1. PURPOSE

This policy establishes guidelines for the faculty credentialing to ensure the employment of faculty members who are qualified to accomplish the mission and goals of the University. It is the policy of this University to ensure that all faculty are qualified to teach courses they are assigned, as per the requirements outlined in Section 6: Faculty of the Principles of Accreditation, and Interpretations on Standard 6.2.a from the Interpretations to The Principles of Accreditation set forth by our accrediting body, The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

SACSCOC requires institutions to justify and document the qualifications of their faculty members to carry out the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of its academic programs.

2. DEFINITIONS

2.1 Academic Program Coordinator: A faculty member assigned the administrative responsibility for the coordination and oversight of the undergraduate degree program, responsibility for directing the learning enterprise, including overseeing and coordinating educational programs to ensure that each contains essential curricular components, has appropriate content and pedagogy, and maintains discipline currency. Other titles for this position include undergraduate program directors, program chairs, and lead faculty.

2.2 Graduate Program Director: A faculty member assigned the administrative responsibility for the coordination and oversight of the graduate degree program, responsibility for directing the learning enterprise, including overseeing and coordinating education programs to ensure that each contains essential curricular components, has appropriate content and pedagogy, and maintains discipline currency.

2.3 Instructor of Record: the faculty member who provides direct course instruction.

2.4 Non-Instructional Faculty: Individuals who are not assigned as the Instructor of Record for a course but who substantially engage in any of the following instructional activities: providing direct instruction, assessing, or providing feedback to students, communicating with students regarding course content or assessments, and other instructional activities typically associated with an instructor of a course. For the purpose of this policy, non-instructional faculty include Corporate Fellows, Community Fellows, and Graduate Teaching Assistants.

2.5 Official Transcripts: a transcript or other academic record that includes official notation. Each official transcript must meet the authentication criteria based on the issuing institution's standards. The transcripts must possess all of the following:

    a) the issuing institution's official seal;

    b) the signature of the appropriate authorizing agent, preferably the institution's registrar;

    c) the institution's official letterhead or stationery;

    d) the institution's watermark or other identifier;

    e) date of issue.

2.6 U.S. Degrees: Degrees earned in the United States from an institution regionally accredited by an agency recognized by the United States Department of Education or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

3. POLICY

3.1 Academic Program Coordinators (referred to as Program Coordinators), Graduate Program Directors (referred to as Program Directors), Instructors of Record, and Non-Instructional Faculty must be properly credentialed in the program they serve, as defined in 3.2.

3.2 There are two ways in which a faculty member can be credentialed as an Instructor of Record, Program Coordinator, or Program Director: Standard Academic Degree Case for Credentialing or Alternative Case for Credentialing.

    3.2.1. Standard Academic Degree Case for Credentialing (referred to as Standard Credentialing): Standard credentialing requires a graduate degree in the teaching discipline, a closely related field, or a different discipline with at least 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline. In the absence of a completed master's degree, an equivalent concentration can be established through official documentation confirming that as part of the faculty member's doctoral or terminal degree program, the equivalent of a master's degree was achieved.

    3.2.2. Alternative Case for Credentialing (referred to as Alternative Credentialing): A faculty member can be credentialed using non-standard qualifications. This may include coursework and non-academic teaching qualifications. Decisions about alternative credentialing are based on competence, effectiveness, and expertise related to teaching. Evidence for an alternative case may include scholarly records, work experience, and excellence in teaching in the discipline.

3.3 In the case of a department or an interdisciplinary program housing two or more-degree programs directed by different academic disciplines, a Program Coordinator or Director

might not be academically qualified in each teaching discipline. In that case, additional faculty who play a lead role in the development and review of the curriculum should be identified on the Program Coordinator or Director's credentials form.

3.4   Instructors of Record and Program Directors of graduate programs, or graduate certificate programs must have a terminal degree in the program discipline and play a lead role in developing and reviewing the curriculum of the graduate program.

3.5   Faculty members teaching courses that are cross-listed across disciplines or programs must be credentialed for one of the cross-listed courses.

3.6   Department Chairs are responsible for ensuring that at least one credentialed Instructor of Record is assigned to each credit-bearing course section in their departments before the start date of the academic term. Department Chairs are also responsible for ensuring that a credentialed faculty member serves as the Program Coordinator or Director for every program in their department.

3.7   Each faculty member serving as an Instructor of Record, Non-Instructional Faculty, Program Coordinator, or Program Director must have an approved Credentialing Packet on file in the department and the Office of the Provost before the first day of class for the semester in which they are serving in the discipline. Included in the Credentialing Packet are the following:

   a) A Faculty Credential Form

   b) All relevant official transcript(s) for credentialing the faculty member in the teaching discipline(s), and

   c) A current curriculum vitae (past 5 years).

3.8   If a faculty member is unable to obtain an official transcript due to an extreme circumstance, as determined by the Department Chair and Dean and approved by the Provost, an unofficial transcript may be acceptable.

3.9   Non-U.S. Degrees: For foreign degrees, a U.S. equivalency evaluation must be provided by an agency that is a member of the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) or is approved by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), such as World Education Services (WES) or Global Credential Evaluators (GCE). Document equivalency for non-US degrees must be approved by the Department Chair, Dean, and Provost.

3.10   The Department Chair or designee is responsible for collecting and submitting a Credentialing Packet to the Office of the Provost before beginning the hiring or appointment process for the faculty member to serve as the Instructor of Record, Non-Instructional Faculty, Program Coordinator, or Director.

3.11   In disciplines where a non-doctoral degree is widely considered the terminal degree, the Department Chair or a designee and the Dean are responsible for articulating the basis for designating other related degrees as terminal degrees. Any disagreement regarding

terminal degree status shall be resolved by the Provost. The decision of the Provost in such matters is final.

3.12 The Department Chair or designee and Dean are responsible for identifying the appropriate credentials within the program discipline. Any disagreement regarding the appropriateness of specific degree titles or disciplinary designations shall be resolved by the Provost. The decision of the Provost in such matters is final.

3.13 For existing faculty members intending to serve as Instructor of Record of a course for which the faculty member has not been credentialed, the Department Chair or designee is responsible for submitting an updated Credentialing Packet as necessary. It is the responsibility of the faculty member to notify the Department Chair or designee that they need to be re-credentialed.

4. PROCEDURES

4.1 The specific process for the credentialing of faculty shall be established and made public on the Academic Affairs website by the Office of the Provost.

4.2 Official transcripts shall be issued to the Office of the Provost through regular mail or through email for official digital transcripts.

4.3 The Credentialing Packet must be reviewed by the Department Chair, College Dean, and if approved, forwarded to the Office of the Provost for review by the Provost or the Provost's designee and the University's SACSCOC Institutional Liaison. Any dispute regarding the acceptability of alternative qualifications shall be resolved by the Provost. The decision of the Provost in such matters is final.

4.4 All new and updated forms and associated documentation should be reviewed, fully approved, and filed in the Office of the Provost before the beginning of the course(s) to be taught.

5. REVIEW PROCESS

Responsible Party (Reviewer): Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

Review Period: Every 5 years on or before June 1, or as needed

Signed original on file.

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President

6. POLICY HISTORY

Issue #1: 06/28/2024 (this issue)

7. REFERENCES

Section 6: Faculty of The Principles of Accreditation

Interpretations on Standard 6.2.a from the Interpretations to The Principles of Accreditation

8. EXHIBITS

There are no exhibits associated with this PS.