

PRINCIPLES FOR UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

As recommended by the Faculty Senate, Feb. 9, 1996;
As recommended by the Administrative Council, Feb. 12, 1996;
As recommended by Professional and Support Staff Advisory Council, Feb. 14, 1996;
As recommended by the Student Association;
Approved by the General Faculty, March 5, 1996 and
Amended by vote of the General Faculty, Fall 1999.

Preamble

The triad mission of learning, research, and service of Mississippi State University can best be achieved through cooperation, collaboration, and consultation among the membership of the entire university community. Achievement of that mission requires an understanding and commitment to the formal and informal decision processes by which the university conducts its work and maintains its standards. It also requires a recognition by the university community that the university must ultimately respond to legitimate external entities and forces that shape policy and render decisions.

Members of the university community need to understand the university's noble and extensive mission and the part each member plays in its achievement. They need to understand how formal authority is shared, the scope and form of their involvement in governance, and the need for those in authority to achieve balance between codification and discretion. This understanding enhances each member's ability to sustain and strengthen the essential nature of the university and facilitates effective university governance and responsiveness to the needs of the people of Mississippi.

Central to effective and efficient university governance is open consultation, communication, and participation in decisions and decision-making bodies, and understanding of the responsibilities and limitations of authority by all members of the university community. Success of the university depends on collegial relationships and mutual respect among the faculty, professional and support staff, students, administrative officers, and representatives of external entities.

All members of the university community must be accountable for their roles and responsibilities. Policies and procedures to measure performance in these roles and responsibilities are essential to achieving the mission and goals of the university.

Mississippi State recognizes the value of diverse opinions in decision making and pursues its mission in an atmosphere of shared governance and open communication. Faculty and staff are involved in policy formulation and in implementing the learning, research and service missions of the university. Faculty and staff also recognize their shared accountability for the performance of the university in carrying out its mission.

In the spirit of promoting effective governance of the university, the following statements of policy relative to members of the university community are adopted. The policies are designed to generate and promote understanding, candor, trust, accountability, and participation in the processes that accomplish the mission and goals of the university.

Principles

Authority. Ultimate authority for governance of the university is vested by the State of Mississippi in the Board of Trustees of the Institutions of Higher Learning and delegated by the board to the president. The president exercises that authority through the vice presidents, deans, directors, and other officials of the administration in consultation, as appropriate, with units of the university and with the faculty, professional and support staff, and students.

Consultation. To facilitate open communication and effective university governance, the president and other administrative officers of the university will exercise due diligence in consulting with the faculty, professional and support staff, students, and external constituents on issues affecting them. Consultation is characterized by early discussions with the affected constituencies, jointly formulated procedures for consultation, reasonable deadlines within the constraints of the academic calendar, access to appropriate information, adequate feedback, and timely communication of decisions to the affected constituencies.

Representation. Effective university governance generally requires that the faculty, professional and support staff, students, and external constituents be represented on budgetary and decision-, policy-, and procedure-making entities. Appropriate representation of these groups is normally obtained through the university's council and committee structure. Elected and appointed representatives should, as far as possible, be selected specifically for the roles in which they will serve. When temporary special committees, study groups, or task forces are established by the president to address matters affecting the mission of the university, a majority of the membership should be composed of elected representatives drawn from the general faculty. Professional and support staff, students, and external constituencies should be included as appropriate. The chairs of these bodies may be appointed by the president.

Faculty Representation. By the Charter of Organization of the Faculty of Mississippi State University, the Robert Holland Faculty Senate is the official representative of the faculty on all matters not delegated by the general faculty to other elected faculty bodies.

University-level curriculum, promotion and tenure, and grievance committees should be composed of elected representatives from the general faculty. These bodies elect their own chairs.

Professional and Support Staff Representation. The Professional and Support Staff Advisory Council is the official representative body for the professional and support staff. The staff should have appropriate representation on matters affecting them. Consultation with the staff should be conducted through their elected representatives and/or the staff council, as well as through normal administrative channels.

Student Representation. The Student Association is the official representative of undergraduate and graduate students of the university. Undergraduate and graduate students should be represented on appropriate university councils, committees, and task forces as well as committees of external entities related to the university. Consultation with students should be conducted through their elected representatives and/or the student association.

Administrative Representation. Administrative officers of the university represent entities for which they have administrative responsibilities on councils, committees, and task forces of the university. Officers who are members of the general faculty may also be represented through the faculty senate, and other officers may be represented through the staff council.

External Entities Representation. To advance the mission of the university, the officers of the administration may appoint members of external entities to serve on councils, committees, and task forces.

Roles and Responsibilities.

Administration. The president has been delegated authority to administer the university, to lead the university so that its mission and goals are achieved, and to coordinate university relations with officers of the Board of Trustees. The president recommends the appointment of appropriate administrative officers for the university to the Board of Trustees. The president exercises primary authority through members of the administration in:

1. Control and allocation of the budgeted appropriation and other funds;
2. Establishment of the administrative organization;
3. Approval of personnel appointments;
4. Administration of university programs and policies;
5. Administration of student affairs and services;
6. Administration of physical plant and fiscal affairs;
7. Administration of athletics;
8. Administration of resource development and fund-raising; and
9. Accomplishment of all other assignments to the university by the Board of Trustees.

The president is required by the Board of Trustees to articulate long-range university goals and to see that high standards are maintained in all university programs. The president exerts a major influence on the specific direction of change, not only through basic judgments on budgets and staff, but also in the continuous evaluation of existing university programs and in the planning of overall program direction. Such evaluation and planning necessitates the participation of faculty, staff, students, representatives of external entities, and administrative groups and is accomplished through the offices of the vice-presidents.

The president is also responsible for maintaining fair employment practices, promotion procedures, and wage and salary distribution, as well as good working conditions for the benefit and safety of all personnel employed by the university.

Faculty. The principal responsibilities of the faculty are teaching, research, and service. Because an important additional responsibility of the faculty is to ensure that the university fulfills its educational mission, the faculty must be involved in the generation and implementation of policies that impact the university's mission. On matters primarily affecting the academic mission of the university (curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, advising, degree requirements, faculty scholarship, faculty status, faculty service), the principal responsibility for formulating and evaluating ideas lies with the faculty. The faculty advises the administration through appropriate channels on these matters. The administration customarily follows this advice. On those extraordinary occasions when this advice is not followed, the administration will identify the reasons that render the proffered advice unwise or impracticable and so inform the faculty. A less direct but no less important role of the faculty is to advise the officers of the university about certain administrative matters that are intrinsically related to the health of the university. Among these matters are:

1. Assessment of faculty performance;
2. Selection of university officers;
3. Determination of university priorities; and
4. Establishment of principles for determining salaries.

Professional and Support Staff. The staff council is an advisory organization with the primary goals of facilitating communication between the staff and the administration and providing input to the administration on university policies and procedures. The primary role of the staff is to support the faculty and the administration in fulfilling the university's mission. The staff conducts the day-to-day affairs of the university, provides essential input to the faculty and administration in planning and decision-making processes, and reports on the operations of the university for internal (management) and external (accountability) purposes. On matters of university governance affecting the academic mission of the university, the staff's role is advisory only.

Students. The purpose of the Student Association is to stimulate university-wide student involvement in all areas of university life that lead to achievement of the university's mission. The voice of students is important in all aspects of the university, and students should provide input, when appropriate, through university committees, councils, and task forces.

Administrative Councils and Committees. Administrative councils and committees play important roles in the governance of the university. These councils and committees may be composed of faculty, staff, students, administrators, and representatives of external entities. The members are elected by the appropriate bodies or are appointed by the president or appropriate vice-president to advise the administration in the development of institutional policy, procedure, and practice. A listing of the university's councils and committees with the membership of each is published annually by the Committee on Committees.

Participation

Evaluation. *Evaluation of Administrators and Faculty.* The performance of faculty, staff, and administrative officers should be evaluated periodically. Students should participate in periodic evaluation of the instructional faculty, and those evaluations should be considered important sources of guidance to improve course content and overall learning and teaching effectiveness. The faculty, staff, administrative officers, and students should participate in periodic evaluations of those responsible for the units affecting their roles in the university community. The role of the various groups in such evaluations should be in accordance with their legitimate interest in the performance of the person being evaluated and the group's competence to make evaluative judgments. Evaluations should conform to commonly accepted procedures of evaluation established in consultation with those being evaluated and those evaluating.

Financial Decisions. Representatives chosen by the faculty, staff, and students should be included in university level discussions of resource allocation and budgetary policy and procedures. The administration may choose additional faculty, students, and staff to participate in discussions of these issues. Participation in these issues may also occur in colleges, schools, departments, and other units.

Administrative, Faculty, and Professional Staff Appointments. All professional positions will be filled in consultation with the affected faculty, staff, and students, and with the appropriate external constituencies. On those extraordinary occasions when the advice of a search committee is not followed, the administrator making the appointment will inform the committee of the reasons that render the proffered advice unwise or impracticable.

For the Provost and the Vice Presidents for Agriculture and Research, for deans, directors, chairs, and heads of academic, research, or service units, and for permanent faculty and staff positions, search committees will contain a majority of elected representatives of the faculty and staff, as appropriate, drawn from the affected on- and off-campus units.

For the Vice Presidents of Business Affairs, External Affairs, and Student Affairs, search committees will be appointed by the President in consultation with the Holland Faculty Senate Chair. The administrator making the appointment will publicize the membership of the search committee and the process of selection.

Administrators who serve primarily as advisors or assistants to executives and who do not regularly exercise independent executive and budgetary authority (for example, presidential or vice presidential assistants and some associate and assistant vice presidents, deans, or directors) may be appointed without a search committee.

Approved by:



President

06-22-2000

Date