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October 15, 2009 (original)

Responsible Executive: University President

Applicability: All University employees

Review By: February 16, 2027

I. INTRODUCTION

This Policy on Policies (the “Policy”) governs the process by which most University policies are created, amended, and communicated at Auburn University, the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, and the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station. Auburn University at Montgomery campus policies are subject to a separate process.

The University’s policies are important statements of our institution’s values, operational principles and practices, and other matters of importance to our campus community. This Policy establishes a process for creating and amending those policies that is efficient and timely, ensures thorough review by appropriate stakeholders, and upholds the University’s commitment to shared governance.

II. POLICY SCOPE

The process described herein applies to university policies that address significant institutional matters, apply to all or a large portion of the campus community or are required by legal authorities. This Policy does not govern matters that are solely within the scope of the Auburn University Faculty Handbook. Policies maintained by the Board of Trustees of Auburn University are not subject to this Policy.

Policies that govern only the internal operations or standards of individual University units, colleges, offices, or departments generally are not subject to the process described herein. If internal unit policies conflict with a university policy, then the University policy will control.

All University policies must be consistent with applicable legal authorities and Board of Trustees policies, resolutions, and other directives.

University policies and amendments subject to this Policy are considered to be adopted and effective

upon approval by the President or the President’s designee (hereinafter, “President”), as outlined herein, unless otherwise specified in the policy. Policy rescissions are effective upon approval by the President. The President may modify the Policy on Policies at any time.

III. EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE

The policy process is supervised by the Executive Policy Committee (“Committee”), which consists of the Executive Vice President, Provost, Vice President for Business and Finance, Vice President for Student Affairs, Associate Vice President for the Office of Audit Compliance and Privacy, General Counsel, and their respective designees.

The Committee may determine the manner in which it deliberates and conducts the activities described herein and may invite other members on a temporary, ad hoc basis. The Committee is not required to hold formal votes on matters it is charged with deciding.

The Office of the General Counsel will provide logistical support as requested by the Committee.

IV. POLICY PROCEDURES

A. Process for Developing Policies and Amendments

University policies and policy amendments must be developed according to the process described in this Section IV.A. References herein to policy proposals and drafts include proposals and drafts of policy amendments.

Step 1: The Responsible Executive submits the policy proposal.

University policies may be proposed by a Responsible Executive, who supervises the unit, office, or department with operational responsibility for the matters addressed in the proposed policy. “Responsible Executive” means a Vice President, Associate Vice President, Dean, Director, or equivalent position.

Policy proposals must be presented to the General Counsel, at policy@auburn.edu, using the form attached as **Exhibit A**. Proposals should include an explanation of the need for the policy, a summary of the proposed content, and a list of stakeholders.

Before submitting the policy proposal, the Responsible Executive should consult with and incorporate appropriate feedback from the units, offices, and/or departments that would assist in interpreting, managing, or enforcing the matters discussed in the proposal.

Amendments to existing policies should be proposed by the Responsible Executive designated in the policy.

Step 2: The Committee reviews the policy proposal.

After a proposal is completed and submitted, it will be reviewed by the Committee. The Committee may require substantive modifications, additional information, consultation with other stakeholders, or other changes or conditions.

After completing its review of the policy proposal, the Committee, in its sole discretion, may approve the proposal and direct that a corresponding draft policy be prepared. If the Committee determines that a policy proposal does not merit further action, then the process described herein is terminated.

Step 3: A draft of the proposed policy is prepared.

If the Committee determines that it is appropriate to prepare a draft of the proposed policy, then the Responsible Executive will prepare a draft. The Committee may direct the Responsible Executive to collaborate with the General Counsel in preparing the policy or amendment.

Completed drafts must be submitted to the General Counsel at policy@auburn.edu. Drafts should be submitted in the format attached as Exhibit B.

Step 4: The Committee reviews the draft policy.

After the draft policy is completed, the Committee may review it and require modifications, additional information, consultation with specific affected units, or other changes or conditions.

After completing its review of the draft policy, the Committee, in its sole discretion, may determine that the draft policy should be advanced for final consideration. If so, the Committee must distribute the draft policy to the campus stakeholder groups identified in Step 5.

If the Committee determines that a draft policy does not merit further action, then the process described herein is terminated.

Step 5: The Committee distributes the proposed policy to campus stakeholder groups.

Before a proposed policy may be adopted, the Committee must distribute it to the University Senate, the Administrative and Professional Assembly, the Staff Council, the Student Government Association, and the stakeholders identified in paragraph IV.A. Step 1. The Committee will retain written records reflecting distribution of the policy for as long as the policy remains in effect.

Except for interim policies (discussed in Section IV.C), proposed policies must be distributed to the campus stakeholder groups identified above at least ten working days prior to approval by the President.

After expiration of the ten-day period, the Committee must consider any input received and may require corresponding modifications to the proposed policy that the Committee, in its sole discretion, deems appropriate.

Step 6: The President decides whether to approve the proposed policy.

After expiration of the ten-day period and the Committee's review of comments, the President may approve, decline to approve, or take no action regarding a proposed policy. The President may require modifications, consultation with other stakeholders, or additional information before approving a proposed policy. So long as the Committee circulates a proposed policy once in accordance with Step 5, the Committee is not required to re-circulate that policy if subsequent non-substantive modifications are made prior to adoption.

Proposed University policies are considered to be adopted and effective upon approval by the President, unless otherwise specified in the policy.

Upon adoption, the policy will be promptly communicated to campus constituencies.

The Responsible Executive for each policy must implement, oversee enforcement of, and monitor compliance with such policy in the manner described therein.

B. University Policy Website and Records

The Committee will maintain an up-to-date website reflecting the University's policies, which must be accessible by the University community and will constitute the sole official record of university policies in effect at a given time. The website may be organized and presented in the manner determined by the Committee.

The Committee also must maintain appropriate supporting documentation for each policy and amendment, including records reflecting approval by the President, distribution of proposed policies to campus constituencies, and prior versions of policies.

The Committee may approve modifications to existing policies without following the process described in Section IV.A if the modifications do not substantially change the policy and are intended to correct errors, clarify existing policy language, ensure consistency with other existing policies, or make the policy consistent with law.

C. Interim Policies

In exceptional cases, the President may approve interim University policies and amendments in order to address urgent health, safety, legal, compliance, and/or operational needs.

Such interim policies and amendments will be distributed to the campus stakeholder groups, as described in Section IV.A. Step 5, within thirty days after the interim approval. After the interim policy or amendment has been distributed, it may be permanently approved by the President, with appropriate modifications, in the manner described in Section IV.A. Steps 5 and 6.

D. Periodic Policy Reviews

The Responsible Executive for each University policy must perform a periodic review of such policy to ensure that it remains consistent with institutional needs, legal requirements, and best practices.

Before recommending a policy for approval, the Committee will identify an appropriate review cycle for the policy (*e.g.*, reviewed every three years).

Proposed policy amendments arising from these periodic reviews must be handled in accordance with the ordinary procedures described in Section IV.A.

E. Policy Rescissions

University policies may be rescinded pursuant to the same procedures by which a policy is proposed or amended, as described in Section IV.A.

F. University Policies Currently in Effect

University policies in effect at the time that this Policy is adopted will remain in full force and effect, even though they were not originally approved in accordance with the processes outlined in this Policy. Subsequent modifications to any such policies will be subject to compliance with this Policy.

V. ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY

University policies are not contracts. Rather, they are a collection of administrative requirements and standards that govern the conduct of university business. University administrators, executives, and other campus leaders retain the authority to perform the customary functions of management and to use appropriate discretion in the exercise of their responsibilities. University policies may be created or modified at any time.