letter. The  
488 candidate's letter(s) of factual corrections must be sent to the review level to which the  
489 response was made. That level may address the concerns in a new letter to be included

490 in the application within 5 working days of receipt of the candidate's letter of factual  
491 correction. All letters shall be included in the dossier as it proceeds through the review  
492 process.

493 The college promotion and tenure committee will review the information in the  
494 candidate's promotion and tenure dossier. The committee will make a recommendation  
495 on the question of promotion or promotion and tenure by a single vote evaluating the  
496 three areas (teaching, research and/or creative achievement, and service) as a whole.  
497 The committee's recommendation will be based on a simple majority vote, conducted by  
498 secret ballot. The committee chair will submit a letter of recommendation and rationale  
499 to be included in the candidate's dossier. The candidate will receive a copy of the  
500 college promotion and tenure committee's letter of recommendation and rationale that is  
501 redacted only insofar as necessary to conceal the identity of external reviewers. The  
502 rationale shall characterize external reviewers' comments that informed the committee's  
503 decision. The letter of recommendation and rationale of the committee will be included  
504 in the dossier as it proceeds through the review process. The candidate may respond  
505 to the college promotion and tenure committee's letter to correct any factual errors  
506 represented therein within 5 working days of the candidate's receipt of the letter. The  
507 committee may address the concerns in a new letter to be included in the dossier within  
508 5 working days of receipt of the candidate's letter of factual correction. All letters shall  
509 be included in the dossier as it proceeds through the review process.

510 The dean will review the dossier and make a recommendation based on pertinent  
511 evidence documented in the faculty member's promotion and tenure dossier and  
512 information in the personnel file that is applicable to the candidate's performance in  
513 professional activities. The candidate will receive a copy of the dean's letter of  
514 recommendation and rationale that is redacted only insofar as necessary to conceal the  
515 identity of external reviewers. The rationale shall characterize external reviewers'  
516 comments that informed the dean's decision. The letter of recommendation and  
517 rationale of the dean will be included in the dossier as it proceeds through the review  
518 process. The candidate may respond to the dean's letter to correct any factual errors  
519 represented therein within 5 working days of the candidate's receipt of the letter. The  
520 dean may address the concerns in a new letter to be included in the dossier within 5  
521 working days of receipt of the candidate's letter of factual correction. All letters shall be  
522 included in the dossier as it proceeds through the review process.

523 The faculty member has the right to discontinue the review process for tenure or  
524 promotion at any point before a decision has been made. His/her request must be made  
525 in writing to the department head or director before a final decision has been rendered.

526 Departmental and college committees on promotion and tenure will assist their  
527 department head or director and dean, respectively, in reviewing the eligibility of all  
528 faculty members who have met the minimum requirements for advancement in rank or  
529 tenure.



530 On rare occasions and in exceptional circumstances when a minor variation of the  
531 process described in this document needs to be initiated in order to be fair to the faculty  
532 member while still ensuring a rigorous review of the candidate's dossier, the University  
533 Promotion and Tenure Committee will review and approve any such appropriate  
534 requests during the review process. These minor variations of the process described by  
535 this paragraph cannot be the sole basis for an appeal.

## 536 **Chronology**

537 The receipt dates listed below for the department and college represent suggested  
538 guidelines intended to facilitate an organized and efficient review of candidates'  
539 dossiers during each official phase of the evaluation process. Minor chronological  
540 delays that may occur beyond these dates do not represent a significant procedural  
541 error. Departments and colleges may specify deadlines that are earlier, but not later,  
542 than those cited below.

543 On a date specified in the department promotion and tenure guidelines but no later  
544 than October 1, the candidate for tenure and/or promotion will notify the department  
545 head and the chair of the departmental promotion and tenure committee of his/her intent  
546 to submit his/her application for tenure and/or promotion. The department head has the  
547 responsibility to assist, where appropriate, the faculty member in preparing the  
548 application for tenure and promotion review.

549 By October 1 (or first working day thereafter), or earlier if specified in the departmental  
550 promotion and tenure document, a faculty member eligible for consideration for  
551 promotion and/or tenure must have provided the department head with all pertinent and  
552 available information to apply for consideration.

553 By November 15 (or first working day thereafter), or earlier if specified by the college  
554 promotion and tenure document, each faculty member's complete dossier will be  
555 provided to the college promotion and tenure committee. This will include letters of  
556 recommendation and rationale from both the department promotion and tenure  
557 committee and the department head. Each of these letters of recommendation and  
558 rationale will be copied to the candidate. The letters will be redacted only insofar as  
559 necessary to conceal the identity of external reviewers. These letters must include a  
560 summary of the procedures followed by the academic unit in evaluating the candidate  
561 and the committee's and head's independent evaluation of the candidate's teaching  
562 effectiveness, research and/or creative achievement, and service to the profession and  
563 university. The chair of the college promotion and tenure committee is responsible for  
564 inserting letters of recommendation and rationale from the department head and the  
565 department promotion and tenure committee, along with any letters related to correction  
566 of factual errors at the department level, into the dossier of each candidate reviewed by  
567 the college promotion and tenure committee.

568 By December 15 (or first working day thereafter) or earlier if specified by the college  
569 promotion and tenure document, the college promotion and tenure committee's letter of

570 recommendation and rationale for each candidate shall be sent to the college dean.  
571 Letters of recommendation and rationale shall be copied to the candidate. The letters  
572 will be redacted only insofar as necessary to conceal the identity of external reviewers.  
573 The letter concerning each candidate must include the committee's summary of the  
574 procedures followed by the college committee in evaluating the candidate and the  
575 committee's evaluation of the candidate's teaching effectiveness, research and/or  
576 creative achievement, and service to the profession and university. The college  
577 promotion and tenure committee chair is responsible to provide the dean with each  
578 candidate's dossier including letters from previous stages of review. For each  
579 candidate, the dean is responsible for collection and inclusion of any letters related to  
580 correction of factual errors at the college level.

581 By January 15 (or first working day thereafter), the dean's letter of recommendation and  
582 rationale for each candidate shall be sent to the provost and copied to the candidate.  
583 The letter concerning each candidate must include the dean's evaluation of the  
584 candidate's teaching effectiveness, research and/or creating achievement, and service  
585 to the profession and university. The dean is responsible to provide the provost with  
586 each candidate's dossier including letters from previous stages of review. Copies of  
587 publications, works of art, etc., will be included only if specifically requested by the  
588 provost.

589 By March 10 (or first working day thereafter), the provost will have reviewed each  
590 candidate's dossier and will make a recommendation to the president. Copies of the  
591 provost's recommendation will be sent to the candidate with copies to the dean,  
592 department head, and chairs of college and departmental promotion and tenure  
593 committees.

594 The president will review the recommendation of the provost and will decide to accept  
595 or reject that recommendation.

596 The president will transmit that decision, together with reasons for a negative decision,  
597 to the faculty member directly, with copies to the dean, department head, and chairs of  
598 college and departmental promotion and tenure committees.

## 599 **J. Appeals**

600 Faculty members who have been denied promotion or tenure may, within ten working  
601 days of the date on the president's decision letter, request an appeals hearing before  
602 the University Committee on Promotion and Tenure. The request must be made through  
603 the provost who will forward the request to the University Committee on Promotion and  
604 Tenure. Grounds for requesting an appeal are:

605 that the decision was prejudiced, arbitrary, or capricious; or

606 that the procedures contained in the promotion and tenure policies of the IHL, MSU,  
607 or those in the candidate's college or unit promotion and tenure policies were not  
608 properly followed.

609 The University Committee on Promotion and Tenure, upon request of the provost, will  
610 review the entire case. The appeal will be heard by at least five members. Members  
611 should recuse themselves from appeals by candidates who are relatives or with whom  
612 they have some conflict-of-interest, if the committee member has served in the previous  
613 levels of evaluation of the appellant or if for any reason the committee member feels  
614 he/she cannot be objective. A committee member will not vote on an appeal unless  
615 he/she has heard all hearings pertaining to the case. If five members are not available  
616 because of absence or recusal, the chair may, with the concurrence of the committee,  
617 appoint substitutes from among the professors of the general faculty. In special  
618 circumstances potentially prejudicial to the appellant, the chair may, with the  
619 concurrence of the committee, appoint an ad-hoc committee to assist in the resolution  
620 of the appeal. This ad-hoc committee reports its findings back to the University  
621 Committee on Promotion and Tenure.

622 The committee will review all available pertinent information and will conduct interviews  
623 with appropriate persons, i.e., appellant, unit head, unit committee chair, dean, college  
624 committee chair and provost. The committee will render its recommendation, in writing,  
625 to the provost. The committee will also provide a copy of this written recommendation to  
626 the candidate.

627 The provost will transmit the committee's written recommendation along with his/her  
628 own recommendation to the president, who will make the final on-campus decision. This  
629 decision will end the university appeals process. A copy of each recommendation will be  
630 provided to the candidate.

631 The Board of Trustees of the Institutions of Higher Learning may grant a further appeal  
632 as outlined in Board of Trustees Policy 403.0105.

633 Candidates who are denied tenure and who have no time remaining in their  
634 probationary periods will receive terminal contracts for the following year.

#### 635 **K. Notice of Non-reappointment of Non-tenured, Tenure-track Faculty**

636 Non-tenured, tenure-track faculty members will be notified in writing of the university's  
637 intention not to renew their contracts as provided in IHL Board Policy 403.0102:

638 not later than March 1 before the date of contract termination during the first year of  
639 service;

640 not later than December 1 before the date of contract termination during the second  
641 year of service; or

642 not later than September 1 before the date of contract termination after two or more  
643 years of service.

644 This schedule of notification does not apply to persons holding temporary, part-time, or  
645 adjunct positions

646 **L. Dismissal of Tenured Faculty**

647 Termination of service of a tenured faculty member is made only under these  
648 extraordinary circumstances (as outlined in IHL Board Policy 403.0104):

649 financial exigencies as declared by the Board;

650 termination or reduction of programs, academic or administrative units as approved  
651 by the Board;

652 malfeasance, inefficiency or contumacious conduct; or

653 for legitimate and justifiable cause.

654 Termination for cause of a tenured faculty member or the dismissal for cause of a  
655 faculty member prior to the expiration of a term appointment will not be recommended  
656 by the institutional executive officer until the faculty member has been afforded the  
657 opportunity for a hearing. In no event will the contract of a tenured faculty member be  
658 terminated for cause without the faculty member being afforded the opportunity for a  
659 hearing.

660 In all cases, the faculty member will be informed in writing of the proposed action  
661 against him/her and that he/she has the opportunity to be heard in his/her own defense.  
662 Within ten (10) working days from the date of the president's decision, the faculty  
663 member will state in writing his/her desire to have a hearing. He/she will be permitted to  
664 have with him/her an adviser of his/her own choosing who may be an attorney. The  
665 institution is directed to record (suitable for transcription) all hearings. In the hearing of  
666 charges of incompetence, the testimony will include that of faculty and other scholars.

667 Tenured faculty members, who are dismissed for financial exigencies or termination or  
668 reduction of program, academic or administrative units will remain employed for a  
669 minimum of 9 to 12 months, consistent with current contract periods of time, from date  
670 of notification. Tenured faculty members, who are dismissed for malfeasance,  
671 inefficiency, contumacious conduct or for a legitimate and justifiable cause will have  
672 their contracts terminated at any time subsequent to notice and hearing with no right to  
673 continued employment for any period of time. At the discretion of the Institutional  
674 Executive Officer, any faculty member's salary may be paid, and he/she may be  
675 relieved of all teaching duties, assignments, appointments and privileges when he/she  
676 is dismissed for any reasons stated above or pending a termination hearing.

APPROVED:

/s/ Randolph F. Follett 2/13/15

Randy Follett, Faculty Senate President Date

/s/ Jerome A. Gilbert 2/13/15

Jerome A. Gilbert, Provost and Executive Vice President Date

/s/ Mark E. Keenum 3/6/15

Mark E. Keenum, President Date