



# Faculty Handbook

*the* FRIENDLIEST CAMPUS *in the* SOUTH

# Chapter 1

## University Overview, Organization, and Governance

### 1.1 UNIVERSITY OVERVIEW (formerly Forward: Introduction)

#### 1.1.1 INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup> (formerly Forward: Introduction)

The Jacksonville State University (JSU) faculty handbook, as approved by the Board of Trustees, is the result of a collaborative effort among members of the Faculty Senate, the faculty at large, and the Academic Affairs leadership team. It is meant to guide faculty through their careers at JSU and help them navigate the policies and procedures in place at the university. It outlines the university overview, organization, and governance ([Chapter 1](#)), faculty rights and responsibilities ([Chapter 2](#)), hiring procedures and academic ranks ([Chapter 3](#)), faculty annual reviews and reappointment ([Chapter 4](#)), promotion and tenure ([Chapter 5](#)), separation, termination, and grievance ([Chapter 6](#)), academic policies ([Chapter 7](#)), salaries and extra compensation ([Chapter 8](#)), leave and benefits ([Chapter 9](#)), and academic support ([Chapter 10](#)). These links will take the reader to the [Faculty Senate Constitution](#) and the [Faculty Senate Bylaws](#).

This handbook serves as a reference manual for faculty members and administration. It is the product of these two groups, which reflects broad-based participation in the governance of the university. The Faculty Handbook is a compilation of selected faculty-related policies, regulations, procedures, and guidelines currently in operation. This handbook is housed on the Academic Affairs webpage<sup>2</sup> and individual policies and chapters will be periodically updated by the Faculty Handbook Committee, through the handbook review process outlined in Section 1.3.8.

Per Title 16, Chapter 52, of the Alabama Code of 1975 and the By-Laws of the Board of Trustees (BOT) of JSU, the Board of Trustees and President of JSU may establish university-wide policy outside the guidance of the policies and procedures described in this handbook. When official university-wide policies are changed by the Board of Trustees or other duly constituted authority, such changes become effective on the date designated at the time of their adoption and supersede any contrary provisions of the Faculty Handbook. State and Federal law also supersede any policies or procedures outlined in this handbook. Policies that apply to all employees are found in the Policies and Procedures Manual housed under the Finance and Administration webpage.<sup>3</sup>

#### History of Jacksonville State University (formerly 1.1)

From modest beginnings, Jacksonville State University has evolved into the educational center of Northeast Alabama. The Alabama Legislature, in the 1882-83 session, created a state normal school when Governor Edward O'Neal signed into law a bill creating the school on February 22, 1883.

Jacksonville State Normal School acquired the facilities and equipment of Calhoun College, consisting of twelve acres of land and a two-story brick building. The Board of Directors elected James G. Ryals,

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<sup>1</sup> Revised 06/2023; 11/2024

<sup>2</sup> [Faculty Handbook - Academic Affairs \(jsu.edu\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Policies and Procedures Manual - Finance and Administration \(jsu.edu\)](#)

Jr., as the first president. The school opened with three instructors: W. J. Borden, mathematics; Eliza A. Bowen, English; and Ida J. Woodward, primary department. As stipulated in the establishing act, the Normal School administered a preparatory school for children of the town and surrounding areas. At the end of the first year, on August 15, 1884, William Mark Hames, President of the Board of Directors, reported that funds totaling \$4,751.25 had been received, including \$2,500 from the state; that twenty-five students were enrolled in the normal school; and that two hundred twenty-two were in the preparatory school.

The normal school remained in operation until 1930, when it became Jacksonville State Teachers College. Five years later, the college earned regional accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The name again changed to Jacksonville State College in 1957 when the first graduate program—the master's degree in elementary education—was created. On August 2, 1966, the legislature authorized the State Board of Education to elevate the college to university status. On August 17, 1967, the legislature established an independent board of trustees for the university and divested jurisdiction from the State Board of Education.

Jacksonville State University has been served by thirteen presidents: James G. Ryals, Jr. (1883-85), J. Harris Chappell (1885-86), Carleton Bartlett Gibson (1886-92), J. B. Jarrett (1892-93), Jacob Forney IV (1893-99), Clarence William Daugette (1899-1942), Houston Cole (1942-71), Ernest Stone (1971-81), Theron E. Montgomery (1981-86), Harold J. McGee (1986-99), William A. Meehan (1999-2015), John M. Beehler (2015-2019) and Don C. Killingsworth, Jr. (2020-present).

### **1.1.2 MISSION STATEMENT<sup>4</sup> (formerly 1.2)**

Jacksonville State University, a learning-centered community, provides distinctive educational, cultural, and societal experiences to prepare students to be competent, ethical professionals and engaged, responsible, global citizens.

#### **Definition of Learning-Centered Community<sup>5</sup> (new)**

At Jacksonville State University, a public, regional comprehensive institution, we believe that students, faculty, and staff comprise a community of learners. We believe it is important for learners to take responsibility for their learning, which means presenting a willingness to learn, being proactive in the acquisition of knowledge, and behaving with integrity and honesty in the learning environment. We believe that learning takes place when learners are engaged, assumptions are challenged, expectations are shared, and relationships are built around the purpose of learning.

Jacksonville State University promotes a learning environment with relevant programs of study supported by current technologies, opportunities for experiential learning and other high impact practices, and flexibility in the learning process. Faculty will use various methods of teaching to meet different learning preferences and will set learning outcomes that emphasize the application of knowledge, ensuring that graduates are prepared with skills necessary for careers in a global marketplace.

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<sup>4</sup> Revised 06/2023

<sup>5</sup> Revised 01/2024

### 1.1.3 STRATEGIC PLAN<sup>6</sup> (new)

The 2023 strategic plan is to reach, engage, and discover.<sup>7</sup>

- REACH: As a thriving learning community, we depend on a strong financial foundation based on diverse student enrollment, a spirit of generosity, and a culture of accountability.
- ENGAGE: As a university, we ensure the vibrancy of our campus, community, and region through the benefit of belonging, mutual relationship, and power of place.
- DISCOVER: As educators, we do not provide the answers. We provide the experiences, environments, and expectations that allow learners to discover the answers.

### 1.1.4 UNIVERSITY ACCREDITATION<sup>8</sup> (formerly 1.5)

Accreditation seeks to ensure constituents and the public that the quality and integrity of higher educational institutions meet acceptable levels of quality. These outcomes are achieved through rigorous internal and external peer review processes during which the institution is evaluated against a common set of standards. Jacksonville State University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), an accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education (USDE), which it means that JSU has (1) a mission appropriate to higher education, (2) resources, programs, and services sufficient to accomplish and sustain its mission, (3) clearly specified educational objectives that are consistent with its mission and appropriate to the degrees it offers, and that it is (4) successful in assessing its achievement of these objectives and demonstrating improvements.<sup>9</sup> Accreditation by SACSCOC is a statement of the institution's continuing commitment to quality and integrity as well as its capacity to provide effective programs and services based on agreed-upon accreditation standards.

#### **Jacksonville State University Accreditation Statement**

Jacksonville State University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award baccalaureate, masters, educational specialist, and doctorate degrees. Jacksonville State University also may offer credentials such as certificates and diplomas at approved degree levels. Questions about the accreditation of Jacksonville State University may be directed in writing to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, GA 30033-4097, by calling (404) 679-4500, or by using information available on SACSCOC's website ([www.sacscoc.org](http://www.sacscoc.org)).

In addition to JSU's regional accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award bachelor's, master's, education specialist, and doctoral degrees, the university offers many programs that have received specialized accreditation from state, regional and/or national professional associations and boards.<sup>10</sup>

### 1.1.5 JSU ORGANIZATIONAL CHART<sup>11</sup> (new)

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<sup>6</sup> Revised 01/2024

<sup>7</sup> [JSU STRATEGIC PLAN | HOME](#)

<sup>8</sup> Revised 01/2024

<sup>9</sup> [FAQs - SACSCOC](#)

<sup>10</sup> [Accreditations and Licensing Information](#)

<sup>11</sup> Revised 01/2024

This chart outlines the current organizational structure of JSU.<sup>12</sup> The organizational structure is provided to assist faculty with understanding the different divisions within JSU and who the administrative head is of each of these divisions.

## **1.2 ACADEMIC AFFAIRS/ADMINISTRATIVE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE (formerly 1.6)**

### **1.2.1 BOARD OF TRUSTEES<sup>13</sup> (formerly 1.6.1)**

As described in the Code of Alabama, “The Board of Trustees is the governing body for Jacksonville State University. The Board has the statutory authority to organize the university; to appoint the faculty and other employees; to fix salaries and compensation and increase or reduce the same at its discretion; to regulate, alter, or modify the government of the university; to prescribe courses of instruction and rates of tuition and fees; to confer degrees; and to do whatever else it may deem best for promoting the interests of the university.”<sup>14</sup>

“The Board of Trustees shall consist of two members from the congressional district in which the institution is located, one from each of the other congressional districts in the state, two at-large members from this state, two at-large members from members who reside either within or outside of this state, and the Governor, who shall be ex officio president of the board. The trustees shall be appointed by the Governor, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate and shall be appointed to hold office for a term of six years and until their successors shall be appointed and qualified. No trustee shall be appointed to serve more than a total of three full terms. No trustee shall receive any pay or emolument other than his or her actual expenses incurred in the discharge of his or her duties as such. A trustee who has attained the age of 75 years during a term of office may continue to serve until the expiration of that term. A trustee who has departed the board and who has attained the age of 70 years or older may be designated by the board as a Trustee Emeritus and may receive such honorary privileges as conferred by the board. No employee of Jacksonville State University shall be eligible to serve on its Board of Trustees.”<sup>15</sup>

“The Board of Trustees holds its annual meeting at the university on the third Monday in October. Quarterly meetings are scheduled at this session unless the board determines to hold its meetings at other times. Special meetings of the board may be called by the Governor or upon the written application of any three members of the board.”

“The Board appoints the President and other officers of the university. The President serves as the Secretary to the Board.”

### **1.2.2 PRESIDENT<sup>16</sup> (formerly 1.6.2)**

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<sup>12</sup> [Organizational Chart - Office of the President \(jsu.edu\)](#)

<sup>13</sup> Revised 06/2023; 07/2024

<sup>14</sup> [AL Code § 16-52-6 \(2023\)](#)

<sup>15</sup> [AL Code § 16-52-3 \(2024\)](#)

<sup>16</sup> Revised 06/2023

The Board of Trustees invests the President with full administrative responsibility for the institution. As the chief executive and administrative officer of the university, the President is responsible for the governance of the institution and for carrying out the policies of the board.

In the implementation of the overall administrative responsibility for the university, the president seeks the advice and assistance of faculty, students, and administrative personnel. This assistance is accomplished primarily through elected and appointed faculty and student representatives and through administrative appointments and delegations of authority.

### **1.2.3 PROVOST AND EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS<sup>17</sup> (formerly 1.6.3)**

The Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs (Provost/EVPAA) has administrative jurisdiction over all academic affairs personnel and programs. The Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs recommends to the President long-range plans for academic affairs development and formulates policies to implement approved plans, coordinates and furnishes direction and guidance to the associate vice presidents and deans in the development and operation of their academic affairs programs, presides at meetings of the academic faculty, and serves as chair of the University Executive Council and the Extended Deans' Council. All academic affairs personnel and departments report through their appropriate department heads and deans/directors to the Provost/EVPAA who, in turn, reports to the President.

### **1.2.4 VICE PROVOST<sup>18</sup> (formerly 1.6.4)**

The Vice Provost reports to the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs. The Vice Provost is responsible for divisional activities such as, but not limited to, the Rebecca O. Turner Faculty Commons, dual enrollment, institutional research and effectiveness, International House and programs, sponsored programs, and Online@JSU. The Vice Provost is a member of the University Executive Council, Extended Deans' Council, and other standing committees as deemed appropriate by the Provost/EVPAA and president.

### **1.2.5 COLLEGE DEANS<sup>19</sup> (formerly 1.6.6 and 1.6.7)**

College deans (including the Dean of Library Services) are responsible for coordinating and managing the operations within their respective colleges. Deans report to the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs. The individual dean is the administrator of the college and serves as a liaison between the Provost/EVPAA and the college. College deans have certain responsibilities for personnel matters; the development and maintenance of programs, plans, and goals for the college; and other assigned duties. College deans are members of the Extended Deans' Council and the University Executive Council.

### **1.2.6 DEPARTMENT HEADS<sup>20</sup> (formerly 1.6.8)**

Department heads are responsible for the general direction and supervision of their departments. Department heads report to their respective deans. The department head is an administrator and the academic leader of the faculty in the development of the department's programs, plans, and goals.

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<sup>17</sup> Revised 06/2023

<sup>18</sup> Revised 01/2024

<sup>19</sup> Revised 06/2023; 01/2024

<sup>20</sup> Revised 06/2023

The department head maintains liaison between the department, the dean, and external agencies. Department heads are members of the Department Head Council.

### **1.2.7 FACULTY<sup>21</sup> (formerly 2.1)**

All regular full-time faculty, temporary full-time faculty, temporary part-time faculty, adjunct faculty, visiting faculty, special appointment faculty, department heads, and administrators with faculty rank comprise the faculty. A ranked faculty member is an employee of the university who has been appointed to one of the six regular full-time academic ranks: instructor, distinguished instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, professor, or distinguished professor. Librarians have the same rank structure as faculty.

## **1.3 GENERAL INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE (formerly 1.7)**

### **1.3.1 UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE COUNCIL<sup>22</sup> (formerly 1.7.1)**

The University Executive Council represents all divisions of the university and serves as the main administrative unit that recommends policy to the President. The Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs serves as chair of the University Executive Council and establishes additional standing and ad hoc committees as deemed necessary.

### **1.3.2 EXTENDED DEANS' COUNCIL<sup>23</sup> (formerly 1.7.2)**

The Extended Deans' Council serves as an advisory unit to the Provost/EVPAA. This council is composed of college deans as well as administrative deans. Other leadership positions within Academic Affairs also sit on the council to include the Vice Provosts and Associate/Assistant Vice Provosts, the Registrar, the Director of Academic Resources and Business Operations, the Executive Director of Accreditation, Director of the Honors Program, the Faculty Senate President, and the Department Head Council co-chair. This body is predominantly focused on information sharing and general discussion of academic related items. The voting members of this group are the college deans.

### **1.3.3 DEPARTMENT HEAD COUNCIL<sup>24</sup> (new)**

The Department Head Council consists of department heads from all colleges. This council serves as an advisory body to the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and as a means of communication between departments, the Provost/EVPAA, and the university at large. Two co-chairpersons representing different colleges with staggered three-year terms are appointed by the Provost/EVPAA with the council's assent. The co-chairpersons will serve three years, with the option of renewable terms.

### **1.3.4 STAFF COUNCIL<sup>25</sup> (new)**

The Staff Council was created as a shared governance body to serve as an advisory body to the governing authorities of the University and to serve as a clearinghouse for issues and concerns of the

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<sup>21</sup> Revised 06/2023; 02/2024

<sup>22</sup> Revised 06/2023

<sup>23</sup> Revised 06/2023

<sup>24</sup> Revised 01/2024

<sup>25</sup> Revised 11/2024



staff at large and work to promote a better understanding of, cooperation with, and communication among all constituent groups. Further, they facilitate collaboration, mentoring, professional development, and knowledge sharing among the staff. Finally, they exercise communication among staff and between staff, faculty, and administrators to support the vision, mission, and values of the University while striving to embrace a positive and supportive environment for all members of the campus community.

### **1.3.5 FACULTY SENATE<sup>26</sup> (formerly 1.7.4)**

The faculty elects from among its members a representative body known as the Faculty Senate. The Faculty Senate is an advisory body and as such may consider and make recommendations through the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs. Those areas affecting the academic activities of the university and faculty welfare are appropriate for consideration by the Faculty Senate. The minutes of the Faculty Senate are published on its website.<sup>27</sup> The Faculty Senate Constitution is found here<sup>28</sup> and the Faculty Senate Bylaws are found here.<sup>29</sup>

### **1.3.6 STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION<sup>30</sup> (formerly 1.7.6)**

The Student Government Association (SGA) is composed of four branches of government: executive, legislative, judicial, and student activities council. The student body elects the officers of the SGA and all registered students are automatically members of this organization. The SGA office is located on the fourth floor of the Theron Montgomery Building. The Deans of Students oversees the SGA.

### **1.3.7 STANDING COMMITTEES<sup>31</sup> (formerly 1.7.7)**

Standing university committees are: Athletics, Budget Committee, Committee Management Committee, Enrollment Management, Institutional Review Board, Institutional Animal Care and Use, Program Review Committee, Strategic Plan Review Committee, Technology Advisory Committee, Undergraduate Admissions Standards Committee, Undergraduate Admission Appeals, University Executive Council, University Safety Committee, and University Wellness Committee. Ad hoc committees and task forces are appointed at presidential discretion. A current list of committee memberships can be found on the President's webpage.<sup>32</sup>

### **1.3.8 FACULTY HANDBOOK COMMITTEE<sup>33</sup> (new)**

To assess the faculty handbook policies and procedures, there shall be a standing Academic Affairs committee called the Faculty Handbook Committee, which is charged with reviewing, modifying, and approving changes to the JSU Faculty Handbook, in consultation with subject matter experts. This committee will work with Faculty Senate, Extended Deans' Council, and Department Head Council to ensure that the Faculty Handbook is consistent, accurate, equitable, and reflects current JSU policies, procedures, mission, and values.

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<sup>26</sup> Revised 06/2023; 11/2024

<sup>27</sup> [Minutes & Resolutions - Faculty Senate \(jsu.edu\)](#)

<sup>28</sup> [JSU Faculty Senate Constitution](#)

<sup>29</sup> [JSU Faculty Senate Bylaws](#)

<sup>30</sup> Revised 06/2023; 11/2024

<sup>31</sup> Revised 06/2023; 01/2024; 11/2024

<sup>32</sup> [Standing Committees - Office of the President \(jsu.edu\)](#)

<sup>33</sup> Revised 01/2024; 11/2024



The Faculty Handbook Committee will meet either when (a) a modification to the Faculty Handbook has been recommended or (b) there is a call from the Provost/EVPAA for a full handbook review and revision (which should occur every 5 to 7 years).

The Provost/EVPAA, Faculty Senate, Department Head Council, Extended Deans' Council, or Faculty Handbook Committee may make recommendations for revisions to the Faculty Handbook, which will then be considered by the committee. Minor changes to policies and procedures, such as wording clarification, title changes, links to new university policies, etc. may be approved by the committee and Provost/EVPAA for immediate inclusion in the current version of the handbook with month and day of revision noted in the footnotes. Substantive changes to policies and procedures, including full handbook revisions, must be approved first by majority vote of the Faculty Handbook Committee, then majority vote of the Faculty Senate, Extended Deans' Council, and Department Head Council. If at least one group votes not to approve, then the Provost/EVPAA will mediate a discussion and resolution among the groups. Revisions to policies will be noted with the month and year of change in the footnotes. All full handbook revisions are subject to approval by the Board of Trustees.