



FACULTY HANDBOOK

July 1, 2017

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Preamble: The Mission of George Mason University

George Mason University

Mission Statement

A public, comprehensive, research university established by the Commonwealth of Virginia in the National Capital Region, we are an innovative and inclusive academic community committed to creating a more just, free, and prosperous world.

Approved by the Board of Visitors on March 20, 2013

Approved by the State Council of Higher Education Virginia on January 14, 2014

Preface to the Handbook

The *George Mason University Faculty Handbook* defines and describes the conditions of full-time instructional, research, and clinical faculty employment; the structures and processes through which the faculty participates in institutional decision-making and governance; and the academic policies of the University as established by its Board of Visitors. As an institution of higher education of the Commonwealth of Virginia, George Mason University is governed by the Code of Virginia. Nothing in this Handbook shall be interpreted as creating any right or benefit not duly authorized by law, or which is contrary to any law, policy, rule or regulation of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The provisions of the *Faculty Handbook*, as amended from time to time, are incorporated by reference in all full-time instructional, research, and clinical faculty employment contracts. These provisions are binding on the University and on individual faculty members. The *Faculty Handbook* governs the employment relationship of individual faculty members, and sets forth the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of faculty members and of the University. Faculty and academic administrators are expected to read the *Faculty Handbook* and to be familiar with its contents.

Except as noted below, revisions to the *Handbook* may be proposed by any of the parties who have participated in its adoption: the Board of Visitors; the Faculty Senate, acting on behalf of the General Faculty; and the central administration.

Proposals to revise the Handbook originating from the Faculty Senate or University administrators will be considered by a joint committee of the faculty and the central administration consisting of three faculty elected by the Faculty Senate, at least one of whom must be a Faculty Senator, and two administrators appointed by the Provost. The chair of the Faculty Senate appoints one of the elected faculty members as the committee chair. Arrangements must assure an expeditious meeting in cases of urgency. It is not necessary to convene a committee for the following cases:

- Revisions proposed and approved by the Faculty Senate, and approved by the Provost;
- Revisions proposed by the central administration, and submitted to and approved by the Faculty Senate.

All revisions require the formal approval of the Board of Visitors. Each revision shall be incorporated, as of the effective date fixed by the Board, in all existing and future faculty employment contracts; however, no revision shall operate retroactively to change materially the substantive rights of any faculty member or the conditions of award of tenure for faculty members already granted tenure, or who have filed a written request with his or her Dean to be evaluated for the award of tenure. For example, the conditions of employment governed by the Handbook may be changed prospectively and criteria for tenure may be changed for faculty who have not been awarded tenure, but may not be changed for faculty already tenured. Where no effective date is fixed for a revision, it shall become effective on July 1st following its approval by the BOV.

When a policy or procedure described in this Handbook is subject to alternative interpretations, then the Provost and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee will be the designated body to resolve the disagreement.

As of the date of the adoption of this edition of the Handbook, all prior policies with respect to matters covered therein are superseded. With the exception of the bylaws governing the University's Board of Visitors, the provisions of this Handbook supersede all inconsistent bylaws, policies and procedures in effect at the time of its adoption by the Board of Visitors (including, if applicable, custom and usage) of any officer, person, body, or unit of the University, including but not limited to the President or other officer of the University and any college, school, department or other faculty organization.

The *Handbook* Committee acknowledges that some sections use language taken from policy statements of the American Association of University Professors. The use of AAUP language does not, however, represent any University endorsement of AAUP policies other than those explicitly contained in this *Handbook*.

The Faculty Senate and the Provost's Office assume joint responsibility for updating and maintaining the contents of the Faculty Handbook in both the print and web versions.

University policies are located on the university's website at <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/>. The Provost's Office web address is <http://provost.gmu.edu/>. Other important information is located on the websites of the Human Resources and Payroll Office (<http://hr.gmu.edu/>) and the Office of Compliance, Diversity and Ethics (<http://integrity.gmu.edu/>). Please refer to these websites for issues not addressed in the *Faculty Handbook*.

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CHAPTER I. UNIVERSITY ORGANIZATION

1.1 The Rector and Board of Visitors

Responsibility for the governance of George Mason University is vested by the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia in the Rector and Board of Visitors. Members of the Board of Visitors are appointed by the Governor of the Commonwealth to serve fixed terms of four years. The Rector is a member of the Board, elected by the Board to serve as its chair.

Without limiting the generality of its powers, the Board of Visitors exercises its authority principally in policy making and oversight. With the exception of meetings convened in executive session, meetings of the Board of Visitors and its committees are open to the public. The chair of the Faculty Senate sits as a non-voting representative to the full Board. The voting membership of the General Faculty (see [Section 1.3.1](#)) shall elect a non-voting representative to all standing committees of the Board, except the Audit Committee (see below). To accomplish this, the Faculty Senate shall conduct elections biennially. The candidates will come from the voting membership of the General Faculty. The Faculty Senate will notify the Rector of the outcome of the election. A separate faculty member may be selected by the Board to serve as a nonvoting, faculty liaison to the Audit Committee. No faculty member may serve concurrently on more than one committee. No faculty member can serve more than three consecutive 2-year terms, although subsequent reelection is permitted.

1.2 Administrative Organization

1.2.1 The President

The Board of Visitors appoints the President of the University, who serves at its pleasure. The President is the chief executive officer of the University and reports to the Rector and Board of Visitors. As chief executive officer, the President is charged with carrying out the policies of the Board and providing leadership to the University's faculty, staff, and students in achieving major objectives. Within guidelines established by the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Board of Visitors, the President is in charge of day-to-day administration and operation of the University.

1.2.2 The Provost

The Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost (hereafter abbreviated as Provost) is the chief academic officer of the University and is responsible for all educational matters. The Provost is appointed by the President and serves at the President's pleasure.

The Provost functions as the liaison to the Faculty Senate for the university administration and has a primary responsibility to keep the Faculty Senate informed about new initiatives as well as ongoing developments within the University. The Provost implements this function in a manner that promotes the highest levels of faculty participation in the shared governance of the University.

1.2.3 Executive Council and President's Council

The Executive Council is the President's advisory group. Members of the Executive Council have overall responsibility for monitoring university projects and for sharing information about major developments.

The President's Council includes senior members of the university administration and the chair of the Faculty Senate. Its function is to keep members informed about initiatives and activities, and to participate in discussions of basic policy.

More information about organizational structure of the central administration is available on the Mason website at <http://administration.gmu.edu/>.

1.2.4 Academic Deans as Members of the Central Administration

Collegiate or school Deans function in a dual capacity: they are the principal representatives of the organizational units and faculties within their charge, but they are also members of the central administration. As members of the central administration, they are appointed by the President, serve at the President's pleasure, and report to the Provost.

1.2.5 Faculty Participation in the Selection of Certain Members of the Central Administration

The faculty plays a vital role in the appointment and reappointment of senior academic administrators and other leadership positions related to the academic mission of the university.

The Board of Visitors provides for participation on presidential search committees by faculty who are elected by the General Faculty. The search and selection process must include opportunities for the General Faculty to meet with candidates who are finalists for the presidency. The Board of Visitors also provides for participation in the process of presidential reappointments or contract extensions by faculty who are elected by the General Faculty. This process includes an opportunity for the General Faculty to meet with the President to discuss his or her achievements and future plans for the university.

The President provides for faculty participation on search and reappointment committees for the Provost by faculty who are elected by the General Faculty. The search and selection process must include opportunities for the General Faculty to meet with the Provost or with candidates who are finalists for the Provost position.

The Provost provides for participation on search and reappointment committees for college/school Deans by faculty who are elected from and by the faculty of the college/school in which the appointment will occur. The search and selection process must include opportunities for the college/school faculty to meet with the Dean or with candidates who are finalists for the position.

The Faculty Senate will assist in conducting elections by the General Faculty.

1.3 Faculty Organization

The faculty conducts its work and participates in institutional governance at the University level, the college/school level, and the level of the local academic unit (defined in [Section 1.3.6](#)). The faculty is organized accordingly, to provide for the exercise of its responsibilities at all three levels, as described in Sections 1.3.1 through 1.3.6 below. In accordance with the best traditions of American universities, the faculty plays a primary role in two types of determinations: the University's academic offerings and faculty personnel actions. The faculty also plays a vital role in academic organization and institutional change.

1.3.1 The General Faculty

The General Faculty consists of all faculty who have full-time instructional, research, or clinical appointments. The General Faculty participates in governance at the university level.

Meetings of the General Faculty are scheduled by the President of the University, who serves as presiding officer. If at least 10% of the voting membership petitions for a called meeting of the General Faculty, the President is obliged to schedule it within thirty days, or within ten days if the purpose of the call is to consider modification of the authority the General Faculty has granted the Faculty Senate; or reversal of specific decisions of the Senate; or amending the Senate charter. All members of the General Faculty have voting rights on matters that pertain to the General Faculty. All members of the University community may attend meetings of the General Faculty and participate in the debate of matters that come before it.

Without relinquishing the generality of its powers, The General Faculty delegates by Charter to the Faculty Senate the responsibility for shared academic governance at the university level. Only those faculty who have instructional appointments – tenured, tenure-track, term, or adjunct – may be elected to the Faculty Senate.

1.3.2 The Faculty Senate

Under powers delegated to it by the General Faculty, the Faculty Senate is the principal faculty advisory body to the President. It has particular responsibility for the formulation of university-wide academic policies and is the principal voice of the faculty in matters affecting the faculty generally. It advises the President and other members of the central administration concerning matters that affect the welfare of the University as a whole.

The principal function of the Faculty Senate is to represent the faculty on all academic and governance issues not internal to any single college/school, including, but not limited to, curricular matters, matters concerning terms and conditions of faculty employment, and matters of academic organization and institutional change. In these matters, the Provost and Senate will consult during the process of planning and implementing changes. To ensure timely consultation about these and other matters, the Provost meets regularly with the Senate's executive committee. Meetings with the President and/or other members of the central administration occur as needed.

The Senate meets at least monthly during the fall and spring semesters. Meetings of the Senate are open to all members of the university community, who may speak to any item of business on

the agenda. Only members of the Senate, however, may introduce motions and vote. The Faculty Senate deliberates in a respectful and open manner, consistent with existing principles of university discourse.

1.3.3 Colleges and Schools

The colleges and schools of the University are communities of teaching, learning, research and scholarship, and service established by the faculty and administration and approved by the Board of Visitors. They house faculties and programs representing shared educational interests, and may or may not be sub-divided into departments. Colleges may also be subdivided into schools.

As an organizational unit the college/school meets four functional criteria: (i) it has a tenured and tenure-track faculty directly and specifically appointed to it or to its departments by the Board of Visitors; (ii) its faculty establishes degree requirements; authorizes the conferral of degrees; proposes, reviews and approves courses and programs; actively participates in decisions concerning the creation, reorganization and dissolution of units within the college/school; and plays a key role in faculty personnel actions such as appointments, promotion, and granting tenure; (iii) it has an instructional budget that includes FTE funds for the payment of its faculty's salaries as well as funds for goods and services in support of its academic programs and other activities; and (iv) its chief administrative officer is a Dean who reports directly to the Provost.

The faculties of colleges/schools, together with their Deans, determine the processes and procedures of governance they will employ, consistent, with the provisions of the Faculty Handbook. All colleges/schools, and if so sub-divided, each of their departments, must act in accordance with the best traditions of the academic profession and within the following guidelines, which prescribe that they

- a. operate in an open and democratic manner;
- b. define their own voting membership;
- c. adopt bylaws or standing rules that are published and made available to all members and that undergo periodic review and that include procedures and define eligibility for faculty participation in the activities specified in this Handbook;
- d. meet often enough to ensure good communication and the timely conduct of business;
- e. hold meetings that follow an agenda distributed in advance;
- f. record the proceedings of the meetings in minutes that are distributed to and approved by the faculty.

1.3.4 Academic Institutes

An academic institute is an organizational unit of the University that fosters interdisciplinary activities that transcend the disciplines based in any single college/school. In addition to research and scholarship and service activities, institutes offer interdisciplinary academic programs that do not duplicate those of other academic units. Academic institutes are also analogous to schools or colleges in that they have a nucleus of full-time faculty appointed directly and specifically to primary affiliation in them.

In addition, academic institutes may have (i) faculty who are assigned to work in them (full- or part-time) but who are affiliated primarily with other local academic units; and (ii) part-time faculty whose work in the University is solely in the institute. Of sufficient size to ensure a sense of community and responsible faculty governance, the faculty of an institute establishes degree requirements; authorizes the conferral of degrees; proposes, reviews, and approves courses and programs; and plays a primary role in faculty personnel actions.

Administratively, the director of an institute is regarded as the equivalent of a Dean, and is therefore expected to possess appropriate academic credentials or their equivalent. Institute directors report directly to the Provost.

An institute has an instructional budget that includes FTE funds for the payment of its faculty's salaries as well as funds for goods and services in support of its academic programs and other activities.

The faculties of academic institutes define their own voting membership. Together with their directors, they determine the processes and procedures of governance they will employ, but all institutes must follow the guidelines applicable to schools and colleges set forth in [Section 1.3.3](#).

For a description of non-academic "Research Institutes," see [Section 1.3.11](#).

1.3.5 Academic Departments

In such colleges/schools as may be subdivided administratively to reflect disciplinary differences and intellectual traditions, the academic department is the local unit of faculty organization. Departments are established to carry out programs of instruction, research and scholarship, and public service in particular fields of knowledge. Accordingly, they are organized on the basis of disciplines or fields of study.

Departmental faculties determine their own voting membership. Together with their chairs, they determine the processes and procedures of governance they will employ, but all departments must follow the guidelines applicable to colleges/schools set forth in [Section 1.3.3](#).

1.3.6 Definition of Local Academic Units (LAU) and Primary Affiliation

The term "local academic unit" refers to an academic department or to a college/school without departments. In this *Handbook* the chief administrative officers of local academic units are generically called "local unit administrators."

Although a faculty member's tenure resides in the University as a whole (see [Section 2.1.1](#)), in recognition of disciplinary qualifications and for purposes of governance, tenure-track and tenured faculty are appointed directly and specifically to one or more local academic units. Term faculty are also appointed directly and specifically to one or more local academic units. The status established by such an appointment to a local academic unit is called "primary affiliation." Primary affiliation in one local academic unit does not preclude the possibility of additional part-time or full-time assignments to other local academic units. An appointment to primary affiliation requires the concurrence of the faculty of the local academic unit to which the

appointment is to be made and may not be transferred from one local academic unit to another except with the concurrence of the faculty of the unit to which a transfer is proposed.

The local level of governance is the most important in the University for the faculty's direct exercise of professional and peer judgment. Faculties of local academic units actively participate in decision-making about academic matters, matters of faculty status, and organizational and institutional change. They have primary responsibility for such academic matters as unit reorganization, the design of programs, development and alteration of the curriculum, standards for admission to programs, and requirements in the major. They play a primary role in such matters of faculty status as the recruitment and initial appointment of new faculty; the reappointment, promotion, tenure, and post-tenure review of members; and in the case of departments, the selection of the department chair.

1.3.7 Colleges and Schools without Departments

Colleges and schools without departments provide simultaneously for faculty governance at the collegiate level (as described in [Section 1.3.3](#)) and at the local level. In carrying out their function as local academic units, such colleges/schools will operate analogously to departments (as described in [Sections 1.3.4](#) and [1.3.5](#)).

1.3.8 The Graduate Council

The Graduate Council, established by the General Faculty, oversees the conduct of graduate education. It establishes the general norms within which local academic units offer graduate degree programs; reviews and acts upon new graduate degree proposals; authorizes the conferral of graduate degrees; participates in the periodic evaluation of graduate programs and the periodic review of academic policy and admissions policies and procedures; and performs other functions as requested by the office of the Provost.

The Graduate Council establishes the specific means of conducting its own business. Like colleges/schools and departments, however, it must act within the guidelines set forth in [Section 1.3.3](#).

1.3.9 Multidisciplinary or Interdisciplinary Programs

Most academic programs are offered by local academic units and are therefore administered and governed by the faculties of such units.

Some multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary programs are offered by faculties drawn from more than a single local academic unit. These faculty members do not hold primary affiliation in those programs but rather, in one or more local academic units (see [Section 1.3.6](#)). For purposes of personnel decisions regarding appointment, promotion and tenure, these faculty members are evaluated primarily by their peers in the local units of which they are a part, but with the requirement that recommendations from the multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary program faculty with which they are associated will be given due consideration.

Academic programs which are not internal to a single local academic unit are administered by a program director. This director is regarded as the equivalent of a department chair and is therefore expected to possess equivalent academic credentials. Such program directors normally report to a Dean. If the program transcends the boundaries of a single college/school, the program director reports to the Provost.

Program faculty define their own voting membership. Together with their directors, they determine the procedures of governance they will employ, but all program faculties must act within the guidelines set forth in [Section 1.3.3](#).

1.3.10 Centers

A center is a unit of the University intended to advance the University's mission of research and/or public service. Normally housed within a department or college/school, a center does not develop or administer academic degree programs, nor does it possess instructional faculty appointed to primary affiliation with it. Centers may require the presence of research, clinical, and/or professional faculty whose affiliation with the center is subject to the availability of research funds. Faculty appointed to a center under externally funded grants or contracts may not receive tenure-track or tenured appointments through the center. A center is chartered for a specific period of time by the Provost on the recommendation of appropriate faculty and Dean(s). Renewal of a center's charter, when called for, is subject to favorable review of a center's performance and accomplishments

A center is administered by a director who serves at will and who is appointed by the local unit administrator of the unit within which the center is housed. Whenever possible, centers are expected to derive most of their operating budgets from a source or sources other than state appropriations.

1.3.11 Research Institutes

When the size and scope of a center's funding, personnel, and potential societal contributions grow to a level that is well beyond the parameters of a typical center, or when a new unit with this profile is initiated, that unit may be classified as a research institute.

Research institutes have the same defining features as centers with the following exceptions: (i) the overall volume and/or complexity of activity is substantially larger, as evidenced, for example, by the number of faculty affiliated with the unit, the range of projects undertaken, or the amount of funding invested in the unit; and (ii) the mission must include a broad social purpose focused directly on the betterment of the human condition.

The term "research institute" is reserved for special cases where there are clear and compelling reasons to provide a distinctive label for that unit. To ensure that this guideline is respected, the process for chartering a research institute must include opportunities for center directors, academic unit heads, and the Faculty Senate to review and comment on chartering proposals before a classification decision is made.

CHAPTER II. FACULTY PERSONNEL MATTERS

2.1 Faculty Appointments

This section defines the various types of faculty appointment at George Mason University.

2.1.1 Tenured Appointment

Although the word "tenure" does not appear in the Code of Virginia, the University grants "election without term." As used in a faculty member's employment contract, the word "tenure" has the same meaning as "election without term". The University defines tenure as the right to continued employment unless separated from the University under conditions outlined in [Section 2.9](#) of this document. For the University, tenure is a major safeguard of academic freedom, of the quality of education offered here, and of the continuity and stability of the institution. For the faculty member on whom tenure is conferred, it is a privilege granted by the University to those who have consistently demonstrated their value to the institution over an extended period of time. Faculty on instructional tenured appointments normally hold the rank of Associate Professor or Professor.

Tenure, once conferred, resides in the University, and is not affected by the reorganization of academic units. In the event of program discontinuation or financial exigency, the institution will make a good faith effort to protect and retain its tenured faculty members and to provide them with opportunities for professional development and training for other roles in the University.

2.1.2 Tenure-Track Appointment

This is an instructional faculty appointment for a fixed term in which service is applied to consideration for tenure. These appointments are issued for terms of up to three years. The University can, but is not required to, renew such appointments for additional terms up to a total of six years of service (not counting any time period off the tenure clock). Faculty on tenure-track appointments may hold the rank of Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, or Professor.

Faculty in their sixth year of tenure-track service at George Mason University stand for tenure at that time if they wish to retain their position beyond the seventh year (see [Section 2.7.2](#) for policy on notification to faculty terminated for failure to receive tenure). Earlier consideration for a tenured appointment is possible under certain conditions. For example, experienced faculty hired on tenure-track appointments from other institutions will not normally be expected to serve a six-year tenure-track period, although there is no requirement that they stand for tenure prior to their sixth year of tenure-track service at George Mason University. Exceptionally, other faculty may be suggested for early consideration based on unusually strong performance. Unsuccessful tenure evaluations for faculty prior to their sixth year of tenure-track service do not reduce the six-year tenure-track period.

2.1.3 Term Appointments

Full-time faculty on fixed-term, non-tenure-track appointments are known as Term Faculty. Term faculty whose assignments focus primarily on teaching are appointed as instructional

faculty. Term faculty whose assignments focus primarily on research are appointed as research faculty. Term faculty whose assignments focus primarily on clinical practice are appointed as clinical faculty.

Term faculty may be offered single-year or multi-year contracts up to a maximum of 5 years. Service in such positions cannot be applied to consideration for tenure, although a faculty member holding this kind of appointment can subsequently be considered for a tenure-track or tenured appointment. (See [Sections 2.3.2](#) and [2.3.3](#).)

Term faculty appointments include appropriate academic rank as judged by the appointing local academic unit and subject to the approval of the Dean and Provost. Term faculty with a terminal degree are eligible for promotion in rank normally after six years of service.

Instructional term faculty may hold one of the following titles: Term Instructor, Term Assistant Professor, Term Associate Professor, or Term Professor. Research-oriented term faculty may hold one of the following titles: Research Instructor, Research Assistant Professor, Research Associate Professor, or Research Professor. Clinical-oriented term faculty may hold one of the following titles: Clinical Instructor, Clinical Assistant Professor, Clinical Associate Professor, or Clinical Professor.

Term faculty on single-year appointments whose permanent employment is with another organization hold title with the prefix of “Visiting.”

2.1.4 Part-Time Appointment

Term faculty who are appointed to less than full-time positions are called part-time faculty. Their assignments may include research, service, clinical practice, administrative program development, or instructional responsibilities that go beyond the boundaries of specific courses. Part-time term faculty positions are governed by the same appointment, rank, and title requirements as full-time term faculty positions. The Dean is the final approval level for part-time faculty appointments, and the maximum length of a part-time term faculty position is one year. Exceptions require the approval of the Provost. Part-time faculty are not voting members of the General Faculty.

2.1.5 Adjunct Appointment

Adjunct Faculty are employees appointed to fulfill the teaching and advising responsibilities associated with a specific course (or a set of specified courses) in a specific semester.

Adjunct Faculty are not voting members of the General Faculty and are not covered by the provisions of this Handbook.

2.1.6 Postdoctoral Research Fellows

Postdoctoral Research Fellows are employees governed by the Postdoctoral Research Fellows Policy. Postdoctoral Research Fellows are not covered by the provisions of the Faculty Handbook.

2.1.7 Affiliate Faculty

The University recognizes two types of affiliate faculty, neither of which is governed by the Faculty Handbook.

Affiliate Faculty

Faculty with teaching, research, service, or administrative assignments who are not employed by the University may be designated with the honorific title of Affiliate Faculty. Recommendations for affiliate faculty appointments are initiated by a local academic unit and must be approved by the Provost. Affiliate faculty appointments are honorific only and carry no employee status.

University Affiliate

Faculty who are employed by the University may be designated with the honorific title of University Affiliate. University affiliate appointments are initiated and approved by a local academic unit. University affiliate status is considered secondary to the faculty's primary appointment as described in [Section 1.3.6](#).

2.1.8 Academic Year Appointments and Fiscal Year Appointments

Academic Year Appointments (9 Months)

Academic year instructional appointments extend over the 9-month period from two weeks prior to the beginning of classes in the Fall semester until two weeks after the end of classes in the Spring semester (Governor's Consolidated Salary Authorization). The 9-month interval during which salary and benefits are paid is from August 25 through May 24. Assignments requiring significant work by faculty outside this time period should be compensated. Faculty on academic-year appointments who work less than the full 9-month period will be paid the appropriate percentage of their full 9-month salary.

Fiscal Year Appointments (12 months)

Faculty who are required to perform duties year-round are placed on 12-month or fiscal year appointments. Faculty on fiscal year appointments who work less than the full 12-month period will be paid the appropriate percentage of the full 12-month salary.

For faculty who convert from an academic year appointment to a fiscal year appointment, the conversion factor of 1.2222222222 will be used to establish the new base salary. For faculty who convert from a fiscal year appointment to an academic year appointment, the conversion factor of .8181818181 will be used to establish the new base salary.

2.1.9 Faculty with Governance Responsibilities

Faculty possess governance responsibilities in local academic units in which they hold primary affiliation and in the larger units of which their local academic units are a part. Local academic

units and collegiate units may also choose to extend voting rights to other faculty who are employed in those units. For purposes of participation in governance beyond the local and collegiate levels, the General Faculty is defined in [Section 1.3.1](#).

2.2 Faculty Ranks

2.2.1 Instructor

An instructor holds the master's degree or equivalent academic and/or professional qualifications. Instructors do not receive tenure-track appointments; therefore, time spent in this rank is not counted as part of the period for consideration for tenure.

2.2.2 Assistant Professor

An assistant professor normally holds the terminal degree in the discipline or field and gives promise of excellence in teaching and/or research and scholarship.

2.2.3 Associate Professor

An associate professor must have met the University's established criteria for advancement in rank as specified in [Section 2.3.3](#) Criteria and Procedures for Appointment, Reappointment, and Promotion of Term Faculty and [Section 2.4](#) Criteria for Evaluation of Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty. New appointees to the rank of associate professor must have demonstrated equivalent qualifications which give reasonable assurance that such criteria will be prospectively met. Additional information regarding evaluation of faculty can be found in [Section 2.5](#) Procedures for Evaluation of Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty.

2.2.4 Professor

A professor must have met the university's established criteria for advancement to the highest rank of the professoriate as specified in [Section 2.3.3](#) Criteria and Procedures for Appointment, Reappointment, and Promotion of Term Faculty and [Section 2.4](#) Criteria for Evaluation of Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty. New appointees to the rank of professor must have demonstrated equivalent qualifications which give reasonable assurance that such criteria will be prospectively met. Additional information regarding evaluation of faculty can be found in [Section 2.5](#) Procedures for Evaluation of Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty.

2.2.5 University Professor

From time to time the University will encounter opportunities to recognize current members of the faculty or appoint to its faculty women and men of great national or international reputation. The rank of University Professor is reserved for such eminent individuals. University Professors are appointed by the President and the Board of Visitors with the advice and consent of a standing committee appointed by the Provost.

University Professor appointments are normally reserved for full professors. The criteria for such appointments include substantial research or scholarship or arts credentials, as appropriate to the discipline.

2.2.6 Distinguished Service Professor

Distinguished Service Professors are recognized as individuals whose careers have had a major impact on their field or on the university community that goes well beyond ordinary levels of service. Normally, such individuals are recommended by a Dean and appointed by the Provost.

Such appointments are normally reserved for full professors. The criteria for granting the rank of distinguished service professor includes extraordinary level of impact, sustained contributions to the good of the university and the academic unit, and/or significant contributions to the field that extend beyond the boundaries of the university.

2.2.7 Emeritus Faculty

Upon retirement from George Mason University, full-time Associate and Full Professors with ten or more years of continuous academic service may be recommended to the Board of Visitors for election to the honorary rank of Emeritus/Emerita in recognition of outstanding dedication to the university. A letter reviewing the candidate's history of teaching, research and scholarship, and service at Mason is normally initiated by the individual's LAU. The letter is forwarded to the LAU Dean, the Provost and the President for accompanying recommendations.

2.2.8 Administrators Holding Faculty Rank

Each person appointed to an administrative/professional faculty position is assigned an academic rank. Initial appointment will normally be at the rank of Instructor. Individuals holding a terminal degree may be appointed at the rank of Assistant Professor. An academic unit and the Provost may together confer academic rank beyond Assistant Professor when appropriate. As exceptions, certain senior administrative positions will be assigned the rank of at least Associate Professor in keeping with the executive status of their position. Assignment of rank must be in accordance with *The Commonwealth of Virginia's Consolidated Salary Authorization for Faculty Positions in Institutions of Higher Education, 2001-2002*. (The assignment of rank to administrative/professional faculty does not confer, nor does time assigned to administrative/professional duties contribute to, tenure.)

Instructional faculty who are appointed to administrative/professional faculty positions, if tenured, retain their tenured status while so serving.

If on a term appointment, the faculty member has no automatic right to return to his or her previous instructional, research, or clinical faculty position.

2.3 Recruitment and Appointment of Faculty

2.3.1 Policies on Recruitment and Appointment of Faculty

The Board of Visitors has full authority over faculty personnel matters, including faculty appointments. To carry out this function effectively, the Board selects a President, who appoints other academic administrators. Academic administrators share responsibility with the faculty for ensuring that appropriate standards are fostered; that equity and due process are the rule; that judgments in the selection, retention, and promotion of faculty are in the best long-term interests of the University; and that equal opportunity and fair employment practices are followed.

Initial review and evaluation of qualifications are carried out by eligible faculty in the local academic unit to which the candidate is to be appointed. Faculty recommendations for appointment are forwarded to the Dean of the academic unit in which the appointment is to be made. If concurring with the faculty recommendations, the Dean will forward them to the Provost.

2.3.1.1 Favoritism in Personnel Decisions

Favoritism, or the appearance of it, can undermine the trust that members of the university community place in personnel decisions as well as the public interest which the university serves. A personnel decision involving a family member or close personal relationship of a faculty member or administrator requires particular scrutiny and safeguards.

No faculty member or administrator who has reasonably questionable objectivity in the employment status of another employee may participate in the hiring, supervision, promotion, or evaluation of such employee. Every employee of the university has a continuing affirmative obligation to disclose to his or her supervisor(s) any relationship that may reasonably affect their objectivity in such matters.

If a faculty member or administrator might exercise or appear to exercise control over any personnel action associated with a person with whom he or she has a family or close personal relationship, the supervisor of the faculty member or administrator must designate a disinterested person to substitute for the individual who might have a personal interest. Additional safeguards may also be required if colleagues or subordinates of the individual with a personal interest are involved in those personnel actions. "Appearance of exercising control" includes but is not limited to assigning responsibility for personnel actions or supervision to a colleague or subordinate. If the personnel action involves a faculty member or administrator in a local academic unit, the faculty in that unit and all other interested parties must be fully apprised of the relationship and the safeguards that have been taken to ensure that the individual with a relationship is not involved in the personnel decision.

Relationships constituting a personal interest under the Conflict of Interest Act (S2.2-3100, *et seq.*), of the Code of Virginia will be handled by the Board of Visitors in accordance with the Act. Family or other relationships reasonably suggesting favoritism under this provision will be fully disclosed to the Board of Visitors incident to promotion, tenure, and hiring decisions. Prior to consideration of a personnel action involving a family member or other relationship reasonably suggesting favoritism, the Provost, or his or her designee, will fully apprise the Board

of Visitors of the relationship and the safeguards taken to ensure that the individual with a personal interest was not involved in the action. Only after the Board is satisfied that the present policy was implemented and that safeguards were adequate should the personnel action be approved.

2.3.2 Procedures for Recruitment and Appointment of Tenured, Tenure-Track, and Term Faculty

Requests for new faculty appointments to allocated positions normally originate with the local unit administrator, acting upon the recommendation of the unit's faculty. In particular, the administrator seeks the assistance of the faculty in defining the requirements of the position to be filled and the qualifications to be sought in the appointee. Authorization from the appropriate Dean and the Provost is necessary before a search is initiated to fill a vacancy or a new position. In unusual cases a waiver of the search process may be requested by the local unit administrator or Dean.

Before extending an offer of appointment, the local unit administrator must secure the concurrence of the unit's eligible faculty as specified in the following procedures, the relevant Dean, the Provost, and the Office of Compliance, Diversity and Ethics.

All full-time faculty receive letters of appointment specifying terms of employment and stating that such employment is governed by the administrative policies and regulations of the University (currently in force and as amended in the future). Acceptance in writing of these letters constitutes a contract between the University and each individual faculty member. Letters of initial appointment for faculty also indicate the expiration date of terms of appointment. All written offers of appointment must include the elements specified in the appropriate offer letter template located on the Mason website.

2.3.2.1 Competitive Appointments

In accordance with its bylaws or standing rules ([Section 1.3.3](#)), the local academic unit establishes a faculty committee to advise and assist the local unit administrator in carrying out a search. After receiving appropriate training from the Office of Compliance, Diversity, and Ethics, this committee reviews applicant credentials and makes recommendations regarding potential finalists for the position. All eligible faculty of the local academic unit will be provided with an opportunity to review the candidates' application materials, to meet with the candidates, and to attend job seminars or formal presentations by the candidates. The search committee then formulates a recommendation that includes the opinions of the eligible faculty. The local unit administrator transmits the faculty recommendation, together with her or his own, to the Dean or to the Provost, as applicable. The faculty shall be apprised in writing of the local academic unit administrator's recommendation at the time of its transmittal.

2.3.2.2 Non-competitive Appointments

Noncompetitive or direct appointments are appointments in which the search process is waived when appointing term, tenured, and tenure-track faculty. Competitive searches for tenured, tenure-track, and term faculty must be used except in very special circumstances. These

circumstances are normally limited to situations in which (a) the candidate has already established a national/international reputation, the program has a unique opportunity to appoint the targeted candidate, and the area of specialization complements those of faculty already in the program; (b) the candidate is a spouse or partner of a candidate being appointed through formal search procedures and the university is attempting to accommodate her or him; or (c) an administrator is appointed and is considered for acceptance in a specific local academic unit. While an administrator is normally appointed using a competitive process at the administrative level, this policy applies because s/he is not part of a competitive process at the LAU level. Instructional term faculty may also be appointed without a search when classes must be staffed immediately due to unexpected circumstances. Waiver of a search in this situation is only valid for one year.

Eligible faculty in the LAU review the credentials of any individual who is a candidate for a noncompetitive appointment using the same procedures as those used to review candidates for competitive appointments. The appointment process moves forward only when a majority of the LAU faculty who are eligible to vote accept the candidate.

In the unusual case of an existing term faculty member seeking a noncompetitive appointment to a tenure-track position, the appointment process moves forward only when no fewer than two-thirds (2/3) of the LAU faculty who are eligible to vote accept the candidate.

2.3.2.3 Awarding of Tenure at the Time of Appointment

If a candidate is to be appointed without term, the appointment procedure is conducted as specified for competitive ([Section 2.3.2.1](#)) or non-competitive ([Section 2.3.2.2](#)) appointments. Following an affirmative decision to appoint, the eligible faculty consider whether to recommend tenure in a first-level review in conformance with [Section 2.7.3](#) Procedures for Promotion and Tenure.

The recommendation is then sent to the second-level college/school promotion and tenure committee. Independent external letters from recognized experts in the candidate's field must be obtained in a manner consistent with other tenure reviews, and candidates are held to the same standards as other candidates in that LAU. Since such appointments may be made outside the normal annual promotion and tenure cycle, college/school promotion and tenure committees must establish and follow procedures for promptly reviewing candidates out of cycle.

2.3.3 Criteria and Procedures for Appointment, Reappointment, and Promotion of Term Faculty

Term faculty appointments will be explicitly designated as such, and offer letters must clearly state the type and length of appointment, as well as the focus of the appointment, whether instructional, research, or clinical. Some specific administrative or service functions may be attached to the instructional, research, or clinical focus.

Term faculty may be offered single-year or multi-year contracts up to a maximum of 5 years. Multi-year term faculty normally hold a terminal degree, as defined by standards in the discipline. Exceptions to either contract length or terminal degree requirements must be

approved by the Provost. For initial appointments, the maximum contract length for term assistant professors is three years and for term associate and full professors it is five years. Such contracts automatically expire at the end of the contract period, and although a faculty member may be reappointed, there is no guarantee or right to reappointment from one contract to the next, whether single-year or multi-year.

If a multi-year appointment is offered to a faculty member whose position relies entirely or partially on non-state appropriated funding, then a multi-year contract may be established subject to the continuing availability of funding throughout the contract period. Both the university and the term faculty member retain the option to request a change from a multi-year contract to a single-year contract. This action must be endorsed by the respective Dean and approved by the Provost.

Term faculty cannot move to a tenure-track or tenured position, either as a direct appointment or as a result of a search, without prior approval of the Provost. [See [Section 2.3.2.](#)] Prior service on a fixed-term, externally-funded appointment is not applied to tenure consideration unless specified in the tenure-track letter of appointment.

Tenure-track faculty cannot move to a term position, either as a direct appointment or as a result of a search, without prior approval of the Provost. [See [Section 2.3.2.](#)] This procedure will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

A maximum of 35% of all Instructional Term Faculty within the University may be on multi-year contracts and a maximum of 25% of all full-time Instructional Faculty within the University may be Term Faculty.

2.3.3.1 Reappointment

The terms “reappoint” or “reappointment” in this Handbook mean offering a term faculty member a contract for an additional term or terms, which may include the same or different duties and responsibilities. Term assistant professors may receive a one, two or three-year reappointment. Term associate and full professors may be reappointed to contracts of up to five years.

Term faculty on single-year contracts will be evaluated annually for reappointment. Term faculty on multi-year contracts will be evaluated for reappointment during the final year of their contract appointments. Term faculty are evaluated by the local unit administrator and/or a local academic unit faculty committee. Criteria for reappointment will emphasize strong performance in those areas designated in the initial and any subsequent contract letters. Based on that evaluation and programmatic needs, the Dean will recommend whether or not to reappoint.

Recommendations for instructional term faculty are due to the Provost usually by November 1st of the final year of the current contract. For research and clinical term faculty, this recommendation is usually due no later than 5 months prior to the last day of the contract term.

The Provost will make the final determination and notify instructional term faculty members, in writing, usually no later than 3 months prior to the last day of the term of their initial contracts, and usually no later than 5 months prior to the last day of the term of subsequent contracts. The Provost will make the final determination and notify research and clinical term faculty members, in writing, usually no later than 3 months prior to the last day of the term of their contracts.

2.3.3.2 Promotion

A term faculty member may be considered for promotion, normally after five years of service. Promotion may occur within the period of a multi-year contract.

Candidates for promotion to associate professor must demonstrate at least high competence in the focus area (instructional, research, or clinical) by the standards developed by the local academic unit and approved by the Provost. Candidates for promotion to full professor must demonstrate genuine excellence in the focus area (instructional, research, or clinical) by the standards developed by the local academic unit and approved by the Provost. The recommendation for promotion is due to the Provost by November 1st.

By the end of fall semester (no later than December 15th), the Provost will notify the faculty member, in writing, of a decision whether or not to recommend promotion.

Term faculty who are promoted will be announced to the Board of Visitors.

2.4 Criteria for Evaluation of Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty

Recommendations on matters of faculty status (e.g., initial appointment, renewal, promotion, the conferral of tenure, and termination) are in large measure a faculty responsibility. The faculty's role in these personnel actions is based upon the essentiality of its judgment to sound educational policy, and upon the fact that scholars in a particular field have the chief competence for judging the work of their colleagues. An additional reason for the faculty's role in these matters is the general competence of experienced faculty personnel committees with a broader charge that encompasses the evaluation of teaching and service. Implicit in such competence is the acknowledgment that responsibility exists for both adverse and favorable judgments.

Recommendations in these matters originate through faculty action in accordance with established procedures; are reviewed by senior academic administrators; and presented to the Board of Visitors for final approval. The administration should overturn faculty personnel recommendations rarely, and only when it is clear that peer faculty have not applied appropriate standards, or when the University's long-term programmatic needs are an overriding consideration. Only in extraordinary circumstances and for clearly stated reasons should administrators substitute their own judgment of the value of scholarly accomplishments for judgments made by faculty.

Candidates for renewal, promotion and tenure will be evaluated in light of the missions of the University which are teaching; research and scholarship, both theoretical and applied; and service (as defined in [Section 2.4.3](#)). Peer review plays a central role in the evaluation of individual achievement in each of these areas. Although candidates are not expected to have

equal levels of commitment or equal responsibilities in each of these areas, high competence is expected. Genuine excellence must be exhibited either in teaching or in research/scholarship. High competence must be exhibited in both areas. The primary consideration in the evaluation of the candidate's achievements will be the extent to which these continue to improve the academic quality of the University.

Levels of expectation will vary with the type of decision. While tenure-track appointments will, to some extent, recognize perceived potential rather than achievement, appointment without term or promotion in rank will be based on achievement rather than potential. Appointment without term should leave no doubt about the candidate's value to the University over an extended period.

As defined above, candidates need to exhibit levels of competence and excellence in teaching, research and scholarship, and service. In addition, candidates for tenure and promotion to the rank of associate professor must provide evidence that their contributions in their area(s) of genuine excellence have had some significant impact beyond the boundaries of this University. If the primary strength is teaching, there should be evidence that the candidate's contributions have influence beyond the immediate classroom; if in theoretical or applied research and scholarship, there should be evidence that the candidate's contributions have significant influence on colleagues at other institutions in this country, and where applicable, abroad.

Candidates seeking promotion to the rank of full professor must maintain high competence in teaching, research and scholarship, and service while also maintaining genuine excellence in teaching and/or research and scholarship. In addition, evidence of significant impact beyond the boundaries of the University must be much more substantial than in cases involving tenure or promotion to the rank of associate professor. Clear and convincing evidence must be provided of an established external reputation in the primary field, based on consequential achievements in teaching, research and scholarship, or professional activities directly related to teaching and research and scholarship.

In addition, evaluation for promotion or tenure should consider the candidate's adherence to professional ethics (see [Section 2.10.2](#)).

Only the criteria described in this handbook can be used in evaluations of faculty.

2.4.1 Teaching

Effective teaching is demonstrated by the clarity, appropriateness, and efficacy of course materials, methods and presentations, and by successful learning outcomes. Contributions to teaching include the development and implementation of new courses and programs; the development of instructional materials, including applications of new technologies; the training and supervision of teaching assistants; mentoring graduate students; clinical and field supervision of students; and student advising.

2.4.2 Research and Scholarship

Scholarly achievement is demonstrated by original publications and peer reviewed contributions to the advancement of the discipline/field of study or the integration of the discipline with other fields; by original research, artistic work, software and media, exhibitions, and performance; and by the application of discipline- or field-based knowledge to the practice of a profession.

2.4.3 University and Professional Service

Annual evaluations and decisions on reappointment, promotion and tenure will be influenced by the extent of the candidate's service to the University. All full-time faculty are expected to participate as part of their professional responsibilities in governance and operational activities outside the classroom. Required university service includes, but is not limited to, such activity as attendance at faculty meetings and participation in faculty personnel matters and curriculum development. University service beyond that which is required of all faculty members will be given positive weight in personnel decisions. Each local academic unit will make known in a timely manner its requirements concerning the minimum acceptable level of university service and its policies concerning positive weight to be given for intramural service in excess of that minimum requirement.

Professional service is demonstrated by contributions to recognized societies and associations that promote research and scholarship and by consultancies and cooperative projects that make the faculty member's discipline or field-based knowledge and skills available to individuals, groups or agencies outside the University. Local academic units will develop and disseminate in a timely manner (i) specific discipline- or field-based expectations regarding the types of professional service that will be considered appropriate as evidence in annual evaluations and for reappointment, promotion and tenure cases; and (ii) the criteria to be used in assessing the quality of this service.

2.5 Procedures for Evaluation of Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty

2.5.1 Teaching

Local academic units regularly evaluate the teaching effectiveness of their faculty. In doing so, they are expected to incorporate data from both peers and students. Whatever additional methods may be used to gather information from students, the process should provide for their anonymous participation in course evaluations and should allow for comparisons among faculty teaching similar courses. Peer evaluation is expected to include, at a minimum, data on the development and implementation of new courses and programs, the appropriateness of course materials currently used, the level and quality of student advising, and learning outcomes. Additional forms of peer evaluation are expected. These may include, but are not limited to, peer observation of classroom teaching, evaluations by mentors, assessments of teaching performance by colleagues, and teaching portfolios.

The evaluation process requires both quantitative and qualitative data. The methods by which such data are gathered and incorporated into the final evaluation should be well-defined and made available to those who are being evaluated, as well as to those who are using the evaluations in personnel decisions. Specific guidelines for the procedures to be used in the

evaluation of teaching effectiveness will be those determined by the office of the Provost in consultation with the University Faculty Standing Committee on Effective Teaching.

2.5.2 Research and Scholarship

The systematic evaluation of a candidate's theoretical or applied research or scholarship begins in the local academic unit with a peer review of the candidate's work. In tenure and promotion cases the faculty will make independent judgments and will also seek and give consideration to external evaluations from qualified referees who are not associated with the University. Each local academic unit will develop its own specific guidelines with respect to the selection and use of external referees. These guidelines must be fair to all parties concerned and be publicized among the faculty in a timely manner. The local unit administrator has a specific responsibility to review annually the research and scholarly activities of tenure-track faculty and to discuss both the strengths and weaknesses with them on an individual basis.

2.5.3 University and Professional Service

The evaluation of university service is based on a peer review of the candidate's contribution to the life and governance of the local academic unit and the larger organizational units of which it is a part.

Procedures for the evaluation of external professional service are similar to those employed in the evaluation of research and scholarship.

2.6 Annual Evaluations of Faculty and Administrators

Universities have a long tradition of self-examination and improvement from within. That process includes the annual evaluation of faculty and administrators.

2.6.1 Annual Review of Faculty

All faculty are evaluated annually by the local unit administrator and/or a local academic unit faculty committee who report to the Dean or the Provost. The criteria for the annual faculty review are the same as those listed in [Section 2.3.3.2](#) (Term Faculty) and [Section 2.4](#) (Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty) except that the evaluation is based upon the contributions of the preceding academic year and, where applicable, the summer. Faculty are evaluated on the quality of their overall performance and in the context of their goals and assignments. The results of and rationale for the evaluation must be given to the faculty member in writing; and faculty members must be afforded the opportunity to discuss the results of the evaluation.

Annual evaluations are the primary basis for determining salary increases (see [Section 3.2](#)). Local unit administrators may take into account performance evaluations over multiple years in making raise recommendations.

2.6.2 Post Tenure Review Policies and Procedures

Policy

1. George Mason University will use the annual review of all faculty (see [Section 2.6.1](#)) as its primary procedure for implementing *Post Tenure Review* within the personnel policies of the Commonwealth of Virginia. The policies and procedures set forth in this document will apply to all tenured instructional faculty, regardless of the nature of the appointment.
 - a. Annual reviews will serve as the vehicle for recognizing the positive contributions of faculty in fulfilling their professional obligations.
 - b. When overall performance is recognized by the annual review as “unsatisfactory,” the procedures below will be followed for each case.
 - c. In accordance with the principles of peer judgment, the faculty of each local academic unit (LAU) will establish its criteria for “satisfactory” and “unsatisfactory” performance.
2. Faculty in honorific positions not evaluated annually by a specific LAU will be evaluated by the Office of the Provost. For faculty holding such appointments the standard of excellence includes contributions to institutional development, which will be addressed for all such appointees as part of their service. Annual evaluation reports for faculty in these categories will be submitted to the Provost. While faculty in these categories are not exempt from other sanctions, sanctions may include the loss of the honorific appointment.
3. Faculty members who receive an overall unsatisfactory rating by their LAU (as reported in the annual review to the Deans or the Provost by the LAU administrator) must develop a plan of action with the LAU administrator to remedy any stated deficiency. The plan will include a timetable.
4. Tenured faculty members who receive two overall “unsatisfactory” ratings in a four-year period will undergo a peer evaluation process to determine if continued employment with the university is appropriate (as described in the following section).
5. The Provost will review the recommendation from the peer evaluation process and take appropriate action.

Procedure

1. Tenured faculty who receive an overall unsatisfactory rating during any annual review but do not meet the criterion stated in paragraph 3 below will meet with the appropriate LAU administrator to establish a written plan of action. The plan will include a timetable.
2. At the meeting with the LAU administrator, the discussion will include at a minimum:
 - a. a discussion of the basis for the evaluation(s) that culminated in an unsatisfactory rating, with particular attention to stated deficiencies or areas of weakness;
 - b. an opportunity for the faculty member to respond to negative judgments;
 - c. an exploration of the concerns of the university for remediation; and

- d. the development of a plan of action in response to the judgment of “unsatisfactory” performance.

One copy of the plan of action will be retained by the faculty member and one copy will be placed in the faculty member’s personnel file in the office of the LAU administrator. In addition, the Provost will be notified that the faculty member was given an unsatisfactory evaluation. The LAU administrator and the Office of the Provost will address relevant issues in subsequent annual evaluations during the rolling four-year period. Faculty members pursuing a plan of action for correcting unsatisfactory performance will be encouraged to avail themselves of university resources designed to assist all faculty in professional development.

3. Tenured faculty members who receive two overall “unsatisfactory” ratings in a four-year period will be required to undergo a peer evaluation procedure conducted by the college/school Promotion and Tenure Committee (i.e., the body authorized to conduct second-level review under the provisions of [Section 2.7.3](#)), serving as an Evaluation Committee. For faculty not assigned to a LAU, the Evaluation Committee will be the Promotion and Tenure Committee of the college/school most closely aligned with the faculty member’s areas of expertise, as judged by the faculty member.

4. The evaluation will be conducted according to the following procedures:

- a. The Evaluation Committee will maintain the confidentiality of information reviewed in the proceedings, but will release such information to others with the consent of the faculty member, and to other University officials who have a legitimate business need to know such information (for example, to the Office of Compliance, Diversity, and Ethics for equity review.)
- b. The Provost will initiate the evaluation process with a written communication to the faculty member (the “Notice”). The Notice shall include:
 1. A statement explaining the current employment status of the faculty member and how that could change as a result of post-tenure review.
 2. The procedural rights, in detail, of the faculty member (as outlined below).
 3. A statement that to maintain employment the faculty member must submit a portfolio summarizing activities and accomplishments in teaching, research, and service, as appropriate, during the period spanning the two unsatisfactory evaluations. The statement should explicitly note that there is no limit on the amount or type of documentation the faculty member may submit, but that the submitted documentation must include copies of annual evaluation results during the period spanning the two unsatisfactory evaluations.
 4. A statement that if the faculty member fails to submit a portfolio within one calendar month of the date the Notice was transmitted, the Provost will make a recommendation for termination to the Board of Visitors without benefit of a committee report.

- c. Submitted materials will be reviewed by the Evaluation Committee to determine if the faculty member under review has discharged the duties associated with his or her position conscientiously and with basic professional competence. The Evaluation Committee will not use the standards associated with the awarding of tenure and promotion to conduct this evaluation. Instead, the Evaluation Committee will focus on whether there is evidence of sustained overall unsatisfactory performance (including but not limited to incompetence and lack of appropriate expertise).
 - d. The Evaluation Committee may seek additional clarification from those who made or contributed to the unsatisfactory evaluations that led to the convening of the committee. Any response to such a request must be made in writing to the committee and shared with the faculty member under review.
 - e. After the committee has received any additional clarifying information, the faculty member under review must be given an opportunity to formally meet with the committee as part of the evaluation process if so requested. Such requests must be made in writing by the faculty member to the Chair of the Evaluation Committee. If the faculty member under review does elect to meet with the Evaluation Committee, a verbatim record of the entire meeting will be made. If the faculty member so requests, a copy will be provided without cost.
 - f. The faculty member under review must also be given an opportunity to have other individuals speak on his or her behalf to the committee if so requested. Such requests must be made in writing by the faculty member to the Chair of the Evaluation Committee. If a meeting is held in which others speak on behalf of the faculty member, a verbatim record of that meeting will be made. If the faculty member so requests, a copy will be provided without cost.
 - g. In the interest of avoiding unnecessary expense and to promote a prompt resolution, the Evaluation Committee may set reasonable time limits on speakers.
 - h. The recommendation of the Evaluation Committee must be based only on the complete record as presented to the committee following the above steps, and must be conveyed to the Provost in writing along with a recorded vote.
5. Recommendations to the Provost from the Evaluation Committee may include: (a) postponement of sanctions, with another peer review to be conducted within one calendar year; (b) a determination that no sanctions are necessary, with appropriate professional development recommendations; (c) a change in the faculty member's assignment that is better aligned with his or her strengths; (d) imposition of appropriate sanctions other than termination; or (e) termination of employment. Outcome (c) may be recommended in conjunction with outcome (a), (b), or (d). In the event of any outcome other than (e), the faculty member will meet with the appropriate LAU administrator to establish a written plan of action following the guidelines specified in paragraphs 1 and 2 of these procedures. Termination can only be considered by the Provost if a majority of those making a recommendation to the provost vote to recommend termination. If termination is recommended and the provost endorses this recommendation, the

faculty member undergoing review must be given at least six months written notice before termination can take effect.

6. The faculty member may appeal the decision to the President within 30 days of receipt of the written decision based on one or more of the following reasons:

- a. material procedural irregularity;
- b. violation of federal or state law or university policy;
- c. inadequate or faulty consideration of evidence.

In case of appeal, the President makes the final decision.

7. In the event the faculty member's employment is terminated in accordance with the procedures of this section, such termination shall be final and [Section 2.9.3](#) shall not apply. However, nothing in this section shall act to prevent or prohibit termination of employment of a faculty member for cause in accordance with the procedure set forth in [Section 2.9.3](#).

2.6.3 Faculty Role in the Evaluation of Academic Administrators

Senior academic administrators serve at the pleasure of the President. In reviewing their performance, the President should refer, when available, to the annual faculty evaluation of administrators, conducted under the joint auspices of the Faculty Senate and the University's Office of Institutional Planning and Research. The purposes of this annual evaluation are (i) to provide information regularly to the President and the Board of Visitors about the strengths and weaknesses of administrators as perceived by the faculty; (ii) to provide, over an extended period of time, a record of faculty opinion regarding the performance of administrators; and (iii) to provide individual administrators with an assessment of their performance.

Faculty are expected to participate in the evaluation of academic administrators.

2.7 Procedures for Renewal, Promotion, and Tenure

2.7.1 General Procedures

Renewal, promotion, and tenure recommendations are based upon an evaluation of performance over the faculty member's total period of service at George Mason University. Scholarly achievements prior to joining the George Mason University faculty weigh less heavily in these evaluations, but are also considered. These evaluations differ from the annual review in their emphasis on lasting contributions, consistency of performance, and versatility.

“Renew” or “renewal” in this Handbook means offering a tenure-track faculty member a contract for an additional term on the tenure track, which may include the same or different duties and responsibilities.

2.7.2 Procedures for Renewal

Faculty appointed to a tenure-track position receive an initial three-year term. (See [Section 2.1.2](#)) Tenure-track faculty will be evaluated for renewal during the third year of their initial

appointment using the following procedure:

1. Tenure-track faculty are evaluated by either the first-level or second-level promotion and tenure committee (see [Section 2.7.3](#)) according to the procedures in [Section 2.4](#) and [Section 2.5](#).

The Dean will submit a recommendation for renewal or non-renewal to the Provost by March 15th. Based on this evaluation, the Provost will act on the recommendation for renewal or non-renewal by April 15th. Faculty members will be advised of their renewals or non-renewals by May 1st of the third year of their initial appointments. Faculty members receive their renewal contracts no later than May 24th of the evaluation year.

2. If the decision is for renewal, then the faculty member's contract normally will be renewed for three years, and the next full evaluation will be for tenure consideration. Under exceptional circumstances, a faculty member may be renewed for only one year, in which case another evaluation will be conducted the following year. Renewal of a contract resulting from the evaluation in the fourth year of service will be for two years, and the next full evaluation will be for tenure consideration.

3. In the event of non-renewal, the faculty member will be offered a terminal, one-year term appointment following the decision for non-renewal contingent on the faculty member having submitted an appropriate and timely dossier for the purpose of seeking tenure-track contract renewal. If a faculty member chooses not to be evaluated, his or her contract will end on the last day of the term of her or his current contract.

4. If a faculty member is not renewed, the appeal procedure outlined in the Faculty Handbook [Section 2.8](#) may be used.

2.7.3 Procedures for Promotion and Tenure

Candidacy for tenure or promotion is normally initiated by the local unit administrator, with the faculty member's concurrence. Self-nomination is also permitted. Dossiers are to be prepared in accordance with the format provided by the Provost and the Dean. Except for external references, the candidate is responsible for the content of the dossier. The local unit administrator is responsible for ensuring that items the University is required to provide for the candidate's dossier are completed in a timely manner.

If a faculty member is (or is to be) appointed to primary affiliation in more than one local academic unit, a recommendation for promotion and/or tenure may be initiated by any of the units. A separate evaluation leading to a recommendation and decision will be made by each unit. An action by one local academic unit does not obligate another local academic unit to act similarly. It is required, however, that in each evaluation process the promotion and tenure committee must solicit and consider evaluations from the other units. All evaluations become part of the candidate's dossier.

In all cases of promotion and/or tenure, there are two levels of faculty review. At both levels, evaluations are carried out by tenured faculty in accordance with [Sections 2.4](#) and [2.5](#). In addition to considering the dossier prepared by the candidate, faculty committees on promotion and tenure examine all relevant evidence and testimony offered to them by members of the

academic community and others with direct knowledge of the candidate's professional qualifications and achievements.

The first-level review is undertaken by faculty in the candidate's local academic unit, which must have bylaws or standing rules that govern renewal, promotion, and tenure procedures ([Section 1.3.3](#)).

In departmentalized colleges/schools (see [Section 1.3.5](#)), the first level of review is departmental.

In non-departmentalized colleges/schools, which are subdivided into programs or other divisions, the first level of review is carried out by faculty appointed to program(s) or division(s) to which the candidate belongs. Tenured faculty from other substantively related areas may also serve on a candidate's first-level review committee if there is an insufficient number of qualified tenured faculty in the candidate's affiliated program(s)/division(s). Program or division faculties cannot exist solely to make personnel evaluations.

In non-departmentalized colleges/schools, which are not further subdivided, the first-level review is carried out by eligible faculty in the candidate's college/school.

In all cases, the second level of review is carried out by a peer-elected committee of the college/school in accordance with its bylaws ([Section 1.3.3](#)). The second-level review committee can include members from outside the college/school who are elected in the same manner as other members of the second-level review committee. In no case may a faculty member vote more than once on any candidate.

The School of Law is exempt from the provisions specified in the above paragraphs, but it is not exempt from the requirement for two-level peer review.

The procedure for considering promotion and tenure cases is as follows:

1a. Departmental review is initiated by the local first-level promotion and tenure committee, which may be a committee of the whole. The committee communicates the results of its review to the tenured members of the department who then vote. Only full professors vote in cases involving promotion to the rank of professor. The department chair does not vote with the tenured faculty. The committee transmits the departmental recommendation, including the division of the vote, to the department chair. The department chair transmits to the second-level review committee: (1) the candidate's dossier and related materials; (2) the recommendation of the departmental committee with appropriate justifications; and (3) his/her own recommendation and justification. Notification of the recommendation of the local academic unit and copies of the accompanying justifications are sent to the candidate and to the faculty who participated in the deliberations before the dossier is sent to the second-level committee.

The candidate is evaluated in like manner by the second-level review committee, which forwards its recommendation along with all preceding reports and recommendations to the Dean. Notification of the recommendation of the second-level review committee is sent to

the faculty who participated in the deliberations at the first level of review. Copies of the statement of justification are sent to the candidate and the department chair.

If the second-level review committee's recommendation differs from that of the first-level review committee, the second-level review committee's recommendation and accompanying justification are sent to the first-level review committee.

1b. The process is analogous in non-departmentalized units, except that the role assigned to department chairs is omitted.

2. All materials are reviewed by the Dean of the candidate's college/school. The recommendation of the Dean is forwarded to the Provost. Notification of the recommendation is sent to the faculty bodies who participated in deliberations at the first and second levels of review and a copy of the accompanying justification is sent to the candidate and the local unit administrator (the latter copy to be retained in the candidate's permanent file).

If the Dean's recommendation is different from that received from the second-level review committee, the reasons for that difference should be specified in the recommendation, which is sent to the candidate, to the faculty bodies participating in the decision-making process, and to the Provost.

3. All relevant materials are reviewed by the Provost. The Provost may consult with other academic administrators who have direct knowledge of one or more aspects of the candidate's professional performance. The Provost makes a recommendation as to whether promotion or tenure should be granted. Notification of the Provost's recommendation is sent to the faculty bodies who participated in deliberations at the first and second levels of review, and a copy of the accompanying justification is sent to the Dean, the candidate and the local unit administrator. The justification shall be retained in the candidate's personnel file.

If the Provost's recommendation is different from that received from the second-level review committee, the reasons for that difference should be specified in writing and sent to the candidate and to the faculty bodies participating in the decision-making process.

4. If the Provost recommends tenure or promotion be granted, the candidate's dossier, with all previously generated recommendations, is forwarded to the President. If the Provost recommends tenure or promotion not be granted, the recommendation is not forwarded to the President.

5. The President makes a recommendation as to whether tenure or promotion should be granted. If the President recommends tenure or promotion be granted, such recommendation is forwarded to the Board of Visitors. If the President recommends tenure or promotion not be granted, the recommendation is not forwarded to the Board of Visitors.

6. Tenure, and promotion to the rank of associate professor or professor, can only be conferred by the Board of Visitors. If the Board of Visitors decides to grant promotion or tenure, the candidate will be notified in writing by the Secretary of the Board of Visitors.

7. If either the Provost or the President recommends that tenure or promotion not be granted, the candidate will be notified of the decision on or before May 1. Upon receiving notice of the Provost's or President's decision, the candidate may:

- a. accept the decision; or
- b. appeal the decision according to the procedure described in [Section 2.8](#).

In the event tenure is not granted in a faculty member's final year on the tenure-track, the faculty member will be offered a one-year terminal appointment for the next year with workload expectations essentially unchanged from the previous renewal contract.

8. Tenure and promotion are never granted by default.

2.7.3.1 Tenure Clock Extension for New Parents

A tenure-track faculty member who becomes the parent of a child by birth or by adoption will be entitled to a one-year automatic tenure clock extension. This extension will be granted automatically upon the faculty member's notifying in writing the chair of the department or the Dean of the college/school in which the faculty member serves. The faculty member should make the request within one year of the child's arrival in the family and prior to September 1 of the academic year in which the tenure decision would have been made.

A faculty member is limited to one automatic extension of term during the time she or he is serving in tenure-track status, although a second extension of term may be requested for a new birth or adoption. A faculty member who declines to request an extension remains eligible for later extensions up to the two-year maximum. Multiple births or multiple adoptions at the same time result in the same one-year extension right as single births or adoptions. At the time of tenure consideration, a faculty member who has received an extension or extensions will be considered using the same tenure criteria as those applied to other faculty in the college/school. Extensions due to parenthood are independent of study leaves.

2.7.3.2 Tenure Clock Extension for Serious Illness

Extension of the tenure clock for a tenure-track faculty member will be approved for circumstances that have a significant impact on the faculty member's productivity, such as serious personal illness or a major illness of a member of the faculty member's immediate family, under the following conditions and definitions. Serious personal illness or illness within the immediate family will be defined according to the Department of Labor's criteria for family and medical leave, already used by the university. Certification of illness by a physician is required and will be handled by Human Resources. Once certification of the illness has been approved by Human Resources, the faculty member can extend the tenure clock by notifying, in writing, the chair of the department or the Dean of the college/school in which the faculty member serves. The request must be made within three months of certification of sick or family leave by Human Resources. Tenure clock extensions will be granted in one-year increments, with the maximum extension being a cumulative total of two years. An extension beyond one year will require discussion with the appropriate department chair and Dean. At the time of

tenure consideration, a faculty member will be considered using the same criteria as those applied to other faculty in the college/school. Extensions due to serious illness are independent of study leaves.

2.7.3.3 Tenure Clock Extension for Military Service

A tenure-track faculty member who is also a member of the U.S. military and is called to active duty will be entitled to an automatic extension of the term in which she or he is currently employed in accordance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). The extension will last for the duration of the active duty assignment, rounded to the nearest year, but will not exceed the extension period provided by USERRA. Therefore, for example, an active duty assignment lasting between 4 through 15 months will earn a one-year extension, 16 through 27 months will earn a two-year extension. This extension will be granted automatically upon the faculty member's notifying in writing the chair of the department or the Dean of the college/school in which the faculty member serves. The faculty member should make the request as far as possible prior to entering active duty and prior to September 1 of the academic year in which the tenure decision would have been made. At the time of tenure consideration, a faculty member will be considered using the same criteria as those applied to other faculty in the college/school. Extensions due to military service are independent of study leaves.

2.7.3.4 Tenure Clock Extension for Administrative/Professional Faculty

Tenure-track faculty members who are appointed to an administrative/professional faculty position may continue on their tenure-track appointment while serving in that capacity. The tenure-track faculty member may request that the tenure clock be stopped during the term of the administrative appointment. Such request must be made to the Office of the Provost.

2.8 Appeal of Negative Decisions in Renewal, Tenure and Promotion Cases.

The decision of the President or of the Provost not to recommend renewal, tenure or promotion may be appealed to the University Promotion, Tenure and Renewal Appeal Committee (UPTRAC) as provided in this section. The intent of the appeal procedure is to provide a fair and competent review of the decision. The decision whether to appoint or reappoint a Term Faculty member may not be appealed.

2.8.1 Grounds for Appeal

An appeal must be based on one or more of the following reasons:

1. Substantial New Evidence;
2. material procedural irregularity;
3. violation of federal or state law or university policy related to nondiscrimination;
4. inadequate or faulty consideration of evidence; or
5. violation of academic freedom as defined in [Section 2.11.1](#) and [Section 2.11.2.1](#).

“Substantial New Evidence” means evidence that was not available at the time of the first-level review and that falls only within one or more of the following categories:

- a. Scholarly work accepted for publication, or creative work exhibited, performed, or published, or other evidence of scholarly distinction.
- b. Grants awarded.
- c. Reviews of the candidate's scholarly or creative work that have been published.
- d. Substantial evidence of significantly improved teaching.
- e. Substantial evidence of significantly increased and influential professional service.

2.8.2 University Promotion, Tenure and Renewal Appeal Committee

2.8.2.1 Committee Charge

Upon written appeal, the UPTRAC reviews the decision of the Provost or President not to recommend tenure, promotion, or renewal. The committee must publish and follow standard procedures for its conduct that are consistent with provisions in this section. The committee members (including the member chosen by the appellant) do not act as advocates for either the appellant or the university. The committee does not review the merits of the tenure, promotion, or renewal case itself.

2.8.2.2 Committee Composition

The UPTRAC shall be composed of three tenured faculty members and two alternate tenured faculty members, elected by the Faculty Senate to staggered terms; and two tenured administrators and one alternate tenured administrator, selected by the Provost to staggered terms. Committee terms are for two years. No two committee members may be from the same local academic unit or administrative unit. A member can serve a maximum of two consecutive 2-year terms, although subsequent non-consecutive service is permitted. Elected alternate members' terms formally begin during the first year that they participate in an appeal. For the purpose of service on the UPTRAC, a local academic unit administrator is considered an administrator.

The appellant will choose a tenured administrator to serve as the sixth member of the committee for the duration of the appellant's appeal. The administrator must be someone who does not have a conflict of interest, who did not participate at an earlier stage of the appellant's promotion, tenure, or renewal process, and who does not come from the same administrative unit as one of the Provost's appointees.

If any member of the UPTRAC has a conflict of interest, participated at an earlier stage of the appellant's promotion, tenure, or renewal process, or is otherwise unable to serve, such member shall not participate in the appeal, and an alternate will serve instead. In the event there are not sufficient faculty alternates to serve, the Faculty Senate shall elect additional alternate members to serve for the appeal. If the need for faculty alternates arises after the last Faculty Senate meeting of the academic year, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee will select the alternate(s). In the event there are not sufficient administrators to serve, the Provost shall select alternate members to serve for the appeal.

2.8.3 Appeal Procedure

To initiate an appeal, the appellant must file a written petition for appeal with the Chair of the Faculty Senate and the Provost's office no later than May 14 of the year in which tenure, promotion, or renewal was not recommended. The reasons for the appeal must be clearly stated, and the appeal must be limited to the grounds permitted in [Section 2.8.1](#). All documentation and evidence in support of the appeal must accompany the petition. The burden of proof in the appeal rests with the appellant.

If the appellant alleges violation of federal or state law or University policy related to nondiscrimination, the appeal process shall be held in abeyance until the Office of Compliance, Diversity and Ethics has completed a formal investigation of the allegation and has issued a final written determination.

In accordance with its published procedures, the UPTRAC will consider all grounds of the appeal and the accompanying documentation and evidence. The UPTRAC may require submission of additional documentation and evidence.

At the conclusion of its deliberations, the UPTRAC will simultaneously forward to the Provost, the appellant's local academic unit, and the appellant a complete case file consisting of: the appeal petition with accompanying documentation and evidence; any additional documentation and evidence requested by the committee; a written report that includes its decision of whether the case has sufficient merit and the basis for its decision; the numerical result of the vote of the UPTRAC members; and any recommendation to the Provost, if applicable.

If the UPTRAC does not determine by majority vote that the appeal has sufficient merit, the case proceeds to final consideration as provided in [Section 2.8.4](#). If the UPTRAC determines by majority vote that the appeal has sufficient merit, the case is remanded as provided in [Section 2.8.5](#).

2.8.4 Final Consideration When Appeal Not Found to Have Merit

If the UPTRAC does not determine by majority vote that the appeal has sufficient merit, the Provost considers the case. The Provost forwards the case file to the President and makes a recommendation as to whether renewal, tenure or promotion should be granted.

If the President believes that tenure or promotion should be granted, the recommendation is forwarded to the Board of Visitors for final action. If the President decides that renewal should be granted, the decision is final. If the President decides renewal, tenure or promotion should not be granted, the decision is final and there is no further appeal.

2.8.5 Remand Process

If the UPTRAC determines by majority vote that the appeal has sufficient merit, then the UPTRAC remands the case to the lowest level at which the grounds for appeal was based or to the first-level review committee if the grounds for appeal is based on Substantial New Evidence

([Section 2.8.1](#)). At that level and each subsequent level specified in [Section 2.7.3](#) (or in the case of renewal, [Section 2.7.2](#)), the case shall be evaluated by the designated bodies as they are constituted at the time of the remand, and by the individuals holding the relevant administrative positions at the time of the remand. At each level, a recommendation should normally be completed within fourteen calendar days and forwarded to the next level. The case file submitted by the UPTRAC must be explicitly addressed in the recommendation at each level. No case may be remanded more than once.

If the President believes that promotion or tenure should be granted, the recommendation is submitted to the Board of Visitors for final action. If the President decides that renewal should be granted, the decision is final. If the President decides renewal, promotion or tenure should not be granted, the decision is final and there is no further appeal.

At each level of review in the remand process, if a recommendation or decision is negative, a clear, written justification is sent concurrently to the appellant, to the local academic unit, and to the next level of review.

2.9 Policies and Procedures Relating to Termination

2.9.1 Financial Exigency

Financial exigency is understood to mean an urgent need to reorder the nature and magnitude of the institution's financial obligations in such a way as to restore or preserve the institution's financial stability. The existence of a state of financial exigency must be established by clear and convincing evidence. This can be demonstrated by various means; for example, by showing declining enrollments coupled with operating deficits of a magnitude or duration as to leave little doubt about the financial weakness of the institution. The crisis should be of sufficient gravity that it cannot be met by less drastic means than salary reductions or termination of faculty appointments.

The University strives to maintain a reasonable balance between positions devoted to its primary missions (instruction, research, and public service) and those devoted to its support programs (e.g., the library, student services, general administration). If threatened by the possibility of financial exigency, the institution will undertake retrenchment in such a way that this balance is preserved, and the faculty will participate with others in the decision-making process. This initial process of retrenchment will not include the termination or reduction of salaries of faculty on tenure-track or tenured appointments. Should it become necessary for the Board of Visitors to consider declaring a state of financial exigency, the Faculty Senate will participate in the determinations that lead to the Board's decision.

Formal declaration of financial exigency by the Board of Visitors initiates the next phase of retrenchment. Administrators responsible for developing specific budget reduction plans must consult with tenured and tenure-track faculty in developing these plans, which may include salary or personnel reduction programs.

Termination of appointment of tenured faculty should be a last resort. Should reductions in the size of the faculty become necessary, the affected units will make reductions on the following priority basis:

1. Termination of part-time faculty;
2. Termination of faculty on fixed-term appointments;
3. Termination of tenure-track faculty;
4. Termination of tenured faculty.

Unless financial, academic, or equity and diversity considerations are demonstrated to be overriding, then tenure, rank, and order of seniority in rank will be respected, in that order, in the termination of appointment of faculty on tenured and tenure-track appointments. Administrators responsible for developing specific budget reduction plans involving the termination of appointment of tenured and tenure-track faculty must consult with tenured and tenure-track faculty in developing these plans. Principles and criteria for identifying specific individuals whose appointments are to be terminated should be formulated by tenured and tenure-track faculty.

Any faculty member whose appointment is to be terminated due to financial exigency may request a hearing before the college/school grievance committee. The findings of the committee will be presented to the Board of Visitors for final action after review by the President.

In all cases of termination of appointment because of financial exigency, the position of the terminated faculty member will not be filled within a period of three years, unless the released faculty member has been offered reinstatement. Faculty members are responsible for keeping a current address on file with the University. Any offer of reinstatement will be sent by registered mail, and the faculty member must respond to it within one month of its receipt. Should termination of full-time untenured faculty members become necessary during the term of their appointment, the University will give them as much notice as possible and no less than thirty days. Tenured faculty members will be guaranteed employment for one additional academic year.

2.9.2 Discontinuation of Degree Programs

The recommendation to discontinue a degree program will be based upon educational considerations as determined jointly by the faculty and the administration. Such educational considerations must reflect long-range judgments that the educational mission of the institution as a whole will be enhanced by the discontinuation. Faculty adversely affected by the discontinuation of a degree program and holding multi-year term appointments will be given at least one academic year's notice of the decision to discontinue a program. Tenured and tenure-track faculty will be given opportunities to join the faculties of other programs, and, if appropriate, will be assisted by the institution through retraining and professional development opportunities. Procedures and safeguards will parallel those provided for termination of appointment in the face of financial exigency, where applicable (see [Section 2.9.1](#)).

2.9.3 Termination of Appointment of Tenured, Tenure-Track, and Term Faculty Members for Cause

Termination of appointment for cause is the involuntary termination of the employment of faculty members for reasons directly and substantially related to their professional conduct. Terminations will not be used to restrain faculty members in their exercise of their Constitutional rights. Tenure does not protect an individual from removal for cause.

Adequate cause may include, but is not restricted to: (i) violations of professional ethics; (ii) inability to perform assigned duties satisfactorily because of incarceration; (iii) exploitation of the power a faculty member may have over other members of the academic community (e.g., improper sexual advances, financial reward or punishment); (iv) failure to carry out professional obligations or assigned responsibilities; (v) falsification of information relating to professional qualifications; (vi) violation of institutional rules regarding outside employment; (vii) abusive or violent conduct toward members of the university community; (viii) retaliation for exercise of free speech and/or association.; and (ix) a finding of research or scholarship misconduct ([University Policy 4007: Misconduct in Research and Scholarship](#)).

The following procedures are designed to ensure due process in termination of appointment proceedings:

- a. If the conduct of a faculty member comes into question, the President or the Provost will discuss the matter with the faculty member personally.
- b. If the matter is not resolved in this conference, it will be referred by the President to the University Grievance Committee. This committee is charged to initiate an inquiry into the matter and to recommend whether or not the situation requires that formal proceedings for termination be instituted. This recommendation is confidential and advisory to the President of the University. The Grievance Committee must complete its work and report to the President within fourteen calendar days of receipt of the President's letter referring the matter to the committee.
- c. The President must decide if formal termination proceedings are to begin. If so, the President will draw up the charge within fourteen calendar days from receipt of the committee's report. If the committee concurs in this decision it should join in the formulation of the statement.
- d. The President will initiate the termination proceedings with a written communication to the faculty member (the "Notice"). The Notice shall include:
 1. The charge that has been formulated.
 2. The procedural rights, in detail, of the faculty member (as outlined below).
 3. A statement that the faculty member may request a hearing within fourteen calendar days of receipt of the charge.

4. A statement that if the faculty member fails to respond, the President will make a recommendation for termination to the Board of Visitors without benefit of a committee hearing or report.

5. A statement that if the faculty member timely responds, waives the right to a hearing, but denies that adequacy of cause for termination exists, the University Grievance Committee which conducted the inquiry will make a recommendation to the Board of Visitors on adequacy of cause on the basis of available evidence.

e. Within (14) calendar days of the date the President transmits the Notice, the faculty member must respond to the President and must either: (i) acknowledge in writing the validity of the charges and agree that they constitute an adequate cause for termination; (ii) deny that adequacy of cause for termination exists, but waive the right to a hearing; or (iii) deny that adequacy of cause for termination exists, and request a hearing. If the faculty member denies that adequacy of cause for termination exists and requests a hearing, the President will notify the Faculty Senate and the Faculty Senate will nominate an ad hoc committee (the Hearing Committee) within seven (7) calendar days of receipt of the faculty member's response by the President. The Faculty Senate shall nominate nine full-time faculty members to serve on the Hearing Committee. These faculty members should be nominated on the basis of their objectivity and competence and of the regard in which they are held in the academic community; they will be determined to have no bias or untoward interest in the case and to be available at the anticipated time of hearing. Administrators, members of the University Grievance Committee, department chairs, and other faculty of the same local academic unit as the faculty member are ineligible to serve on this committee. The faculty member and the President will each have a maximum of two challenges from among the nominees without stated cause. The President will then name a five-member Hearing Committee from the remaining nominees. The Hearing Committee will elect its own chair. All materials and evidence the parties wish to have considered must be made available to the parties and to the committee.

f. The Hearing Committee shall conduct a hearing no sooner than 14 calendar days and no later than 28 calendar days following the establishment of the Hearing Committee. The Hearing Committee will observe the following procedures:

1. The faculty member may choose his or her academic and/or legal representatives to be present at the hearing. The administrative representative will enjoy the same rights.

2. At the request of either party or on the initiative of the Hearing Committee, representatives of one or more recognized educational associations may be present as observers.

3. The faculty member decides whether the hearing will be open or closed.

4. A verbatim record of the complete hearing will be made. If the faculty member so requests, a copy will be provided without cost.

5. The parties will make every reasonable effort to assure the availability of witnesses and documents under their control.
 6. The hearing will be adjourned when necessary to enable either party to investigate newly disclosed evidence.
 7. Both parties have the right to examine all documents and question all witnesses.
 8. Witnesses may include, but are not limited to faculty members or administrators from any institution of higher education accredited by a regional accrediting association.
 9. The faculty member, the administration, and the Hearing Committee are to avoid publicity about the case until the proceedings have been completed by the Board of Visitors. Only necessary announcements such as hearing time and place are permitted.
 10. All the evidence should be duly recorded. It is not necessary to follow formal rules of court procedures.
 11. In the interest of avoiding unnecessary expense and to promote prompt resolution of matters, the Hearing Committee may set reasonable time limits on the hearing, and appropriately limit testimony, witnesses, or introduction of other evidence.
- g. The decision of the Hearing Committee must be based only on the complete record of the hearing considered as a whole. The burden of proof that adequate grounds exist for termination rests with the Administration. The Hearing Committee reports to the President, normally with one of the following recommendations:
1. cause has not been established and the faculty member should not be terminated.
 2. cause has been established and the faculty member should be terminated.
 3. cause has been established, but a lesser penalty than termination is appropriate.
- h. If the President accepts the recommendation of the Hearing Committee that no cause has been established, then the process is concluded.
- i. If the President accepts the recommendation of the Hearing Committee that cause has been established and the faculty member should be terminated, then the President's recommendation of this action to the Board of Visitors must include a record of the case.
- j. If the President accepts the recommendation of the Hearing Committee that cause has been established but a lesser penalty than termination is appropriate, then such lesser penalties will be determined administratively.
- k. Should the President reject the recommendation of the Hearing Committee that cause for termination or other disciplinary action has not been established, then the President must state his or her reasons for rejection in writing to the Hearing Committee and the faculty

member. In addition, all parties must be afforded an opportunity to respond to this statement before the President forwards a recommendation for termination to the Board of Visitors.

l. Should the President reject the decision of the Hearing Committee that cause has been established and therefore a recommendation for termination will not be forwarded, then the President must state his or her reasons for rejection in writing to the Hearing Committee and the faculty member.

m. If the faculty member wishes to appeal the President's decision, the Board of Visitors will evaluate the President's recommendation for termination, using the record of the hearing. It may at its discretion also afford an opportunity for the parties to present their arguments orally or in writing. If the Board of Visitors rejects the President's recommendation for termination, then the hearing process is concluded. The Board of Visitors renders the final decision.

n. Normally the faculty member will remain at his or her usual duties until the final decision is reached by the Board of Visitors. The faculty member may be suspended only if the President determines that continued work threatens immediate harm to self or others (see [Section 2.10.9](#)) or in situations where the faculty member has been found guilty by a court of a felony crime. Any such suspension is to be with pay. When termination charges are brought against a faculty member who fails to perform specified duties during the course of termination proceedings, the President can withhold a portion of the faculty member's salary prorated to the duties not performed.

2.10 Faculty Duties and Responsibilities

2.10.1 University Policies

Faculty are responsible for complying with a wide range of university policies (see University Policies: <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/>).

Of particular importance are:

1104 Use and Reproduction of Copyrighted Materials

<http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/use-and-reproduction-of-copyrighted-materials/>

1114 Data Stewardship

<http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/data-stewardship/>

1201 Non-Discrimination Policy

<http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/non-discrimination-policy/>

1202 Sexual Harassment Policy

<http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/sexual-harassment-policy/>

1203 Non-Discrimination and Reasonable Accommodation on the Basis of Disability

<http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/non-discrimination-and-reasonable-accommodation-on-the-basis-of-disability/>

1301 Responsible Use of Computing

<http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>

1406 Environmental Health and Safety

<http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/environmental-health-and-safety/>

4007 Misconduct in Research and Scholarship

<http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/misconduct-in-research-and-scholarship/>

4001 Conflicts of Interest

<http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/financial-conflicts-of-interest-in-university-contracts-with-businesses-under-virginia-law/>

2.10.2 Professional Ethics

Although no set of rules or professional code can guarantee or take the place of a scholar's personal integrity, the University believes that the "Statement of Professional Ethics" and the "Statement on Plagiarism" promulgated by the American Association of University Professors at <http://www.aaup.org/aaup> serve as a reminder of the obligations assumed by all members of the professoriate. Faculty members must also adhere to the ethical standards of their respective professional associations and to university policies related to professional ethics (e.g., Research and Scholarship Misconduct, Responsible Use of Computing) while employed by the University. Please see University Policies at <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/>. In addition, unethical or unprofessional conduct may include, but is not limited to, repeated instances of workplace bullying, intimidation, harassment, verbal abuse, sabotage, and threatening behavior.

Generally accepted standards of professional ethics require faculty members who plan to resign or retire to give notice in writing to their local unit administrator no later than May 15. Only in personal emergencies or for other compelling reasons should faculty members leave the institution during the academic year, except when this coincides with the expiration of their contractual obligations.

Allegations of unethical or unprofessional conduct may be brought to the attention of the Provost, President, employee relations specialists in the Human Resources and Payroll office, or the appropriate University or local academic unit grievance committee (see [Section 2.11.2.1](#) and [Section 2.9.3](#)). In all cases, all parties have a right to procedural due process.

2.10.3 Faculty Work Assignments

Faculty work assignments include some combination of teaching, research and scholarship, and/or service.

The faculty of each local academic unit prepares and maintains a plan for the equitable allocation of teaching, scholarly and service activities that will be components of the individual work

assignments of its faculty. For the purposes of meeting institutional needs while ensuring fairness and equity throughout the University, the plan of each local unit is prepared in consultation with the appropriate Dean and/or the Provost.

Faculty may use relevant grievance procedures to address disputes about work assignments. If the grievance is against the chair, the LAU's grievance committee is advisory to the Dean. If the grievance is against the Dean, the university grievance committee is advisory to the Provost or his/her designee. In all cases, the Provost's decision is final.

2.10.4 Faculty Absences from Class

Except for sudden illnesses and other emergencies, faculty members must arrange in advance for absences and notify their local unit administrator. Faculty members should arrange for qualified colleagues to assume their duties temporarily and/or leave appropriate assignments for their students. In emergencies they should make every effort to notify promptly class members and the local academic unit or program office as soon as practicable.

2.10.5 Faculty Responsibility Under the Honor Code

Since the founding of the University, the Honor Code has been and remains a part of the educational process at George Mason. Although the students are primarily responsible for preserving and enforcing the code, the faculty share common interests with the students in matters of academic integrity.

Faculty are expected to have a strong commitment to the Honor Code, and to support and to encourage students in their pursuit of its goals.

2.10.6 Political Candidacy

Faculty who run for elective office must inform the President in advance and must be aware of possible conflicts of interest and comply with applicable laws and university policies.

2.10.7 Outside Employment and/or Business Interests

The University encourages faculty members to keep abreast of developments in their disciplines and to gain practical experience in their fields. In many instances, consulting work affords excellent opportunities for faculty to improve themselves professionally and to bring added prestige to them and to the University. The University looks favorably on appropriate consulting work by faculty members insofar as it does not interfere with full, proper, and effective performance of faculty duties and responsibilities.

Outside employment and paid consulting cannot exceed the equivalent of one day per work week without written authorization from the collegiate Dean. Faculty may be required to document outside employment to insure compliance with these requirements. Although faculty members are state employees, they consult as private individuals, and the University is not responsible for their work outside the University. When consulting, faculty members should take care to preserve the distinction between projects undertaken through individual initiatives and projects

sponsored or officially sanctioned by the University. Outside business interests must not violate the Commonwealth's conflict of interest laws at (<http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacodepopularnames/state-and-local-government-conflict-of-interests-act>) or the University's two conflict of interest policies: 4001, Financial Conflicts of Interests in University Contracts with Businesses under Virginia Law at <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/financial-conflicts-of-interest-in-university-contracts-with-businesses-under-virginia-law/> and 4010, Financial Conflicts of Interest in Federally Funded Research at <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/financial-conflicts-of-interest-in-federally-funded-research/>.

Faculty members may use university facilities, equipment, supplies or computer time in their consulting only after obtaining the approval of the collegiate Dean. Faculty must also secure approval of the collegiate Dean before using university resources to support the activities of professional organizations.

2.10.8 Full-Time Faculty Teaching at Other Institutions

Full-time faculty are expected to teach their assigned course loads (as determined by their respective unit) unless they are granted release time for research, administrative and service functions or "buy down" their effort through sponsored program activities. This precludes teaching as "instructor of record" for another educational institution during the academic year (exceptions require the permission of the Provost). Full-time faculty who are teaching part-time at another institution may not at the same time teach overload courses.

This policy does not pertain to summer employment for nine-month faculty.

Requests for exceptions, generally for reasons of professional growth, must be submitted well in advance to the local academic unit head and the respective Dean. Approval, if granted, will normally apply only for one or two semesters. Approval would be made with the understanding that the outside teaching effort does not compromise the faculty member's professional responsibilities to George Mason University or create a conflict of interest.

2.10.9 Temporary or Short-Term Relief of Faculty from Duties and Responsibilities

Preserving the safety and well-being of students and faculty is a paramount concern. On occasion it might be determined that a faculty member is unable to carry out his or her duties or responsibilities, including classroom instruction. If at any time a faculty member's continued responsibilities, including classroom instruction, is judged by the Provost or a designated representative to constitute an immediate danger or serious threat of substantial damage to the faculty member, his or her colleagues, university staff, or students, the faculty member will be immediately relieved of his or her duties, including exclusion from the classroom, until such time as he or she can safely re-assume them. "Temporary relief of duties" for documented medical reasons is described in more detail in [Section 2.10.10](#) The Family and Medical Leave Act. "Permanent termination of appointment for cause" is described in [Section 2.9.3](#) Termination of Appointment of Tenure, Tenure-Track, and Term Faculty Members for Cause. Re-assumption of duties may entail a reassignment of primary duties and responsibilities within the local academic unit or university.

Unless waived by the faculty member, the grievance committee of the college/school will be convened within three days after any such relief of duties or classroom exclusion. To safeguard against abuse of this emergency authority, this committee will conduct a brief but careful, confidential, and thorough examination of the particulars of the case and report within three days to the Provost or designated representative. Should the committee's findings not support the relief of duties or classroom exclusion, this committee will also report its findings to the chair of the Faculty Senate.

2.10.10 The Family and Medical Leave Act

Relief from faculty duties or responsibilities for medical reasons may be governed by the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Details can be found at the website:

<http://hr.gmu.edu/benefits/leave/fmla.php>.

The FMLA describes the federal regulations regarding job-protected leave to eligible employees for certain family and medical reasons. In consideration of instructional faculty duties and responsibilities related to workloads and the university's academic calendar, whenever possible the university will attempt to adapt application of the FMLA to the academic calendar and the faculty member's needs. The federal regulations pertaining to the FMLA can be found at: <http://www.dol.gov/dol/topic/benefits-leave/fmla.htm>. Faculty members may also be eligible, depending on their medical condition, for either long-term or short-term disability benefits. For details see: <http://hr.gmu.edu/benefits>.

2.11 Faculty Rights and Privileges

2.11.1 Academic Freedom and Civil Liberties

One of the vital activities of a university is the critical examination of ideologies and institutions. It is essential that faculty members have the right to express their views and the University is committed to upholding the principles of academic freedom to protect the expression of faculty members without fear of censorship or retaliation. The University defines academic freedom as:

1. the right to unrestricted exposition of subjects (including controversial questions) within one's field and professional obligations, both on and off the campus, in a professionally responsible manner; and
2. the right to unrestricted scholarly research and publication within one's field and professional obligations, in a professionally responsible manner within the limits imposed by the resources of the institution.

The University is fully aware that faculty members must enjoy, in addition to academic freedom, the same civil liberties as other citizens. In the exercise of their civil liberties or academic freedom, faculty have an obligation to make clear that they are not representing the institution, its Board, or the Commonwealth of Virginia. All employees have an obligation to avoid any action which appears or purports to commit the institution to a position on any issue without appropriate approval.

Faculty personnel actions, including initial appointment, reappointment, annual performance evaluations, and promotion and tenure will not be affected by considerations such as the exercise of academic freedom and civil liberties.

2.11.2 Grievances

2.11.2.1 Policies Concerning Grievances

This section does not apply to the resolution of (1) research and scholarship misconduct allegations, which are governed by [University Policy 4007 –Misconduct in Research and Scholarship](#); (2) allegations of discrimination, which are investigated by the Office of Compliance, Diversity and Ethics; or (3) alleged violations of academic freedom related to reappointment, promotion or tenure, for which [Section 2.8](#) applies.

The university and each college/school are required to have a standing committee charged to investigate internal grievances in a timely manner concerning (i) alleged violations of academic freedom; (ii) other conditions of employment, such as work assignments, salaries, facilities, and support services (except for grievances related to Discontinuation of Degree Programs ([Section 2.9.2](#)) and Termination for Cause ([Section 2.9.3](#)); and (iii) charges of unprofessional or unethical conduct brought by one faculty member against another.

College/school committees hear grievances from faculty whose primary affiliation is within the college/school. The University Grievance Committee hears grievances that involve faculty from more than one college/school as well as other grievances mandated in the committee charge. The University Grievance Committee hears all grievances against academic administrators at or above the level of Dean. See [Section 2.11.2.2](#).

The University Grievance Committee and each college/school grievance committee will establish, publish, and disseminate their grievance procedures. Upon receipt of a grievance that includes an allegation of violation of federal or state law, or discrimination in violation of federal or state law or University policy, the grievance hearing shall be held in abeyance until the Office of Compliance, Diversity and Ethics has investigated the allegation and has submitted a report to the committee.

In addition to hearing specific cases, the committees may initiate, as they deem necessary, discussions with appropriate administrators about any matters that fall within the committees' purview. In the course of such discussions, however, they may not commit the faculties of their units to changes in grievance policy unless specifically authorized to do so.

At their discretion, academic departments may also establish grievance committees. Their procedures should be similar to those of the collegiate committees.

2.11.2.2 Grievance Procedures

1. Grievance procedures for all Grievance Committees must adhere to the following basic elements.

- a. The faculty member initiates a grievance by filing a written statement of the grievance, along with supporting documentation, with the Chair of the relevant grievance committee. No grievance may be heard on behalf of a third party or group.
- b. Before the grievance itself is considered, the committee must conclude that the petitioner's case appears to have merit.
- c. The faculty member may withdraw the grievance at any time without the grievance committee's approval. In such case, the grievance committee will not make a decision or recommendation.
- d. No member of the committee with a conflict of interest in the grievance case may participate in the proceedings.
- e. Committees are particularly charged to be alert to instances of inequitable treatment and retaliation against colleagues who have filed grievances.

2. Within a college/school, grievances against fellow faculty members and academic administrators below the level of Dean are heard by the local grievance committee.

- a. If the grievance is against a fellow faculty member, the committee is charged to investigate the facts of the case and determine an appropriate resolution. The grievance committee's decision is final.
- b. If the grievance is against an academic administrator below the level of Dean, the committee is charged to investigate the facts of the case and to recommend a resolution, which is then forwarded to the Dean, whose decision is final.
- c. In cases of alleged violations of academic freedom, the faculty of the college/school acts on its grievance committee's recommendation by formal vote, the outcome of which is final.

3. Grievances against academic administrators at or above the level of Dean are heard by the University Grievance Committee.

- a. If the grievance is against a Dean, the committee's recommendation is forwarded to the Provost, whose decision is final.
- b. If the grievance is against the Provost, the committee's recommendation is forwarded to the President, whose decision is final.
- c. If the grievance is against the President, the committee's recommendation is forwarded to the Rector of the Board of Visitors, whose decision is final.

2.12 Department Chairs

Department chairs serve in a dual capacity: as representatives of their faculty colleagues to the administration and as spokespersons of the administration to their faculty colleagues.

Normally, chairs serve in twelve-month instructional faculty appointments and are subject to all university policies pertaining to twelve-month appointees, including annual leave policies. Their specific responsibilities, including teaching assignments, are negotiated with the administration at the time of appointment. The term of appointment for a department chair is four years; appointments are renewable. Chairs who serve two or more consecutive terms receive at the end of their last term a study leave equivalent to one-half year's pay for a full academic year's leave or full pay for a semester's leave. If they elect to take such a study leave, however, they may not succeed themselves in an additional term as chair.

During an unforeseen vacancy or during illness or temporary absences of an incumbent chair, the Dean or Provost may appoint an acting chair to serve until such time as the regularly appointed chair assumes or reassumes the position.

2.12.1 Duties and Responsibilities

The duties and responsibilities of department chairs are to:

1. Represent the unit to the university community and serve as a channel of communication on program, personnel, and budget matters;
2. Encourage and foster excellence in teaching, research and scholarship, professional and university service and provide leadership in the pursuit of the University's commitment to affirmative action and equal opportunity;
3. Coordinate, in consultation with the unit's faculty, the unit's academic programs, and plan and administer the unit's budget;
4. Make faculty work assignments;
5. Evaluate faculty for purposes of reappointment, promotion, tenure; and make annual reviews for the purpose of recommending salary increases;
6. Supervise staff and part-time faculty and provide an environment that, within the limitations of available resources, is supportive of faculty professional activities and goals;
7. Consult regarding fair employment practices with the Office of Compliance, Diversity and Ethics;
8. Consult with Human Resources and Payroll as appropriate on faculty and staff matters.

2.12.2 Policies on Appointment and Renewal

Department chairs are appointed by the Provost on the recommendation of the departmental faculty and the Dean in accordance with the following guidelines:

- a. Since department chairs function in a dual administrative/faculty capacity, their selection requires substantive involvement of both the administration and the department faculty. Except under unusual circumstances, the final candidate must be acceptable to both.
- b. Procedures for the selection of department chairs therefore foster joint faculty/administrative appraisals of candidates.
- c. Similar criteria for reviewing incumbent chairs and searching for new chairs are applied, with the following clarifications:
 - i. Incumbent chairs under review for renewal are kept fully apprised of the methods adopted by the review committee and are supplied a copy of the committee's report at the time of its submission to the Dean. Chairs have the same rights with regard to their personnel files as other faculty members.
 - ii. An acting chair is considered as a possible candidate for a vacant position rather than as a candidate for renewal of his/her term.
 - iii. Incumbent chairs who are not reappointed by the Provost because of negative recommendations and action at the department, college/school, or university level will receive a prompt account in writing as to the reasons for this non-renewal, if they request it.

2.12.3 Procedures for Appointment and Renewal

2.12.3.1 Search Procedures

Search procedures are initiated after the incumbent chair has declined to seek reappointment, or after the Provost has notified the incumbent chair that he/she will not be reappointed, or when the position is vacant. A search committee is constituted no later than December 10th. This committee consists of five faculty, all of whom must be tenured or tenure-track and will have held a full-time instructional appointment for at least one year: (i) a chair, appointed by the Dean, from among the faculty of the college/school but not of the department; (ii) two faculty, of whom one may be on tenure-track appointment, appointed by the Dean from among the faculty of the department; (iii) two faculty, of whom one may be on tenure-track appointment, elected by the faculty of the department from among its own ranks. The department elects its members of the committee after the appointments by the Dean have been made known. If the qualifications for faculty membership cannot be met, the Dean will appoint an appropriate faculty member. The search committee:

1. consults with the faculty of the department and other persons it deems appropriate about the qualities to be sought in a new chair;
2. seeks qualified candidates from inside or, if the Dean has given notice that external candidates can be considered, from outside the department;
3. requests dossiers, including references, from candidates outside the University, when appropriate;

4. consults regarding fair employment practices with the Office of Compliance, Diversity and Ethics;
5. evaluates qualifications and dossiers of candidates;
6. supervises departmental discussion of candidates and balloting to determine the wishes of the department faculty; and
7. submits to the Dean reports including a general assessment of the several candidates, a summary of departmental discussions, the results of departmental balloting, and its own recommendations.

The Dean reports his/her recommendations and supporting arguments in writing to the Provost and the departmental faculty, including in that report the full report of the committee. If the committee and the departmental faculty are not in agreement or if the Dean does not endorse the majority recommendations of the committee and/or the department faculty, the Dean meets with the committee and/or the faculty to seek an identity of views before submitting the report to the Provost.

If the committee and/or the departmental faculty and the Dean have remained in disagreement or if the Provost does not endorse the joint recommendation of the committee and the Dean, the Provost meets with the committee and the Dean to seek an identity of view.

The Provost acts upon the recommendations received and apprises the Dean, search committee, and the faculty of his/her decision. Upon notification of the Provost's decision, the Dean extends a formal invitation to the person chosen.

If the vacancy is not filled nor an offer extended by May 1st, the Provost, after consultation with the Dean and the faculty of the department, appoints an acting chair and so notifies members of the department by July 1st.

2.12.3.2 Renewal Procedures

The Dean of the appropriate college/school writes to the incumbent chair before the last day of classes of the spring term of the academic year preceding the chair's final year of appointment. In this letter, the Dean states that the chair will be considered a candidate for reappointment unless the chair withdraws from consideration in writing before September 1st.

If the incumbent chair wishes to be a candidate for reappointment, the Dean constitutes by September 15th a committee to elicit and formulate the views of the faculty of the department. The committee is constituted according to the specifications governing the composition of the search committee described in [Section 2.12.3.1](#).

The committee consults with the department faculty and other persons it deems appropriate concerning the past performance of the chair and the desirability of the chair's renewal. The committee ascertains the will of the department faculty and makes recommendations in writing

to the Dean no later than October 15th. The report includes the division of departmental and committee balloting by numbers only.

The Dean makes a recommendation to the Provost by November 1st. The Provost decides whether or not to reappoint the incumbent chair by December 1st and promptly communicates this decision and supporting reasons in writing to the Dean, the committee, the departmental faculty, and the chair.

2.12.4 Removal

The faculty of a department, under extraordinary circumstances, may petition the Dean to remove a chair who no longer enjoys the trust and confidence of the faculty. A petition of this type will be conveyed to the Dean only if supported by at least three-fourths of the tenure-track and tenured faculty of the department. Upon receipt of such a petition, the Dean, after having inquired into the circumstances which have resulted in the petition, will make a recommendation to the Provost whether or not the removal of the chair is in the best interests of the department and/or the University. The Provost will make the final determination.

The Provost, under extraordinary circumstances, and in consultation with the Dean and the faculty, may remove a chair who is failing to perform at an acceptable level, even when the chair is covered by a multi-year contract. The Provost will give the chair at least thirty days notice.

2.13 Directors of Academic Programs Spanning More Than a Single Academic Unit

Administratively, directors of programs that are not internal to a single local academic unit are regarded as the equivalent of department chairs. They have the same duties and responsibilities as department chairs except that, since faculty members are not appointed to primary affiliation in a program faculty, they do not make primary evaluations of faculty for purposes of reappointment, promotion, and tenure, and they do not make primary annual reviews for the purpose of recommending salary increases.

Policies on appointment and renewal of directors of academic programs are the same as those described for department chairs in [Section 2.12.2](#) and [Section 2.12.3](#). These procedures may be modified as appropriate to the size and complexity of the program to be directed. Program directors are subject to removal in accordance with the provisions set out for department chairs in [Section 2.12.4](#).

CHAPTER III. FACULTY COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

3.1 Faculty Salaries

State colleges and universities in the Commonwealth of Virginia do not have a common salary schedule. The General Assembly determines appropriations for state colleges and universities, which includes funding for faculty salaries.

The University attempts to be as competitive as possible in its recruitment and retention of faculty. The differences that are found among disciplines and departments with regard to salary ranges within a given academic rank partially reflect supply and demand in the marketplace.

Faculty salaries for the current academic year appear on the Faculty Senate website.

3.2 Salary Increases

Subject to the availability of funding, salary increases are given annually. The annual salary increase is confirmed to the faculty member by a letter from the Provost.

Annual salary increases are based chiefly on performance. All faculty with a satisfactory performance rating will receive at least a minimum salary increment. Salary increases may also reflect efforts to achieve equity. In the case that funding from the state is designated as a cost-of-living adjustment, it is the responsibility of the University to ensure such funds are disbursed accordingly.

Faculty members who are dissatisfied with a salary increase normally seek recourse within their local academic unit. If dissatisfaction persists, grievance procedures outlined in [Section 2.11.2](#) may be followed.

3.3 Summer Salary

The University offers a summer program consisting of several sessions. Full-time faculty members assigned to teach a summer course shall be paid 3.33% per credit hour (10% per three-credit course) of their nine-month salary. If a course is valued at a higher or lower amount for workload purposes during the academic year, the summer payment will be assigned by the academic unit accordingly. Every full-time faculty member who wishes to teach in the summer shall be afforded an opportunity to teach one 3-credit course (or equivalent) at 10% of their annual nine-month salary, assuming he or she is qualified to teach the course and that the course meets minimal enrollment criteria and appropriate scheduling, curricular, and pedagogical needs. Furthermore, full-time faculty should not be excluded from teaching additional courses at 10% of their annual nine-month salary when no demonstrated financial constraints exist. Grievances over what constitutes financial constraints should be resolved at the local level, but if no agreement can be reached, then the Provost and the Faculty Senate's Executive Committee will be the designated body to resolve the disagreement. Summer teaching is optional, and in no case may it be required of a faculty member. Faculty may be paid no more than one third of their prior academic year salary for all summer work, regardless of funding sources.

Faculty members whose contracts end in the spring semester prior to the start of summer, or whose contracts begin in the fall semester after the summer semester, will be paid for summer teaching according to the salary matrix. Exceptions can only be granted by the Provost Office.

Faculty and LAU administrators on 12-month contracts who teach during the summer do not earn additional pay for teaching unless the teaching assignment is an overload assignment. Overload teaching is paid according to the salary matrix and must be approved by the Provost.

3.4 Salary Matrix

Most adjunct faculty and full-time faculty teaching overload courses are paid on the salary matrix. Faculty in highly competitive areas of instruction may be paid above matrix rates. These exceptions are considered on an individual basis and in light of the prevailing job market.

3.5 Faculty Benefits

As employees of the Commonwealth of Virginia, Mason faculty members are provided with health insurance, retirement plans, life insurance, and medical and child care flexible spending accounts. In addition, the University offers certain employee-funded benefits. All such benefits are described in more detail on the Human Resources and Payroll web site (<http://hr.gmu.edu/>), along with a Total Compensation Calculator.

3.6 Faculty Development

The quality of the institution depends on the vitality of its faculty. Faculty members have a responsibility to continue to grow as scholars and educators so that they remain contributing members of the intellectual community. The University recognizes its responsibility to foster faculty growth by providing a variety of opportunities for professional development. These may include, among other opportunities, departmental study leaves, competitive awards in the form of summer stipends and University study leaves, opportunities to consider new approaches to teaching and the assessment of teaching (e.g. portfolio development), and assisting faculty with the application of new technologies to instruction.

3.6.1 Study Leave for Tenure-Track Faculty

All tenure-track assistant and associate professors will be granted a one-semester study leave at some point during the first five years of their tenure-track appointment. The leave is at full pay and benefits. This leave is designed to assist a tenure-track faculty member in advancing his or her research, scholarly, or creative activities. The timing of this leave will be subject to approval by both the respective local academic unit head and the appropriate Dean. The Office of the Provost will provide one-course matrix replacement funding per granted leave request. This leave policy is not intended to conflict with an existing local academic unit practice; rather than reducing a local academic unit's flexibility, its intent is to enhance and supplement existing practices. During the semester either prior to or succeeding the faculty member's leave, the local academic unit may need to ask the recipient to teach one additional course in order to accommodate this leave. Full details and application procedures are available from the Provost Office's web site (<http://provost.gmu.edu/>).

3.6.2 Leave Programs for Tenured Instructional Faculty

There are two leave programs for tenured faculty. One is administered by the Provost's Office. The other is administered at the local academic unit level. The purpose of these leave programs is to support professional development initiatives designed to advance scholarly research, teaching, and/or creative activity, including the development of innovative teaching approaches and methods. Leaves are for one semester at full pay and full benefits or an academic year at half pay with full benefits (based on 50% of their base salary). Full details and application procedures for each of these programs are available on the Provost Office's web site (<http://provost.gmu.edu/>).

Eligibility for the Provost Office Study Leave Program for Tenured Instructional Faculty:

Faculty must be tenured, with six years of service at Mason, and have completed six years of such service since a previous study leave. This six-year period includes time spent on leave of absence, unless such leave includes time worked at another agency or institution, in which case an exception must be approved and granted by the Vice President for Research.

A faculty member who receives a study leave must agree to remain a full-time employee of the University for at least one academic year after the conclusion of the leave.

A faculty member who accepts a study leave must agree to serve as a reviewer of future applications at least once.

Eligibility for LAU Professional Development Leaves:

Faculty must be tenured, with six years of service at Mason, and have completed six years of service since a previous study leave. This six-year period includes time spent on leave of absence, unless such leave includes time worked at another agency or institution, in which case an exception must be approved and granted by the Vice President for Research.

A faculty member who receives a professional development leave must agree to remain a full-time employee of the University for at least one academic year after the conclusion of the leave.

Local academic units are responsible for establishing the procedures, criteria and deadlines for submission and review of leave proposals. Local academic units are also responsible for obtaining approval of leave proposals by their Dean and the Provost. The timing of a leave may be delayed if in the judgment of the LAU administrator, the faculty member's services are needed for a particular semester.

3.7 Retirement

From time to time the University, and particular academic units, may develop programs to assist faculty with the transition to retirement. Faculty contemplating this transition should discuss their options with their Dean and with the Human Resources and Payroll department.

3.8 Conversion Factors

Instructional faculty who convert from an administrative or professional faculty contract are governed by the policies of the [Administrative Faculty Handbook](#). Consult this source for information on related matters such as Section IV. Compensation Policies.