

## 4.8 FACULTY

### **Introduction**

The University of South Alabama recognizes that the quality of its educational programs is intrinsically related to the quality of its faculty. The faculty--through the academic programs, departmental and college committees, --is responsible for establishing and reviewing USA's educational programs. Central to the faculty's role in maintaining the quality of the educational programs is its active participation in the institutional decision-making process at USA.

Faculty fulfill the University's mission of teaching, research, public service, and health care by pursuing the "preservation, discovery, communication and the application of knowledge." Through its teaching function in undergraduate and graduate programs, faculty promote the growth of critical thinking skills and effective communication, provide opportunities for independent investigation and creative achievement, and seek to advance knowledge in a broad range of disciplines in order to prepare graduates for professional careers.

Scholarship is considered to be the responsibility of every faculty member at USA.

Research in the areas of business, education, engineering, mathematics, science, fine and performing arts, humanities, social sciences and the health sciences is supported by providing appropriate facilities within an atmosphere of academic freedom and shared governance. In recognition of USA's commitment to the community, faculty endeavor to

provide instruction and services that are relevant to the educational needs of the community.

#1 of 1

**Evidence of Quality**

*(Page 40, Line 9): An institution **must** provide evidence that it has employed faculty members qualified to accomplish its purpose.*

Credentials for all current full time faculty are maintained in the Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs. Part-time faculty files are maintained in the offices of the college deans. This system of record keeping is updated by academic departments as faculty credentials and certifications change, and this system reflects an accurate record of all current faculty credentials. Current faculty curriculum vitas are also available for inspection in the Self-Study Office.

**Conclusion**

Compliance.

**Recommendation**

None.

#### 4.8.1 Selection of Faculty

#1 of 4

(Page 40, Line 15): An institution **must** show that it has an orderly process for recruiting and appointing its faculty.

The process for recruitment of faculty at USA is described in Chapter 3 of the *USA Faculty Handbook, 2001* (pp. 38-41). This document shows that USA has an orderly process for recruiting and appointing faculty. The published material states that USA follows a program of broad, comprehensive, and open recruitment for full-time faculty. All full-time searches are conducted by a search committee having at least 25% female representation. The *Search Committee Checklist* is used to guide the search process. The guidelines for faculty and administrative searches are presented to each search committee at its first meeting. Copies of the guidelines are available in the office of each college dean and department chair as well as in the Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs. These guidelines are followed from the beginning of a search to the final appointment of an applicant for an academic position to assure compliance with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), Affirmative Action, ADA, Southern Association for Colleges and Schools and Consent Decree (Title VI).

In addition to advertisements in discipline specific journals and electronic media, all full-time tenure track faculty positions are advertised in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and the *Affirmative Action Register*. The University of South Alabama is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity educational institution. Potential minority faculty are identified through the *Directory of Minority PhD and MFA Candidates and Recipients*,

and the *Minority and Women Doctoral Directory*. Step-by-step criteria for faculty searches are identified in Chapter 3 of the *USA Faculty Handbook, 2001* (pp. 38-40). These steps includes interviews, scholarly presentations, and candidate evaluations.

**Conclusion**

Compliance.

**Recommendation**

None.

#2 of 4

**Recruitment and Appointment Procedures**

(Page 40, Line 12): *Recruitment and appointment procedures **must** be described in the USA Faculty Handbook or other published documents.*

Chapter 3 of the *USA Faculty Handbook, 2001* (pp. 38-40) describes in detail the recruitment and appointment procedures for faculty. The *Handbook* is available at USA's website ([www.southalabama.edu/academicaffairs/handbook.pdf](http://www.southalabama.edu/academicaffairs/handbook.pdf)). The *Handbook* is also available in the office of each college dean.

**Conclusion**

Compliance.

**Recommendation**

None.

#3 of 4

### **Appropriate Academic Preparation**

*(Page 40, Line 27): If an institution employs a faculty member whose highest earned degree is from a non-regionally accredited institution within the United States or an institution outside the United States, the institution **must** show evidence that the faculty member has appropriate preparation.*

USA's policy is to employ faculty members who graduate from accredited institutions as verified by the Office of Academic Affairs. Verification of institutional accreditation for non-regionally accredited institutions in the United States and institutions outside of the United States is achieved by consulting with various reference sources. Reference sources are located in the University's Office of International Services and Admissions and include the *Guide to Educational Systems Around the World*, *World List of Universities*, and the *International Handbook of Universities*. Transcripts and other official documents are required for every faculty candidate, and are forwarded to the President when a candidate is recommended for appointment. USA requires that all part-time and full-time faculty meet the following criteria:

- at least eighteen graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline, and
- at least a master's degree, or the minimum of a master's degree with a major in the teaching discipline

In exceptional cases, faculty might satisfy these criteria by having outstanding professional experience.

### **Conclusion**

Compliance.

**Recommendation**

None.

#4 of 4

**Communications Proficiency**

*(Page 41, Line1): Institutions **must** ensure that each faculty member employed is proficient in oral and written communication in the language in which assigned courses will be taught.*

An applicant's proficiency in oral and written communication is determined through an applicant screening and interview process. This process provides an adequate opportunity to evaluate written skills by reviewing the applicant's scholarly publications and written application materials. Oral skills are evaluated through the seminar and interview agendas. As part of the screening process, candidates are normally asked to give a presentation (scholarly/philosophical), which should be open to all interested persons, especially the faculty members of the candidate's discipline (*USA Faculty Handbook, 2001, Chapter 3, p. 42*).

The adequacy of this applicant screening and interview process was confirmed during a Dean's Council meeting. Several examples were cited where candidates had been rejected because of inadequate communication skills, while others had been employed with the stipulation that they receive instruction in accent modification (Document 4.8.1: 4 of 4, *Dean's Council Minutes, February 21, 2001*).

The procedure for academic searches is described in Chapter 3 of the *USA Faculty Handbook, 2001*, pp. 38-41). The *Handbook* is available on the USA website and in the offices of college deans and departmental chairs.

**Conclusion**

Compliance.

**Recommendation**

None.

**Proposal for Excellence**

To further assure that new faculty have adequate English communication skills, the Principal Committee suggests that USA consider a requirement for instruction in oral and written English or in accent modification/remediation when determined necessary as a condition of new faculty appointment and retention.

## **4.8.2 Academic and Professional Preparation**

#1 of 1

### **Criteria for Preparation**

*(Page 41, Line 10): Both full-time and part-time faculty **must** meet the following criteria for academic and professional preparation.*

The academic and professional preparation for USA faculty is discussed below (Sections 4.8.2.1 - 4.8.2.3). Current full-time faculty credentials are maintained in the Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs. Part-time faculty credentials are maintained in the appropriate college dean's office. A review of all full-time and part-time faculty to determine compliance with the SACS criteria revealed that twenty full-time and twenty-two part-time faculty do not meet the academic preparation requirements. A justification for an exception is provided in the file of each individual.

### **Conclusion**

Compliance.

### **Recommendation**

None.

#### **4.8.2.1 Associate**

#1 of 12

### **Academic Preparation**

*(Page 41, Line 13): In an associate degree program, full-time and part-time faculty members teaching credit courses in the following areas: humanities/fine arts; social/behavioral sciences; and natural sciences/mathematics **must** have completed at least 18 graduate hours in the teaching discipline and hold at least a master's degree with a major in the teaching discipline.*

There are no associate degree programs offered at USA (*Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletin 2001-2002, p. 6*).

### **Conclusion**

Not applicable.

#2 of 12

### **Exceptional Cases**

*(Page 41, Line 24): In exceptional cases, outstanding professional experience and demonstrated contributions to the teaching discipline may be presented in lieu of formal academic preparation in the above areas. Such cases **must** be justified by the institution on an individual basis.*

There are no associate degree programs offered at USA (*Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletin 2001-2002, p. 6*).

### **Conclusion**

Not applicable.

#3 of 12

### **Interdisciplinary Courses**

*(Page 41, Line 26): The Commission encourages interdisciplinary courses and recognizes that appropriate credentials for teaching may vary. The institution **must** document and justify the academic and professional preparation of faculty members teaching in such courses or programs.*

The interdisciplinary degree programs offered at USA are at the baccalaureate and graduate level only (verbal communication from Senior Vice-President for Academic Affairs, May 30, 2001).

### **Conclusion**

Not applicable.

#4 of 12

### **Transfer Credit**

*(Page 41, Line 31): Each full-time and part-time faculty member teaching courses in professional, occupational, and technical areas other than physical activities courses that are components of associate degree programs designed for college transfer, or from which substantial numbers of students transfer to senior institutions, **must** have completed at least 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline and hold at least*

*a master's degree, or hold the minimum of the master's degree with a major in the teaching discipline.*

There are no associate degree programs offered at USA (*Bulletin*, p. 6).

### **Conclusion**

Not applicable.

#5 of 12

### **Professional, Occupational and Technical Areas**

*(Page 42, Line 4): Each full-time and part-time faculty member teaching credit courses in professional, occupational and technical areas that are components of associate degree programs not usually resulting in college transfer, or in the continuation of students in senior institutions, **must** possess appropriate academic preparation or academic preparation coupled with work experience.*

There are no associate degree programs offered at USA (*Bulletin*, p. 6).

### **Conclusion**

Not applicable.

#6 of 12

### **Minimal Academic Degree**

*(Page 42, Line 10): The minimum academic degree for faculty teaching in professional, occupational and technical areas **must** be at the same level at which the faculty member is teaching.*

There are no associate degree programs offered at USA (*Bulletin*, p. 6).

**Conclusion**

Not applicable.

#7 of 12

**Exceptional Cases**

*(Page 42, Line 20): In exceptional cases, outstanding professional experience and demonstrated contributions to the teaching discipline may be presented in lieu of formal academic preparation for faculty members teaching both transfer and non-transfer courses in these areas. Such cases **must** be justified by the institution on an individual basis.*

There are no associate degree programs offered at USA (*Bulletin*, p. 6).

**Conclusion**

Not applicable.

#8 of 12

**Faculty Competence**

*(Page, 42, Line 33): Non-degree diploma or certificate occupational courses are typically taught by faculty members with some college or specialized training, but with an emphasis on competence gained through work experience. While competency requirements may vary, they **should** be clearly defined by each institution.*

Faculty providing instruction in Radiologic Technology and the Emergency Medical

Services Training programs possess professional credentials (National Board of Registry) and clinical experience in the areas in which they provide instruction.

**Conclusion**

Compliance.

**Suggestion**

None.

#9 of 12

**Special Competence**

*(Page 42, Line 35): In all cases, faculty members **must** have special competence in the field in which they teach.*

USA offers certificate programs in Radiologic Technology and Emergency Medical Services Training. All faculty in these disciplines possess professional credentials (National Board of Registry) and clinical experience in the areas in which they provide instruction.

**Conclusion**

Compliance.

**Recommendation**

None.

#10 of 12

### **Faculty Qualifications**

*(Page 42, Line 41): Faculty members who teach basic computation and communication skills in non-degree occupational programs **must** have a baccalaureate degree and, ideally, **should** have work or other experience which helps them relate these skills to the occupational field.*

There are no basic computation and communication skills programs offered in non-degree occupational programs at the USA .

### **Conclusion**

Not applicable.

### **Recommendation**

None.

#11 of 12

### **Adult Basic Education**

*(Page 43, Line 5): Faculty members who teach adult basic education courses below the collegiate level **must** have a baccalaureate degree, and also **should** have attributes or experiences which help them relate to the particular needs of the adults they teach.*

USA does not offer adult basic education courses below the collegiate level.

### **Conclusion**

Not Applicable.

### **Recommendation**

None.

#12 of 12

### **Remedial Programs**

*(Page 43, Line 10): Faculty members who teach in remedial programs **must** hold a baccalaureate degree in a discipline related to their teaching and either have teaching experience in a discipline related to their assignment or graduate training in remedial education.*

The Developmental Studies Program is a remedial program designed for students requiring learning support to improve reading and writing skills, study skills, and mathematical deficits. A review of files reveals that faculty providing instruction in this program hold degrees at the masters and doctoral level in the discipline in which they teach.

### **Conclusion**

Compliance.

### **Recommendation**

None.

### **4.8.2.2 Baccalaureate**

#1 of 5

### **Baccalaureate Faculty**

*(Page 43, Line 13): Each full-time and part-time faculty member teaching credit courses leading toward the baccalaureate degree, other than physical education activities courses, **must** have completed at least 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline and hold at least a master's degree, or hold the minimum of a master's degree with a major in the teaching discipline.*

As noted previously in Section 4.8.2, Table 4.8.2 identifies those faculty during the fall of 2001 who did not meet the academic preparation requirements criteria established by SACS. All other faculty meet the criteria. (See #2 of 5 below). Current full-time faculty credentials are maintained in the Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs. Credentials for part-time faculty are maintained in the appropriate college dean's office.

**Conclusion**

Compliance.

**Recommendation**

None.

#2 of 5

**Exceptional Cases**

*(Page 43, Line 24): In exceptional cases, outstanding professional experience and demonstrated contributions to the teaching discipline may be presented in lieu of formal*

*academic preparation. Such cases **must** be justified by the institution on an individual basis.*

USA faculty who do not meet the minimum educational requirements established by SACS may possess other professional accomplishments that enable them to teach in programs leading to the baccalaureate degree. Documents justifying the appointment of these faculty members on a full-time basis can be found in the faculty member's official file in the Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs. Similar documentation for part-time faculty is maintained in the office of each college dean.

### **Conclusion**

Compliance.

### **Recommendation**

None.

#3 of 5

### **Interdisciplinary Courses**

*(Page 41, Line 28): The institution **must** document and justify the academic and professional preparation of faculty members teaching in such courses or programs.*

USA offers several interdisciplinary programs in the College of Arts and Sciences and in the School of Continuing Education and Special Programs. Programs offered in the College of Arts and Sciences include African-American Studies, Gerontology, and International Studies. The School of Continuing Education and Special Programs offers an interdisciplinary program through the Department of Adult Interdisciplinary Studies.

Faculty providing instruction in these programs typically provide instruction in other academic units of the University. These faculty have appropriate degrees in their respective fields and are qualified to teach in the interdisciplinary programs (*Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletin, 2001-2002*, pp. 61-63, 116, and curriculum vitae).

**Conclusion**

Compliance.

**Recommendation**

None.

#4 of 5

**Undergraduate Faculty Terminal Degrees**

*(Page 43, Line 39): At least 25 percent of the discipline course hours in each undergraduate major **must** be taught by faculty members holding the terminal degree, usually the earned doctorate, in that discipline.*

Within the forty-six departments offering undergraduate degree programs, at least 25% of all student credit hours are taught by faculty holding the terminal degree in the teaching discipline (Departmental Self-Studies, 2001).

**Conclusion**

Compliance.

**Recommendation**

None.

#5 of 5

**Faculty Teaching in Remedial Programs**

*(Page 44, Line16): Faculty members who teach in remedial programs **must** hold a baccalaureate degree in a discipline related to their teaching assignment and have either teaching experience in a discipline related to their assignment or graduate training in remedial education.*

Remedial courses are offered through the Developmental Studies Program (DS). This program provides instruction in mathematics, composition, reading, study skills, and general career counseling. USA faculty members teaching in this program hold either a doctorate or a master's degree in a discipline related to their teaching assignment (verbal communication with Chair of Developmental Studies Program, April 17, 2001; *Developmental Studies Program Self-Study, 2001*).

**Conclusion**

Compliance.

**Recommendation**

None.

### **4.8.2.3 Graduate**

#1 of 12

#### **Faculty Competence in Teaching and Scholarship**

*(Page 44, Line 21): Institutions offering either Master's or specialized degrees **must** demonstrate a high level of faculty competence in teaching and scholarship.*

Graduate faculty status can only be obtained through an application process, which requires the approval of a department chair, a college/school -level director of graduate studies, the Dean of the College, the Dean of the Graduate School, the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the President. The applications, which are maintained in the office of the Dean of Graduate Studies, must include evidence of appropriate terminal degrees (normally the doctorate) plus evidence of scholarly achievement, professional activities, and demonstrated competence of upper-division or graduate teaching. For associate status, the recommendation of the majority of graduate faculty members in the particular department is required. Full status requires a higher level of scholarship (normally three refereed publications within the past five years), an active research agenda, and serving on (or chairing) thesis or dissertation committees. In cases where eligibility is not clear, the Credentials Committee of the Graduate Council advises the Dean of the Graduate School on appointments (Document 4.8.2.3:1 of 12a, *Bylaws of the Graduate School*, revised August 27, 1997; Document 4.8.2.3: 1 of 12b, *Request for Appointment*).

#### **Conclusion**

Compliance.

### **Recommendation**

None.

#2 of 12

### **Doctoral Faculty Qualifications**

*(Page 44, Line 23): Institutions offering doctoral degrees **must** demonstrate the research capability of faculty members teaching in these programs.*

All faculty who provide instruction at the doctoral level must have graduate faculty status. Dissertation directors must hold full graduate faculty status, which requires substantial research experience and scholarly productivity as required by the *Bylaws of the Graduate School*. Evidence of research capability and scholarly productivity can be found in the appointment application files of the Graduate School and in faculty vitae. Graduate faculty members must maintain high levels of competence in teaching and research. Appointments to associate graduate faculty status are for a three-year term, while appointments to full membership are for five year terms. At the end of the term, individuals must present evidence of continued achievement and competence (Document 4.8.2.3: 2 of 12, *Graduate Faculty Review Form*). Item 31 in the *Self-Study Faculty Survey, 2001* reveals that 88% of faculty members could describe their colleagues' scholarship as setting an example for graduate students.

### **Conclusion**

Compliance.

**Recommendation**

None.

#3 of 12

**Definition and Publication of Faculty Requirements**

*(Page 44, Line 26): Eligibility requirements for faculty members teaching graduate courses **must** be clearly defined and publicized.*

Eligibility requirements for graduate faculty status are published in the *Bylaws of the Graduate School* (Document 4.8.2.3:1 of 12a) and are also provided on a cover sheet to requests for appointment (Document 4.8.2.3: 3 of 12, cover sheet of the *Graduate School Form IA*, revised March 1997)

**Conclusion**

Compliance.

**Recommendation**

None.

#4 of 12

**Adequacy of Faculty Resources**

*(Page 44, Line 28): All institutions **must** have adequate resources to attract and retain a*

*qualified faculty, especially in the disciplines in which doctoral programs are offered.*

Doctoral programs at USA were established during the past twenty years.

Implementation proposals for any graduate program, particularly at the doctorate level, are subject to stringent reviews by the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE), expert consultants, and peer institutions. Approval is only granted if adequate resources for such programs are present. One current objective measure of resource adequacy is the growing volume of externally funded contract and grant activity as monitored by the Office of Sponsored Research. The self-study for the previous accreditation period (1993) noted that awards for new and continuing awards for sponsored research and training were at the \$16.5 million mark. A current report notes an increase to approximately \$21.3 million in 1997 to over \$35.5 million in fiscal year 2001. (See Document 4.8.2.3: 4 of 12a for the *Annual Report of Externally Funded Contract and Grant Activity, Fiscal Year 2001*, p. 3.2). The *Self-Study Faculty Survey, 2001* supports a conclusion of adequacy, wherein 60% of the faculty agreed that the library supports their research program, 66% considered laboratory support for their research adequate, and 79% considered the USA's information technology resources and systems adequate for their research (Items 57, 63, and 70).

## **Conclusion**

Compliance.

## **Recommendation**

None.

#5 of 12

### **Qualifications for Directing Doctoral Research**

*(Page 44, Line 30): Faculty members responsible for the direction of doctoral research **must** be experienced in directing independent study.*

Doctoral dissertation directors are required to be full members of the graduate faculty.

Unlike associate status, full membership status requires evidence of experience in having served on or chaired thesis or dissertation committees or directed other appropriate research (e.g., independent studies, grant participation, contract research, research courses taught, supervision of graduate assistants' research, and directed research projects). (See Document 4.8.2.3: 1 of 12b, *Request for Appointment to Membership*.)

### **Conclusion**

Compliance.

### **Recommendation**

None.

#6 of 12

### **Involvement and Commitment of Graduate Faculty**

*(Page 44, Line 33): In addition, those engaged in graduate teaching **should** demonstrate, by their involvement in institutional activities, their commitment to the academic*

*community, the institution they serve, their students, and their academic disciplines.*

Graduate faculty members are expected to excel at research, teaching graduate courses, and directing independent research. They are held to the same standards of commitment to the institution, students and their academic discipline as non-graduate faculty members. These expectations of involvement and commitment are described in USA's Mission Statement (*Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletin, 2001-2002* p. 3).

### **Conclusion**

Compliance.

### **Suggestion**

None.

#7 of 12

### **Credentials of Graduate Faculty**

*(Page, 44, Line 38): Each faculty member teaching courses at the master's and specialist degree level **must** hold the terminal degree, and usually the earned doctorate, in the teaching discipline or a related discipline.*

Graduate faculty are required to hold the earned doctorate or terminal degree in their teaching field or a related field. Exceptions are rare but may occur in emerging fields or where a shortage of qualified individuals exists (i.e., computer science, physician assistant studies, and physical therapy). (See Document 4.8.2.3: 7 of 12a , *SACS Guidelines for Justifying Exceptions to Faculty Credential Requirements, Revised*

*February 2001.*) Exceptions, such as when a faculty member holds a master's degree in the teaching field or a doctorate in a related field, must be justified and approved. This justification, with a rationale for exception, is placed in the individual's personnel file.

**Conclusion**

Compliance.

**Recommendation**

None.

#8 of 12

**Doctoral Degrees**

*(Page 45, Line 11): All faculty members teaching courses at the doctoral degree level **must** hold the earned doctorate in the teaching discipline or a related discipline.*

All faculty members in doctoral programs at the USA hold earned doctorates in the teaching discipline or a related discipline (see faculty roster in *Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletin, 2001-2002*, pp. 226-237).

**Conclusion**

Compliance.

**Recommendation**

None.

#9 of 12

**Justification for Earned Doctorates outside the Teaching Discipline**

*(Page 45, Line 23): In either case, when an institution presents evidence of competence or academic credentials other than the doctorate in the discipline for its graduate faculty, it **must** justify the employment of such faculty.*

In rare cases when the graduate faculty member's earned doctorate is in an area different from the teaching discipline, evidence must be presented to justify the competence of the individual to teach in the field. The justification and rationale are placed in the faculty member's official personnel file located in the office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs (Document 4.8.2.3: 7 of 12a , *Exception for Faculty Academic and Professional Preparation*).

**Conclusion**

Compliance.

**Recommendation**

None.

#10 of 12

**Faculty Credentials for Interdisciplinary Courses**

*(Page 45, Line 27): The Commission encourages interdisciplinary courses and recognizes that appropriate credentials for teaching may vary. The institution **must** document and justify the academic and professional preparation of faculty members*

*teaching in such courses or programs.*

USA has two interdisciplinary graduate programs. One is the Graduate Certificate Program in Gerontology. All courses, except one, are part of other graduate programs and are taught by graduate faculty members of those departments. The only true interdisciplinary course is GRN 596 (Internship in Gerontology) taught by the Director of the Gerontology Program, who meets all criteria for graduate faculty status (Document 4.8.2.3: 10 of 12a, *Gerontology Brochure*). The other interdisciplinary graduate program is Marine Sciences. All Marine Science courses at the masters or doctoral level are taught by members of the Biology, Geology, Chemistry, and related departments. All have earned doctorates in their fields and are members of the graduate faculty (Document 4.8.2.3: 10 of 12b, *Department of Marine Sciences Faculty Research Interests and Publications, 2000*).

### **Conclusion**

Compliance.

### **Recommendation**

None.

#11 of 12

### **Minimum Number of Faculty**

*(Page 46, Line 3): However, for each graduate degree program, an institution **must** employ at least four full time faculty members whose responsibilities include teaching in the program.*

All graduate programs at USA have at least four full-time faculty members whose duties include graduate teaching. (See document 4.8.2.3:11 of 12 listing full-time faculty members teaching in each department. See also faculty roster in *Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletin, 2001-2002*, pp. 226-237).

### **Conclusion**

Compliance.

### **Recommendation**

None.

#12 of 12

### **Graduate Council**

*(Page 46, Line 6): All policies and regulations affecting graduate curricula, as well as requirements leading to graduate credit, certification and degrees, **should** be formulated by the graduate faculty or an appointed or elected group representing that faculty.*

The Graduate Council serves as an advisory body to the Dean of the Graduate School for the purpose of formulating policies and regulations governing the graduate curriculum and degree requirements. The Graduate Council is composed of representatives of each college that offers graduate programs. All members are required to have graduate faculty status. The composition, duties, and procedures of the Graduate Council are described in Chapter 2 of the *USA Faculty Handbook, 2001* (p. 42).

**Conclusion**

Compliance.

**Suggestion**

None.

**4.8.2.4 Distance Learning Programs/Activities**

#1 of 2

**Faculty Criteria for Distance-Learning Courses**

*(Page 46, Line 11): Institutions offering courses for credit through distance learning activities and programs **must** meet all criteria related to faculty.*

Since the inception of online courses at USA in 1999, all online courses have been taught by full-time faculty members at USA and are therefore subject to the full-time faculty criteria (a recent enrollment history of all on-line courses and faculty can be found in Document 4.8.2.4: 1 of 2).

**Conclusion**

Compliance.

**Recommendation**

None.

#2 of 2

### **Student Access to Distance Learning Faculty**

*(Page 46, Line 13): Whether through direct contact or other appropriate means, institutions offering distance learning programs **must** provide students with structured access to and interaction with full-time faculty members.*

USA's online distance learning operates under the premise that online course educational contents are identical to campus-taught courses; only the method of delivery and communication differ. Faculty members are available through telephone and email, as well as during office hours. Applicable instructions are a mandatory part of syllabi for these courses (verbal communication with Director of Online Learning Program, December 5, 2000).

### **Conclusion**

Compliance.

### **Recommendation**

None.

### **4.8.3. Part-Time Faculty**

#1 of 6

### **Adequate Number of Full-Time Faculty**

(Page 46, Line 18): *The number of full-time faculty members **must** be adequate to provide effective teaching, advising and scholarly activity or creative activity, and be appropriate to participate in curriculum development, policy making, institutional planning and governance.*

A review of the departmental self-studies (2001) indicates that the perception of adequacy in terms of full-time faculty members varies. However, survey results such as the *Self-Study Faculty Survey, 2001* and the *Self-Study Student Survey, 2001* support a conclusion that the number of faculty is adequate based on overall satisfaction with USA's ability to accomplish its mission. Objective measures of faculty teaching loads, research productivity, reassigned time (including externally funded research found in the *Annual Report of Externally Funded Contracts and Grant Activities, 2000*), and degrees conferred support a conclusion of an adequate number of full-time faculty members.

Data obtained from *Statistical Profiles* for the academic years 1995-1996 through 2000-2001 reveal that the number of faculty positions has increased by 9.7%, despite an overall 4.7% decrease in enrollment during the same time period (see *Abstract of Statistical Profiles, 1995-1996 through 2000-2001*, Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs). Similar discussions of data obtained from *Statistical Profiles* for the academic years 1995-1996 through 2000-2001 are found in Sections 1.4 and 4.8.9 of this *Self-Study Report*. Furthermore, specialized accreditation of the programs in Nursing, Allied Health Professions, Business, Engineering, Education, Computer and Information Sciences, Medicine, Music, and Art are evidence of the adequacy of the number of faculty in these programs.

**Conclusion**

Compliance.

**Recommendation**

None

**Proposal for Excellence**

Given the perception that the adequacy of faculty numbers varies among some full-time faculty members, the Principal Committee suggests that deans and departmental chairpersons continue to develop a process to prioritize funds according to enrollment and reallocate additional faculty lines to departments on the basis of need. Moreover, it is suggested that vacant faculty positions be filled as soon as possible.

#2 of 6

**Limitations on Part-Time Faculty**

*(Page 46, Line 22): The employment of part-time faculty members can provide expertise to enhance the educational effectiveness of an institution but the number of part-time faculty **must** be properly limited.*

Overall, USA seeks to keep part-time faculty to a minimum. Exceptions exist in departments that offer large introductory lower-division courses or those in which community fieldwork is essential. The *Self-Study Student Survey, 2001* and the *Self-Study Faculty Survey, 2001* indicate an overall satisfaction with the quality of all

instruction. Data obtained from Office of Institutional Research, as shown in Table 4.8.3, provide further insight regarding part-time faculty employment at USA.

**Table 4.8.3**  
**Instruction by Full- and Part-Time Faculty**  
**Fall Semester 2000 and Spring Semester 2001**

	Number of FT Courses	Number of PT Courses	Percent of FT Courses	Percent of PT Courses	Number of FT SCH	Number of PT SCH	Percent FT SCH	Percent PT SCH
AHP	255	14	94.7%	5.3%	13,360	763	94.6%	5.4%
A&S	1,204	382	75.9%	24.1%	94,909	33,009	74.2%	25.8%
BMS	265	52	83.6%	16.4%	23,724	4,641	83.6%	16.4%
CESP	101	42	70.6%	29.5%	4,642	2,477	65.2%	34.8%
CIS	132	20	87.1%	12.9%	9,575	2,288	80.7%	19.3%
EDUC	400	146	73.2%	26.8%	22,002	7,621	74.3%	25.7%
ENGR	163	16	91.0%	9.0%	7,902	984	88.9%	11.1%
NURS	213	17	92.6%	7.4%	10,316	464	95.7%	4.3%
TOTAL	2,520	672	78.9%	21.1%	176,114	51,783	77.3%	22.7%

Key: FT = Taught by Full-Time Faculty  
 PT = Taught by Part-Time Faculty  
 SCH = Student Credit Hours = Number of Students Enrolled x Course Credit Hours

The National Center for Educational Statistics, which is part of the 1999 National Study of Post-Secondary Faculty, reports that part-time faculty made up 43% of the faculty nationwide. The survey included 960 universities and colleges. As shown above, University of South Alabama part-time faculty taught 21.1% of the total courses and 22.7% of student credit hours in academic year 2000-2001, placing USA considerably below the national norm (Office of Institutional Research, *REG 4616, Instructor Teaching Load, 2001*).

**Conclusion**

Compliance.

**Recommendation**

None.

#3 of 6

### **Credentials of Part-Time Faculty**

*(Page 46, Line 26): Part-time faculty members teaching courses for credit **must** meet the same requirements for professional, experiential and scholarly preparation as their full-time counterparts teaching in the same disciplines.*

The *Part-time Faculty Roster* (Document 4.8.3: 3 of 6) lists all such staff members who were (as of March 2001) teaching or had taught and were available to teach again. The roster includes academic preparation for each faculty listing. In those few cases where experiential or special professional credentials substitute for advanced degrees in the field, justifying statements of exception are filed in the individual's personnel file, which is located in the office of the appropriate dean. All records for part-time faculty can be found in the offices of college deans. In the *Self-Study Faculty Survey, 2001* (Item 41), 85% full-time faculty respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that part-time faculty members in their respective departments were qualified to teach their assigned courses.

### **Conclusion**

Compliance.

### **Recommendation**

None.

#4 of 6

### **Publication of Policies for Part-Time Faculty**

*(Page 46, Line 31): Each institution **must** establish and publish comprehensive policies concerning the employment of part-time faculty members.*

*Part-Time Faculty Policy and Procedures* is published in the *USA Faculty Handbook, 2001* (Ch. 3, pp. 10-14). These policies and procedures apply to all part-time faculty members at USA.

### **Conclusion**

Compliance.

### **Recommendation**

None.

#5 of 6

### **Orientation, Supervision, and Evaluation**

*(Page 46, Line 33): It **must** also provide for appropriate orientation, supervision and evaluation of all part-time faculty members.*

Orientation, supervision, and evaluation of part-time faculty are addressed in *Part-Time Faculty Policy and Procedures*. In addition, an *Orientation Handbook for Full and Part-Time Faculty, 2001*, which offers guidance for individual faculty members, is distributed to each part-time and full-time faculty member (Document 4.8.3: 5 of 6).

**Conclusion**

Compliance.

**Recommendation**

None.

#6 of 6

**Student Access to Part-Time Faculty**

*(Page 46, Line 35): Procedures to insure student access to part-time faculty members must be clearly stated and publicized.*

Section V of the *Orientation Handbook for Full and Part-Time Faculty, 2001* requires both full- and part-time faculty members to establish office hours or provide appropriate contact information for consultation with students (Document 4.8.3: 5 of 6). Similar policies are published in Chapter 6 of the *USA Faculty Handbook, 2001* (p. 1).

**Conclusion**

Compliance.

**Recommendation**

None.

#### 4.8.4 Graduate Teaching Assistants

#1 of 5

##### **Monitoring of Teaching Assistants**

*(Page 47, Line 1): The employment of graduate teaching assistants is a well established practice in higher education, but **should** be carefully monitored.*

The Dean of the Graduate School bears overall responsibility for monitoring graduate teaching assistants. As indicated in the **must** statement response that follows, USA has a very limited number of graduate teaching assistants.

##### **Conclusion**

Compliance.

##### **Suggestion**

None.

#2 of 5

##### **Dependence on TAs**

*(Page 47, Line 3): An institution **must** avoid heavy dependence on graduate teaching assistants to conduct classroom instruction.*

USA severely limits the use of graduate teaching assistants in the classroom. Full responsibility for teaching courses (i.e., “instructor of record”) exists only in the Department of English where five to six graduate students teach introductory

composition courses. In fall 2001, these graduate assistants accounted for seven of the sixty sections of freshman composition. These teaching assistants are required to participate in a training program and are carefully supervised by the Director of Freshman Composition. Teaching assistants in a few other departments provide administrative assistance to full-time faculty who teach large sections, serve as lab instructors, or offer remedial tutoring, as in the case of the Department of Mathematics and Statistics (verbal communication from Graduate Program Coordinator, College of Arts and Sciences, April 11, 2001).

**Conclusion**

Compliance.

**Recommendation**

None.

#3 of 5

**Graduate Assistant Guidelines**

*(Page 47, Line 5): Each institution **must** provide a published set of guidelines for institution-wide graduate assistantship administration, including appointment criteria, remuneration, rights and responsibilities, evaluation and reappointment.*

The Dean of the Graduate School publishes and distributes the *Policy and Procedures for Graduate Assistantships* (Document 4.8.4: 3 of 5). The guidelines cover all aspects of graduate assistantships, except provisions that govern teaching assistants who have full

responsibility for a course, as described below in #4 of 5.

**Conclusion**

Compliance.

**Recommendation**

None.

**Proposal for Excellence**

The Principal Committee suggests that USA incorporate *Guidelines for the Use of Teaching Assistants* into the document entitled *Policy and Procedures for Graduate Assistantships*.

#4 of 5

**Qualifications of Graduate TAs**

*(Page 47, Line 11): Graduate teaching assistants who have primary responsibility for teaching a course for credit and/or assigning final grades for such a course, and whose professional and scholarly preparation does not satisfy the provisions of Section 4.8.2 **must** have earned at least 18 graduate semester hours in their teaching discipline, be under the direct supervision of a faculty member experienced in the teaching discipline, receive regular in-service training and be evaluated regularly.*

Only the Department of English has assigned graduate teaching assistants (GTA) full responsibility to teach courses, and these assignments apply only to freshman

composition courses (EH 101 and EH 102). All graduate teaching assistants in this category have earned at least eighteen graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline. Documentation is maintained in the student files found in the Department of English. These GTAs work under the direct supervision of the Director of Freshman Composition, receive in-service training before they teach and during the semester they teach (including enrolling in EH 405, a mandatory teacher-training course), use standard syllabi and teaching materials, and are regularly evaluated and mentored. When these particular teaching assistantships are awarded, preference is given to applicants who have previous teaching or tutoring experience (verbal communication from English Department Graduate Coordinator, April 11, 2001).

### **Conclusion**

Compliance.

### **Recommendation**

None.

#5 of 5

### **Administrative Oversight**

*(Page 47, Line 32): Institutions employing graduate teaching assistants **must** provide a structure for administrative oversight at a level above that of the individual academic units to insure conformity with institutional policies and procedures.*

As previously discussed, USA has a very limited number of graduate teaching assistants.

Graduate assistants with teaching responsibilities receive supervision from the Graduate Coordinator within their department and further administrative supervision from the Director of Graduate Studies, normally the Associate Dean, of their respective College. The Director of Graduate Studies assures that academic units maintain uniformity and compliance with institutional policies and procedures (Document 4.8.2.1: 5 of 5, *University Guidelines for the Use of Graduate Teaching Assistants*).

### **Conclusion**

Compliance.

### **Recommendation**

None.

## **4.8.5 Faculty Compensation**

#1 of 3

### **Provisions for Adequate Salaries and Benefits**

*(Page 47, Line 36): An institution **should** provide adequate salaries and benefits to attract and retain faculty members.*

The *Self-Study Faculty Survey, 2001* supports the conclusion that USA provides adequate salaries and benefits. Fifty-eight percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that USA provides fair compensation. Sixty-one percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that USA offers an attractive fringe benefits program (Items 42 and 43). With

respect to faculty salaries, USA strives to achieve and maintain reasonable parity with other doctoral institutions in the State of Alabama and across the nation. Table 4.8.5A and Table 4.8.5B indicate that USA has been successful in this endeavor.

**Table 4.8.5A  
Alabama Public Senior Institution  
2000-2001**

	Professor		Associate Professor		Assistant Professor		Instructor		Undesignated Rank		All Ranks	
	No.	Avg. Salary	No.	Avg. Salary	No.	Avg. Salary	No.	Avg. Salary	No.	Avg. Salary	No.	Avg. Salary
Alabama A&M Univ.*	55	\$63,153	73	52,607	104	\$42,133	37	\$33,369			269	\$48,068
Alabama State Univ.	40	59,236	52	49,640	75	41,555	52	36,208			219	45,435
Athens State University	24	62,462	12	54,758	40	48,026	1	43,727			77	53,519
Auburn Univ.*	447	76,573	368	56,368	201	48,142	97	29,732	25	\$39,090	1,138	60,202
Auburn Univ. Montgomery	55	65,333	58	51,161	56	44,296	24	34,816			193	51,175
Jacksonville State Univ.	81	59,450	50	49,137	61	42,425	65	37,870	2	43,133	259	47,907
Troy State Univ.	20	55,000	65	45,970	90	39,990	30	28,925	2	20,271	207	41,524
Troy State Univ. Dothan	16	59,230	10	45,817	17	44,227	6	32,198	1		50	47,743
Troy State Univ. in Montgomery	10	59,552	17	45,177	10	42,416	2	27,614			39	47,254
Univ. of Alabama*	278	77,860	222	57,170	200	47,323	83	30,580			783	59,182
*Univ. of Alabama at Birmingham	141	78,499	163	55,579	113	48,316	35	34,205	5	38,865	457	59,035
Univ. of Alabama in Huntsville*	79	76,576	82	53,938	78	48,591	6	41,175	25	34,385	270	56,923
Univ. of Montevallo	35	57,220	36	47,312	43	37,097	17	33,739			131	44,845
Univ. of North Alabama	59	57,812	45	50,781	77	43,983	18	39,385			199	49,204
Univ. of South Alabama*	118	72,010	102	55,294	154	47,516	58	35,404	2	40,250	434	54,351
Univ. of West Alabama	23	51,509	27	43,947	24	38,058	3	27,220	3	23,486	80	42,960

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Totals	1,481	\$71,898	1,382	\$53,871	1,343	\$45,321	534	\$33,443	65	\$36,080	4,805	\$54,527
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*SOURCE: Alabama Commission on Higher Education, Salaries, Tenure and Fringe Benefits of Full-Time Instructional Faculty, 2000-2001.*

- a. A factor of 0.8182 was used to convert 11/12 month contracts to 9/10 month equivalents. Eminent Scholar not included in average salary.
- b. Includes those listed in "Lecture" category.
- c. Includes Academic Affairs and Nursing.
- \* Doctoral Institutions.

**Table 4.8.5B**  
**USA Average Faculty Salaries Compared to AASCU CUPA Survey Analysis, by Rank**  
**1999-00 and 2000-01**

	AASCU/CUPA National Mean			University of South Alabama*		
	1999-00	2000-01	% Change	1999-00	2000-01	% Change
Professor	\$74,454	\$76,688	3.00	\$68,560	\$72,010	5.03
Associate Professor	55,313	57,400	3.77	52,071	55,294	6.19
Assistant Professor	45,165	46,233	2.36	45,391	47,516	4.68
Instructor	33,412	34,017	1.81	33,586	35,404	5.41
All Ranks**	\$58,313	\$60,437	3.64	\$51,121	54,379	6.37

\* University averages based on salaries in effect October 1, 2001

\*\* Excludes lecturers and faculty of undesignated rank.

*Sources: College and University Personnel Association Annual Faculty Salary Surveys, 1999 and 2000. PAY 104 Faculty Salary Analysis.*

USA offers faculty a number of benefits set forth in the *USA Faculty Handbook, 2001* and briefly described below.

USA's commitment to providing faculty with appropriate salaries and benefits is reinforced by the existence of the Fringe Benefits Committee and the Faculty

Compensation Committee. These committees comprise University-wide representation and are charged with reviewing and monitoring salary and fringe benefits, as well as making recommendations to the President (*USA Faculty Handbook, 2001, Ch. 2, pp. 42, 48*).

Health, life, and long-term disability insurance are available to regular faculty who work half-time or more. The cost of health insurance is shared by USA and the faculty member. Premiums for basic life and disability insurance coverage are provided by the University. Faculty may obtain additional optional life insurance upon approval of the insurer. Premiums for long-term disability coverage are paid by USA. (*USA Faculty Handbook, 2001, Ch. 5, p. 3*).

A retirement plan is provided through the Teachers Retirement System of Alabama (STRA). Participation is mandatory, and faculty members are required to contribute 5% of their salary to STRA. In fiscal year 2001, USA made a contribution of 6.31% to STRA on behalf of each faculty member. This rate is set annually by the Alabama Teachers Retirement Board. Faculty can also participate in an optional tax-sheltered annuity plan via the Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association and College Retirement Equities Fund (TIAA-CREF). The TIAA-CREF optional plan provides for the University to match employee contributions of up to 3% of one's annual salary. In addition, Social Security benefits are provided. Employees are required to contribute an amount in accordance with the Social Security Program requirements, and the University contributes a matching amount (*USA Faculty Handbook, 2001, Ch. 5, p. 4*).

USA has adopted policies which provide for sick leave, family/medical leave, medical leave, maternity or adoptive leave, military leave, and professional leave (*USA Faculty Handbook, 2001*, Chapter 5, pp. 4-12). Faculty members in the College of Nursing, Medicine, and Allied Health Professions are appointed on a twelve month basis and are thus provided with vacation benefits. In addition, faculty members who have completed at least six years of service are eligible to apply for sabbatical leave (*USA Faculty Handbook, 2001*, Ch. 5, pp. 12-15).

Other benefits include tuition reimbursement for faculty and their family members, discounts on items in the University Bookstore, and use of various USA facilities such as the University Recreational Facility (*USA Faculty Handbook, 2001*, Ch. 5, pp. 15-17).

### **Conclusion**

Compliance.

### **Suggestion**

None.

#2 of 3

### **Provisions for Retirement Plans**

(Page 47, Line 38): *The institution also **should** provide a retirement plan, to which it contributes a reasonable percentage of the cost, and a plan for adequate insurance coverage.*

As described in Section 4.8.5: 1 of 3, USA provides a retirement plan to which it contributes a reasonable percentage of the cost (*USA Faculty Handbook, 2001*, Chapter 5, p. 3). The insurance plan provided for faculty was also previously described above in #1 of 3 (also see *Handbook*, Chapter 5, pp. 2-3).

### **Conclusion**

Compliance.

### **Suggestion**

None.

#3 of 3

### **Criteria for Salary Increases**

(Page 48, Line 1): *Salary increases **must** be based on clearly stated criteria.*

Increases in salary for faculty at USA are based upon merit, promotion in rank, or equity adjustment as described in the *Faculty Handbook, 2001*: “Promotion in rank is accompanied by a salary increase” (pg. 20-21).

Merit increases are determined based upon faculty performance as recorded by an annual evaluation using an approved Affirmative Action Plan Evaluation (AAP) form as

provided for in Chapter 3 of the *Handbook* (pp. 36-37). Exceptions to the use of the AAP form exist within the College of Medicine, University Libraries, Department of Military Science, and Department of Air Force Studies. Although the evaluations used in Medicine, University Libraries, Military Science and Air Force Studies differ from the standard AAP form, they do include criteria either similar to--or the same as--the criteria included on the AAP form. Evaluations of all faculty are based upon teaching, scholarship (research/professional growth), and service. Typically, these items are weighted 60%-30%-10% respectively, but this allocation can vary between programs and individual faculty. Incorporated into the teaching component are the results of evaluations of faculty conducted by students at least one time during each academic year.

Due to differences in the manner by which different academic units may apply the evaluation procedure and differences in the ranking of a given evaluation score within a given departmental unit, faculty members in different academic units may receive different percentage raises for similar evaluations.

The form entitled *Criteria and Methodology for Special Equity Adjustment Recommendation* sets forth criteria to determine qualification for an equity adjustment, as well as the methodology to determine the amount of such adjustment. This procedure entails the application of an algorithm that focuses upon comparable data within the faculty member's department and takes into account discipline, rank, years in rank, merit record, salary, and actual dollars difference in salary. (See Document 4.8.5: 3 of 3, *Criteria and Methodology for Special Equity Adjustment*).

### **Conclusion**

Compliance.

### **Recommendation**

None.

### **Proposal for Excellence**

The Principal Committee suggests that USA include a discussion of the criteria and methodology for determining special equity adjustments in the *USA Faculty Handbook*.

### **4.8.6 Academic Freedom and Professional Security**

#1 of 7

#### **Academic Freedom for Faculty and Students**

*(Page 48, Line 3): Faculty and students **must** be free to examine all pertinent data, question assumptions, be guided by the evidence of scholarly research, and teach and study the substance of a given discipline.*

USA supports the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) *Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure* (USA Faculty Handbook, 2001, Chapter 3, p. 21 and Chapter 4, p. 1). USA's commitment to academic freedom is also seen in its published goals and purposes, which state that USA "is dedicated in purpose to the creation of an environment of intellectual excitement and an educational climate that will

stimulate both faculty and students. A forum of free thought and discussion is provided which is intended to help develop an independent spirit”(*Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletin, 2001-2002*, pp. 3-4).

Faculty satisfaction regarding academic freedom at USA is documented by results from the Faculty Senate’s *Annual Faculty Survey*. In the section entitled Faculty Morale, the response to the question “How do you feel about your degree of academic freedom within the classroom?” yielded an average score of 4.09 on surveys obtained during the years 1998 through 2001 (on a scale of 5 for “very satisfied” and 1 for “very dissatisfied”). In another survey, faculty response to “I have academic freedom as a member of the USA faculty” indicated that 90% either strongly agreed or agreed (*Self-Study Faculty Survey, 2001*, Item 44).

### **Conclusion**

Compliance.

### **Recommendation**

None.

#2 of 7

### **Statement of Principles**

*(Page 48, Line 13): An institution **must** adopt and distribute to all faculty members a statement of the principles of academic freedom as established by the governing board, ensuring freedom in teaching, research and publication.*

USA's statement regarding academic freedom is published in Chapters 3 (pp. 21-22) and 4 (pp. 1-2) of the *USA Faculty Handbook, 2001*. The Faculty Handbook is distributed in hard copy form to all new faculty at appointment and to all departments and college offices. It is also available on the University website.

### **Conclusion**

Compliance.

### **Recommendation**

None.

#3 of 7

### **Institutional Policies**

*(Page 48, Line 16): Institutional policies **must** set forth the requirement for faculty members to carry out their duties in a professional, ethical and collegial manner that enhances the purpose of the institution.*

As seen in the *USA Faculty Handbook 2001* (Chapter 4, pp. 13-14), USA subscribes to the AAUP's *Statement on Professional Ethics* (1940). The *Statement* describes the professional and ethical expectations of faculty from the standpoint of professors,

teachers, and colleagues--as members of the institution and as citizens in the community in which they reside. The *Statement* also provides a safeguard relative to professional ethics: “The Academic Freedom and Ethics Committee on Professional Ethics Council is responsible for discussing privately and confidentially with a faculty member the ethics of his/her behavior when the Committee concludes that the above ethical standards are being transgressed. Faculty and administrators may confidentially invite the attention of the Committee to the practices of a particular faculty member” (*USA Faculty Handbook, 2001*, Chapter 4, p. 14).

### **Conclusion**

Compliance.

### **Recommendation**

None.

#4 of 7

### **Terms of Employment**

*(Page 48, Line 20): Although tenure policy is not mandated, each institution **must** provide contracts, letters of appointment, or similar documents to faculty members clearly describing the terms and conditions of their employment.*

USA’s tenure and faculty appointment policies are described in Chapter 3 of the *USA Faculty Handbook, 2001* (pp. 6–28). USA provides a written letter of appointment clearly describing the conditions and terms of employment for all faculty. Copies of

appointment letters are available in each faculty member's official personnel file. This practice is mandated by policies set forth in Chapter 3 of the *Handbook*, which state that the "precise terms and conditions for every appointment should be stated in writing and be in the possession of both institution and teacher before the appointment is consummated" (p. 22). In addition, faculty receive annual contracts until tenure is acquired. Tenured faculty receive notification each year of any salary increase (*Handbook, 2001*, Chapter 3, p. 10).

### **Conclusion**

Compliance.

### **Recommendation**

None.

#5 of 7

### **Distribution of Policies**

*(Page 48, Line 23): All policies regarding employment, as established by the governing board, **must** be published and distributed to the faculty.*

USA policies regarding employment are published in Chapter 3 of the *USA Faculty Handbook, 2001* (pp. 2–43). The *Handbook* is available to all faculty members and is available on the USA website.

## **Conclusion**

Compliance.

## **Recommendation**

None.

#6 of 7

## **Publication of Policies and Procedures**

*(Page 48, Line 26): If the institution uses faculty ranks and tenure, the policies and procedures for promotion, for awarding tenure, for providing adequate notice on non-renewal of probationary appointment, and for termination of appointments, including those for cause, **must** be clearly set forth in the USA Faculty Handbook or other official publication.*

Policies regarding faculty personnel are published in Chapter 3 of the *USA Faculty Handbook, 2001* (pp. 1– 43). USA subscribes to the AAUP’s *Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure* (1940), *Standards of Notice of Non-Reappointment* (1964), and *Statement of Procedural Standards in Faculty Dismissal* (1958). Citations of specific faculty personnel policies in Chapter 3 of the *Handbook* are as follows:

- Promotion Policies and Procedures (pp. 15 – 21).
- Tenure Policy and Procedures (pp. 21 – 28).
- Standards for Notice of Non-Reappointment (p. 26).
- Termination/Dismissal (pp. 31 – 36).

## **Conclusion**

Compliance.

## **Recommendation**

None.

#7 of 7

## **Termination and Non-Renewal**

*(Page 48, Line 32): Termination and non-renewal procedures **must** contain adequate safeguards for protection of academic freedom.*

USA's policies and procedures regarding termination and non-renewal of faculty have been developed and are applied in accordance with AAUP's *Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure* (1940). Procedures relative to non-renewal and termination are found in the *USA Faculty Handbook, 2001* (Chapter 3, pp. 31-36).

While faculty members may bring issues regarding academic freedom to the attention of the AAUP via the Academic Freedom and Ethics Committee on Professional Policies Council, they may also bring academic freedom claims in the form of a grievance in accordance with the Faculty Grievance Policy. As stated in Chapter 4 of the *Handbook* (p. 3), "A 'grievance proceeding' is a proceeding initiated by one or more members of the faculty of the University who claim(s) to have been directly wronged. Such a wrong is concerned normally with appointment, termination, tenure, promotion, academic

freedom.” Therefore, faculty grievance policies and procedures provide an internal safeguard for the protection of academic freedom.

### **Conclusion**

Compliance.

### **Recommendation**

None.

### **4.8.7 Professional Growth**

#1 of 3

#### **Opportunities for Professional Development**

*(Page 48, Line 34): An institution **must** provide faculty members the opportunity to continue their professional development throughout their careers.*

USA encourages and actively supports scholarship in all areas of faculty development. Within the institution, faculty development involves maintaining disciplinary expertise and is further defined as "service on editorial and advisory boards, offices held in professional organizations, participation in professional institutes and workshops, research, publications, exhibitions, performances, professional awards, grants and fellowships, presentations to professional organizations and lecture appointments" (*USA Faculty Handbook, 2001, Chapter 3, p. 15*).

"Scholarship is an important aspect of the mission of the university" (*Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletin, 2001-2002*, p. 3). At the institutional level, USA encourages faculty development in a variety of ways. Faculty members are encouraged to increase disciplinary expertise by taking advantage of free tuition for up to four hours credit per semester. In addition to funding available at the departmental and college levels, a Special Faculty Development Fund is available which provides up to an additional \$1,000 per year for travel and conference expenses for full-time faculty who attend scholarly/professional association meetings as a presenter, in a leadership position, or as a chair/evaluator for a major session. The USA Foundation provides \$200,000 per year to support the Special Faculty Development Fund.

USA provides a sabbatical program for study and research to eligible full-time tenured faculty. The program provides full pay for one semester's leave or half salary for two semester's pay (*USA Faculty Handbook, 2001*, Chapter 5, pp. 12-13).

The Office of the Associate Vice President for Research serves as the central administrator of research activity for USA. This office, along with the Office of Sponsored Programs, provides leadership and support to faculty and identifies potential areas of research as well as funding sources.

The research mission of USA is explained in Chapter 7 of the *Handbook* (p. 1). Each year, USA provides intramural funds in the amount of \$50,000 for research grants to faculty members. The University Research Council, with the Associate Vice President

for Research as chair, is responsible for allocating and monitoring the intramural funds. Chapter 7 of the *Handbook*, (pp. 1, 3) provides guidelines and procedures for the awarding of grants. The Council also sponsors the Annual Research Forum to encourage research, scholarship, and development activities by faculty.

In addition, colleges and departments provide start-up funds for new faculty research needs and may provide additional small grants. The Office of Sponsored Programs assists faculty in obtaining external support for research, submission procedures, and proposal preparation for research activities that advance the mission of USA. Grant writing seminars are offered through this office (*USA Faculty Handbook, 2001, Chapter 7, p. 3*).

USA provides mandatory development programs for new faculty and also provides development programs periodically for all faculty. An example of developmental activities for faculty is the OLL (Online Learning Laboratory) which assists faculty with course development by offering weekly training, facilities for course development, a website with resources and a listserv, and assistance with grant writing related to online learning. A series of workshops called "Faculty Fridays" are offered each semester that are open to all faculty who seek to enhance online teaching skills and course development (Document 4.8.7: 1 of 3, memorandum from Coordinator of the Online Learning Lab, June 21, 2000).

USA has a five-year contract with eCollege Inc., which provides assistance with course content development and technical assistance for faculty offering online courses.

Additionally, through a weekly newsletter, online instructors receive helpful information, including the latest research in the field and related conferences. A regional consultant is also available (verbal communication from a Distance Learning Committee member, May 31, 2001).

The University also contracts with Netg to provide online training for all faculty, staff and students in the use of over 500 types of software.

Extensive library resources are also available for faculty. The University Library has 463,784 bound volumes, 861,050 items on microforms, 3,735 serial titles, and 1,037,637 government documents. The Library offers standard faculty support services such as book purchases, journal subscriptions, interlibrary loans, and research assistance. In recent years, USA has begun offering online services including access to a wide variety of databases, full text online journals, and instructions on usage of online resources.

At the department level, chairs and deans of each respective college determine faculty load to allow sufficient release time for professional growth. Criteria for faculty workload are clearly defined in Chapter 4 of the *USA Faculty Handbook, 2001* (pp. 9-12).

## **Conclusion**

Compliance.

**Recommendation**

None.

#2 of 3

**Evidence of Professional Growth**

*(Page 48, Line 36): The institution **must** demonstrate that such development occurs.*

The Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP), in its *Annual Report of Externally Funded Contract and Grant Activity, Fiscal Year 2001* (p. 1), reported that over the last five years (FY 1997-FY 2001) there has been a 66% increase in sponsored program support from external dollars. The OSP reported an increase in proposal funding of 13% in fiscal year 1999 over the previous year and a 6% increase in proposal funding in fiscal year 2000 compared to fiscal year 1999 (p. 4.1). During fiscal year 2001, over 43% of faculty with PhD's or MD's submitted proposals for consideration by external funding sources with a success rate of 64%. This represents \$35,506,150 in contract and grant activity (p. ii). A complete college-by-college breakdown of funding, as well as funding sources, is available in the annual report. The report also gives a breakdown of proposal submissions and funding rates for fiscal year 1996 through fiscal year 2001 (p. 4.1).

As stated the *USA Faculty Handbook, 2001*, "Promotion in academic rank constitutes a recognition of an individual's professionalism and professional achievement" (Chapter 3, p. 15). Professional development is one of three ways that faculty are evaluated for

promotion and reflects the scholarship of the faculty. According to a representative of the Office of Academic Affairs, fifteen faculty received promotions in 1998, twenty in 1999, and seventeen in 2000 (verbal communication from an Administrative Assistant, Office of Academic Affairs, March 14, 2001),

Decisions regarding merit pay increases are in part reflective of faculty development. Merit pay decisions, initiated at the departmental level, are based on annual evaluation ratings. Some colleges require an annual accounting of developmental activities through the *Faculty Activity Report*, while other colleges ask faculty to respond specifically to the AAP evaluation criteria. Criteria for ratings typically include publications, research, grant activity, participation in professional institutes, workshops, conferences, and presentations to professional organizations (*USA Faculty Handbook, 2001*, Chapter 3, pp. 15-21).

The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) was created in 2000 to provide opportunities for faculty to improve their instructional skills. New faculty are encouraged to attend, but the seminars are open to all faculty. Five seminars were attended by 219 faculty in academic year 2000-2001 (verbal communication with the CTL Director, April 19, 2001). The Online Learning Lab (OLL) offers programming designed to improve online instruction. A summary of activities by the OLL reported a total of eighty-four persons attended ten sessions of Faculty Fridays (memorandum from the Coordinator, OLL, June 21, 2001).

In addition to travel support provided by the department and college budgets, a Special Faculty Development Fund in the amount of \$200,000 is exhausted each year in support of faculty travel to professional meetings. Faculty use of these funds provides further evidence that faculty are participating in professional development activities involving professional presentations of research or participation on boards. In addition, the University Research Council reported that each year the USA faculty exhausts the \$50,000 fund set aside for intramural research grants. The average award is \$3,500 to \$4,000 (verbal communication from an Administrative Assistant, Office of Graduate Studies, March 14, 2001).

Faculty development activities are documented through patents, publications, research grants, travel and presentations at professional conferences. A review of the departmental self-studies (2001) finds that faculty from all colleges and schools are utilizing professional development funds at the departmental, college, and University level and from extramural sources, depending on availability.

For the past four years, the University Research Council and Sigma XI have sponsored a faculty/graduate student research forum and invite faculty to participate. The Office of the Graduate School reports the following regarding participation by faculty in the forum: 57 in 1997; 64 in 1998; 54 in 1999; 73 in 2000 (Document 4.8.7: 2 of 3, memorandum from an Administrative Assistant, Office of Graduate Studies, March 23, 2001).

## **Conclusion**

Compliance.

### **Recommendation**

None.

#3 of 3

### **Clarity of Policies**

*(Page 49, Line 5): The general tone and policies of an institution **must** make it clear that individual faculty members are to take initiative in promoting their own growth as teachers, scholars and, especially in professional and occupational fields, practitioners.*

Chapter 4 of the *USA Faculty Handbook, 2001* (p. 13) states that "the University subscribes to the AAUP *Statement on Professional Ethics*." These ethical guidelines clearly express the responsibilities placed on faculty members to improve competence in their fields of expertise and to be effective scholars and teachers.

The promotion process is initiated at the level of the department chair and/or the individual who wishes to be evaluated for promotion. Promotion policies and procedures for faculty are clearly defined in the *Handbook* (Chapter. 3, pp. 15-21). These policies demonstrate that USA makes it clear that faculty members are responsible for taking the initiative in promoting their own growth as teachers, scholars, and professional practitioners.

**Conclusion**

Compliance.

**Recommendation**

None.

#### 4.8.8 The Role of the Faculty and Its Committees

#1 of 2

##### **Responsibility for Quality**

*(Page 49, Line 10): Primary responsibility for the quality of the educational program must reside with the faculty.*

An atmosphere of shared governance coupled with a network of university, college, and department committees ensures that the primary responsibility for the quality of the educational programs offered at USA resides with the faculty. The faculty's role in shared governance, as it pertains to the quality of the educational programs, is exemplified in the academic responsibilities of department chairs cited in the *USA Faculty Handbook, 2001*, which states that "the departmental chair will involve the faculty in determining educational policy within the broader outlines of those policies already established within the college and the University. Such departmental policy would include the establishing of curricula and departmental majors, developing the department's faculty, establishing standards of instruction, evaluating instruction within the department, and determining requirements for graduation" (Chapter 2, pp. 35-36).

Each college has committees composed of full-time faculty, generally at both the department and college level, who are charged with the responsibility of making decisions regarding the curriculum (*USA Faculty Handbook, 2001*, Chapter 2, pp. 10 - 22). The curriculum typically reflects the consensus view of departmental faculty, and it is the responsibility of faculty members to modify existing courses or initiate new ones in response to effectively serving the needs of majors and non-majors. Curriculum review

begins with the departmental curriculum committee, or in the case of small departments, the entire faculty. Once approved, a proposal is presented to the respective college curriculum committee and the dean for approval with subsequent submission for approval to the Academic Affairs Undergraduate Curriculum Committee or the Graduate Council (graduate school proposals) comprised of representative faculty. Final committee recommendations are submitted to the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs (*USA Faculty Handbook, 2001, Chapter 2, p. 10*).

Faculty satisfaction with their role in being responsible for the quality of the curriculum is seen in the *Self-Study Faculty Survey, 2001*. In response to Item 8 regarding undergraduate programs, 90% of the faculty agreed or strongly agreed they are responsible for determining the undergraduate curriculum for majors in their departments. Similarly, 92% of the faculty responding to Item 25 agreed or strongly agreed they are responsible for determining the graduate curriculum in their departments. In response to Item 47, “USA makes clear the role of the faculty in ensuring the quality of the educational program,” 70% of the faculty agreed or strongly agreed.

The Faculty Senate is the primary representative body of the faculty. As an elected body, the Senate through its standing committees fulfills the function and performs the service of acting as a communication channel between the faculty and the administration in matters pertaining to academic programs. Faculty Senate representatives serve on USA standing committees and on ad hoc committees that have an impact University-wide, including committees whose work involves planning, budgetary matters, curriculum policy, and development (*USA Faculty Handbook, 2001, Chapter 2, pp. 45-52*).

## **Conclusion**

Compliance.

## **Recommendation**

None.

#2 of 2

## **Participation and Jurisdiction**

*(Page 49, Line 11): The extent of the participation and jurisdiction of the faculty in academic affairs **must** be clearly set forth and published.*

The *USA Faculty Handbook, 2001* states that in matters for which faculty have primary responsibility (e.g., curricula, standards of instruction, and requirements for degrees) action will be required by the faculty as a whole or by a representative committee of the faculty (Chapter 2, p. 36). In addition, “those departmental operations that concern primarily the formulation of educational policy, including curriculum requirements, are the primary responsibility of the faculty,” and the “faculty must act to effect changes” (Chapter 2, p. 37).

As discussed above in #1 of 2, each college has committees composed of full-time faculty, generally at both the departmental and college level, who are charged with the responsibility of making decisions regarding the curriculum. These committees and their respective functions are described in the Chapter 2 of the *USA Faculty Handbook, 2001* (pp.10–45).

### **Conclusion**

Compliance.

### **Recommendation**

None.

### **4.8.9 Faculty Loads**

#1 of 4

#### **Sufficient Numbers of Faculty**

*(Page 49, Line 18): An institution **must** provide a faculty of adequate size to support its purpose.*

USA's Mission Statement "actively embraces the functions of teaching, research, public service" (*Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletin, 2001-2002*, p. 3). The extent to which individual faculty excel in each of these functions is evaluated annually. At the same time, the functions of teaching, research and public service ultimately determine the allocation of faculty workload based on guidelines set forth in the *USA Faculty Handbook, 2000* (Chapter 4, pp. 9-13).

In responding to Items 8, 9, and 16 in the *Self-Study Student Survey, 2001*, 76% of the students agreed or strongly agreed that the courses needed to complete their program are usually offered in the sequence needed, 79% agreed or strongly agreed that they were able to register for courses they needed, and 78% agreed or strongly agreed that they

receive appropriate advising.

The *Self-Study Faculty Survey, 2001* reveals that 92% of faculty respondents agreed that appropriate academic advising is provided to undergraduate and graduate students (Items 14 and 34). With respect to faculty workloads, 71% indicated they were satisfied with their overall workload (Item 51), and 71% indicated they were satisfied with their teaching load (Item 49). In addition, 83% reported they were satisfied with their committee responsibilities (Item 50). Finally, 80% percent indicated they had an appropriate number of undergraduate students to advise (Item 15), while 81% believed they had an appropriate number of graduate students to advise (Item 35).

Data obtained from *Statistical Profiles, 2000-2001* show the student/full-time faculty ratio to be under 18-1. When part-time faculty are included, the ratio is under 13-1. Both of the reported faculty-student ratios for 2000-2001 are lower than the 21-1 ratio cited in the 1991 *USA Self-Study Report* (p. 186).

As mentioned previously in Sections 1.4 and 4.8.3 of the current *Self-Study Report*, data obtained from *Statistical Profiles* for the academic years 1995-1996 through 2000-2001 reveal that while overall student enrollment has declined by 4.7%, the number of faculty positions has increased by 9.7%. The Faculty FTE Summary Reports from the Office of Institutional Research include data on faculty workload and reassigned time. The data show that the average faculty teaching load was 10.1 credit hours in fall 1995 and was 9.66 in fall 2000 (*Abstract of Statistical Profiles, 1995-1996 through 2000-2001*).

USA's commitment to providing a faculty of adequate size is, in part, evidenced by the number of programs/departments accredited by external accrediting agencies. As of 2001, sixteen external accrediting organizations have granted full accreditation to

programs and departments in the Colleges of Allied Health Professions, Engineering, Arts and Sciences, Nursing, Education, Business, Medicine and the School of Computer and Information Sciences, Music and Chemistry (*Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletin, 2001-2002*, p. 4).

The data presented above validate the conclusion that USA provides a faculty of adequate size to support its purpose. In contrast, information obtained from Section 9.1 (Strengths and Weakness, p. 58) of the departmental self-studies (2001) reveals that 41% of the departments report additional full-time faculty are needed to support the functions of teaching and research. It should be noted that it is expected that departments would typically advocate for additional faculty. The perceived need for additional faculty coupled with the uncertainty regarding future budgetary allocations for higher education in the State of Alabama is a source of concern among many USA faculty.

### **Conclusion**

Compliance.

### **Recommendation**

None.

### **Proposal for Excellence**

The Principal Committee suggests that USA continue to take steps necessary to ensure that maintaining an adequate number of faculty sufficient to meet its mission receives a high priority in budgetary considerations. In addition, it is suggested that deans and

chairpersons continue to actively seek input from faculty regarding faculty resource needs and apprise faculty of efforts to recruit and retain faculty.

#2 of 4

### **Assignment of Responsibilities**

*(Page 49, Line 19): It **must** have procedures for the equitable and reasonable assignment of faculty responsibilities – including classroom instruction, academic advising, committee membership, guidance of student organizations, and research and service to the public.*

USA's policies regarding faculty workload are presented in the *USA Faculty Handbook, 2001* (Chapter 4, pp. 9-13). Policies include USA's expectations of faculty relative to teaching, research and service. While the policies include typical distributions of time and effort, other distributions are possible. For example, the standard teaching load is twelve credit hours per semester when 60% is the assigned effort for teaching. However, commitments in this area can be adjusted in consideration of particular course needs and requirements, as well as faculty research and service commitments. It should be noted that the average teaching load was 9.66 semester hours in fall 2000. Exceptions to standard workload expectations are also addressed in the *USA Faculty Handbook, 2001* (Chapter 4, pp. 10-11).

### **Conclusion**

Compliance.

### **Recommendation**

None.

#3 of 4

### **Policies for Protecting Faculty**

*(Page 49, Line 24): The institution **should** have policies to protect faculty members from assuming or being assigned internal or external responsibilities which might encroach upon the quality or the quantity of the work they are employed to perform for the institution.*

Chapter 4 of the *USA Faculty Handbook, 2001* (pp.10-11) includes policies that provide for exceptions to the standard workload expectations for faculty. These policies are intended to provide alternatives to faculty while maintaining the quality or quantity of the duties and responsibilities they are employed to perform. Despite the existence of these policies, differences among departments regarding assignments and responsibilities do exist. Faculty in departments with large numbers of majors typically assume more advisees. However, departments with the largest number of majors do have professional advisors (e.g., Nursing, Allied Health, Engineering, Business, Curriculum and Instruction, and Communication) to assist. Competing responsibilities coupled with faculty shortages were cited in the departmental self-studies (2001, p. 58) as being a weakness within a given department. While the perception among many respondents is that heavy advising impeded other faculty responsibilities, 80% believe they have an appropriate number of undergraduate advisees (Item 15), and 81% believe they have an appropriate number of graduate advisees (Item 35).

## **Conclusion**

Compliance.

## **Suggestion**

None.

#4 of 4

## **Instructional Load Factors**

*(Page 49, Line 28): The calculation of instructional loads **should** take into account such factors as number of preparations, number of students taught, nature of the subject, and help available from secretaries and teaching assistants.*

Chapter 4 of the *USA Faculty Handbook, 2001* (pp. 9-11) provides the following statements regarding instructional loads:

- The standard teaching load is twelve credits per semester where 60% is the assigned effort for teaching.
- Any deviation (adjustment) from the normal load must be approved by the dean of the respective college or school. However, the teaching load is never greater than fifteen semester hours.
- The maximum teaching load for faculty during the summer session will normally be defined as teaching no more than nine semester hours.
- Exceptions from the standard instructional load may be based upon a number of factors, including class size (number of preparations); development of new

courses; modality of instruction, including distance education; level of instruction; discipline; and accreditation requirements.

While these statements contain specific wording and quantitative standards they, like the **must** statement, do not address every conceivable variation that can arise in determining faculty loads. For example, the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering reported that laboratory courses are typically 170 minutes in duration, but are weighted at one semester hour (departmental self-studies, 2001, p. 50). Similarly, faculty in the College of Allied Health Professions and College of Nursing provide clinically-related instruction with the student-contact hours typically exceeding the semester hour weighting.

As previously mentioned, 41% of the departments responding to the Strengths and Weaknesses section of the departmental self-studies (p. 57) cited the need for additional faculty as a weakness in their department. In contrast, thirty-nine departments selected at random from the departmental self-studies (p. 50) revealed that only three departments reported teaching loads exceeding the 12-15 semester-hour load. Data previously cited from the Office of Institutional Research indicate that the average teaching load for all faculty in fall 2000 was 9.66 credits per semester. However, in the same sample, twenty-two departments indicated a need for additional faculty, and seven departments expressed concern over heavy teaching loads. As reported by the Office of Institutional Research in fall of 2000, faculty reassigned time amounted to 98.7 FTE faculty of a total of 430 FTE faculty, which is equivalent to 395 course reassignments available for research and other

activities. There has also been a concomitant increase in externally funded research in recent years (*Annual Report of Externally Funded Contracts and Grant Activities, 2000*).

Differences exist among the number of student advisees assigned to faculty, and the student-faculty ratios often vary substantially from one department to another and between courses as well. However, some departments have experienced declining enrollments and they would likely welcome such differences (departmental self-studies, p. 58). While the preceding data and comments may appear contradictory, it is clear that for whatever reason, some faculty, such as those who wish to devote the majority of their time to research, believe instructional-related responsibilities are a major area of concern. However, USA's statement regarding instructional exceptions to standard workload expectations does provide an equitable approach to assigning faculty teaching loads while providing alternatives for faculty to pursue other areas of interest. Perhaps the issue was best summarized in the Department of Psychology's response to Section 9.1 (Challenges) in the departmental self-studies (p. 58) when the author(s) stated: "There is tension between the competing desires and responsibilities of teaching and scholarship. An increase in teaching duties decreases the amount of time available to devote to scholarship, and as the amount of time devoted to scholarship increases less time is available for teaching. The challenge is to strike a balance between these two desired activities so that the instructional duties and the quality of instruction are maintained while at the same time sufficient time is provided for pursuit of scholarly activities."

### **Conclusion**

Compliance.

### **Suggestion**

None.

### **Proposal for Excellence**

The Principal Committee suggests that college deans and chairpersons conduct formal reviews of the methods by which instructional loads are based, give priority to filling current faculty vacancies, and expand the number of faculty in those departments who can justify the need.

### **4.8.10 Criteria and Procedures for Evaluation**

#1 of 4

#### **Faculty Performance Evaluations**

*(Page 49, Line 33): An institution **must** conduct periodic evaluations of the performance of individual faculty members.*

Evidence of USA's commitment to conducting periodic evaluations of faculty performance is set forth in Chapter 3 of the *USA Faculty Handbook, 2001* (p. 36), which states that "all faculty are evaluated (by their department) each year during the Spring Semester using the standard Affirmative Action Evaluation of Faculty form (AAP)."

Evaluation of faculty teaching performance is further mandated by the requirement that all faculty must be evaluated by students at least one time each academic year (*USA Faculty Handbook, 2001*, Chapter 3, p. 36). The administration of student evaluations was confirmed via a survey of USA's college deans conducted by the Principal Committee during summer of 2000. The survey further revealed that, while the format for student evaluations varies among departments, many of the respondents to the survey of college deans indicated that they use a standard rating form available through the Computer Services Center (see Document 4.8.10: 1 of 4).

### **Conclusion**

Compliance.

### **Recommendation**

None.

#2 of 4

### **Faculty Performance Criteria**

*(Page 49, Line 34): The evaluation **must** include a statement of the criteria against which the performance of each faculty member will be measured.*

The form entitled *Affirmative Action Plan Evaluation of Faculty (AAP)* includes a full description of general information, guidelines, and procedures for annual faculty performance evaluations. Twelve criteria are listed and explained in the AAP form under the basic divisions of Teaching Effectiveness, Professional Development and

Professional Service (Document 4.8.10: 2 of 4, *Affirmative Action Plan Evaluation Form*). Reference to policy statements regarding the criteria for evaluating faculty and weighting of the three basic divisions of the criteria is found in the *USA Faculty Handbook, 2001* (Chapter 3, pp 36-37, and Chapter 4, pp. 11-12).

According to the survey of deans conducted by the Principal Committee, the College of Medicine, the University Library, the Department of Military Science and the Department of Air Force Studies do not employ the AAP form. The College of Medicine evaluates faculty through the completion of the *Annual Faculty Productivity and Evaluation Report* (AFPER). Although different from the AAP form, the AFPER form includes the three basic criteria of teaching, research, and service in the evaluation of faculty. Library faculty are evaluated in accordance with job performance/effectiveness, research/professional development, and service. These criteria are weighted according to specific assignments and responsibilities of individual library faculty. The Departments of Military Science and Air Force Studies evaluate faculty performance in accordance with United States military regulations. Army officers are evaluated via the *Officer Evaluation Report*, and enlisted personnel via the *Non-Commissioned Officer Report*. Air Force officers are evaluated via the *Officer Performance Report*, and enlisted personnel via the *Enlisted Personnel Performance Report*.

## **Conclusion**

Compliance.

## **Recommendation**

None.

#3 of 4

### **Consistency of Criteria with Institutional Goals**

*(Page 50, Line 2): The criteria **must** be consistent with the purpose and goals of the institution and be made known to all concerned.*

Evaluation criteria stress the importance of teaching, research, and service--the cornerstones of USA's mission. These criteria are consistent with USA's mission which states that, "The University mission actively embraces the functions of teaching, research, public service and health care through which it vigorously pursues the preservation, discovery, communication and the application of knowledge" (*USA Faculty Handbook, 2001*, Chapter 1, pp. 1-2). In addition to teaching, research and service, the advancement of the "health care" mission is the responsibility of the faculty in the colleges of Allied Health Professions, Medicine, and Nursing.

New faculty appointees are required to attend faculty orientation sessions sponsored by the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs. During the orientation process, new appointees are provided copies of the *USA Faculty Handbook* and the *Faculty Orientation Manual for Full and Part-Time Faculty*, both of which contain the criteria for annual faculty evaluations. (See Document 4.8.10: 3 of 4 for the agenda for orientation held in fall of 2002.) In addition, several colleges introduce new faculty members to the evaluation process as part of their orientation process. Faculty actively participate in

establishing their goals and objectives for the academic year, and personally review their evaluations annually with their department chair.

**Conclusion**

Compliance.

**Recommendation**

None.

#4 of 4

**Institutional Use of Evaluations**

*(Page 50, Line 4): The institution **must** demonstrate that it uses the results of this evaluation for improvement of the faculty and its educational program.*

The results of the evaluation process are used for improvement of faculty and the institution's educational programs. At the individual level, the results are used for decision-making in faculty development, promotion, retention, and merit pay. The process is aimed at ensuring faculty are productive and competent in discharging their duties.

Information obtained through the survey of USA's deans conducted by the Principal Committee provides insight into ways in which the various colleges use the evaluation process to improve their educational programs. For example, the College of Engineering is actively involved in a multi-year development program to implement a continuous improvement process based on outcomes assessment and feedback mechanisms. Each

engineering program has an external review council that meets periodically to review assessment tools and recommend improvements. Improvements accomplished as a result of this process are documented and become part of the subsequent outcomes assessment cycle. Outcomes assessment are also employed in all of the departments within the Colleges of Allied Health Professions and Nursing. In the Mitchell College of Business, problems related to faculty performance are identified through the evaluation process and then are addressed through faculty development activities. These range from individual training opportunities, to college faculty development workshops, to supporting faculty participation in external workshops. All respondents to the survey of deans report that teaching deficiencies are identified through student evaluations and that mechanisms are in place to address these issues, principally through faculty mentoring, attendance at instructional-related workshops, and discussions between individual faculty and their chairs.

The evaluation process provides an important form of feedback to each faculty member in assessing performance and provides incentives for continuing improvement of the quality of teaching, research, and service. The evaluation process also serves to improve the academic environment, and the curricular offerings provided at USA.

## **Conclusion**

Compliance.

## **Recommendation**

None.

## **4.9 CONSORTIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENTS**

### **Introduction**

Consortial relationships and contractual agreements are consistent with USA's published goals and purposes statement, as they allow the University to "maintain relations with other colleges and universities for the purpose of sharing resources and responsibilities in teaching, research, and service, in this country and abroad." USA's commitment to establishing and maintaining external consortia and contractual agreements is evidenced by the large number of affiliation agreements, which are essential to the educational program.

The Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium (MESC) was initiated on October 1, 1971. Coursework presented by MESC at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab provides significant academic field experiences not otherwise available at USA's main campus. The British Studies Program, Paris Studies Program, and Mexican Studies Program provide USA faculty and students with unique educational and cultural experiences via a residential summer session offered annually in these countries. These external relationships, along with others discussed in the following sections, exemplify USA's commitment to "reaching outward to the international community and encouraging a wide exchange of knowledge and cultural relationships with other peoples" (Goals and Purposes Statement, *Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletin, 2001-2002*, p. 3).

#1 of 3

### **Control of Relationships/Agreements**

*(Page 50, Line 13): A member institution which enters into such consortial relationships or contractual agreements **must** have sufficient control of relationships/agreements so as to maintain compliance with the **Criteria** when offering educational programs through such arrangements.*

A large number of affiliation agreements exist with health-care institutions for the education of nursing, allied health, and medical students. These agreements are on file in departmental offices and in the Office of Institutional Research and Planning, and ensure compliance with the SACS criteria.

USA also participates in two consortial relationships and six contractual agreements.

Consortial relationships have been established with the Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium and the British Studies Programs. Contractual agreements have been established with six foreign educational institutions:

1. Worms University, Worms, Germany
2. Passau University, Passau, Germany
3. Pau University, Pau, France
4. Georg-Simon-Ohm Fachhochschule, Nuremberg, Germany
5. University of Veracruz, Veracruz, Mexico
6. Laval University, Quebec City, Canada

The partners in the consortial relationships are themselves fully accredited by the SACS; therefore, compliance is maintained (verbal communication with Director of International

Programs and Development, May 28, 2001). The specific ways in which quality is maintained differs for each program and will be described individually.

The Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium (MESC) consists of both public and private institutions of higher education in Alabama, all of which are fully accredited by SACS. A listing of the twenty-two institutions participating in the MESC Consortium is as follows:

- Alabama State University
- Athens State University
- Auburn University, Auburn
- Auburn University, Montgomery
- Birmingham Southern College
- Huntingdon College
- Jacksonville State University
- Judson College
- University of West Alabama
- University of Mobile
- Samford University
- Spring Hill College
- Talladega College
- Troy State University, Troy
- Troy State University, Dothan
- Tuskegee University

- University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa
- University of Alabama, Birmingham
- University of Alabama, Huntsville
  - University of Montevallo
  - University of North Alabama
  - University of South Alabama

Coursework presented by MESC is taught through the Dauphin Island Sea Lab, located at the mouth of Mobile Bay. Faculty providing instruction for MESC courses may be from any member institution, from the Sea Lab faculty, or qualified visiting faculty. Students come from the member institutions or, as transient students, from non-MESC institutions. All courses offered through MESC have been approved by the MESC Program (Academic Review) Committee and by USA through the same mechanisms USA employs to approve its own curricular offerings. The appropriate departmental faculty have approved the course content and methods, the courses have been scrutinized by the collegiate curriculum committee, and the courses have been sanctioned by the USA Academic Affairs Committee and Office of Academic Affairs (verbal communication from the Executive Director, Dauphin Island Sea Laboratory, June 1, 2001). As a consequence, these courses will be found listed, under the appropriate department, in USA's *Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletin, 2001-2002* (pp. 121-225). Courses are also routinely listed in USA's semester schedule of courses, and USA students may enroll in MESC courses for USA credit directly, without the necessity of transferring credit (*Bulletin*, pp. 50-51).

Continuing evaluation of MESC coursework is accomplished through the participation of USA faculty in both the course offerings and in the governance and operation of the Sea Lab itself. Because of the University's location and the high level of its faculty's interest and expertise in marine sciences, faculty members have been significantly involved in both the Sea Lab and MESC since their inception, an involvement that continues today. MESC courses are regularly evaluated by students using a MESC evaluation instrument. The results are communicated to USA through the Chair of the Marine Sciences Department (verbal communication from Executive Director, Dauphin Island Sea Laboratory, June 1, 2001).

The British Studies Program (BSP) is a cooperative arrangement with the University of Southern Mississippi (USM), which allows USA faculty and students to participate in a summer program of special courses offered in Great Britain at the University of London. Unlike MESC, the coursework in this arrangement "belongs" to USM, which is responsible for the quality-control paperwork. When USA undergraduate or graduate students participate in the program, they do so as transient students at USM; the credit earned is then transferred in the normal way to USA. USA faculty, however, have been more directly involved in shaping the course offerings. From the beginning of the agreement, which goes back some twenty years, USA faculty have designed and taught BSP courses and, in some cases, have collaborated with USM faculty to do so. Given this proprietary involvement, USA faculty and administration are comfortable with pre-approving the courses for transfer credit. Since USA faculty are onsite in England every

summer, they have an opportunity to observe the way in which the program is conducted. Responsibility for formal evaluation, however, resides with USM, an institution fully accredited by SACS (verbal communication with Director of International Programs and Development, May 30, 2001).

Contractual agreements maintained with foreign educational institutions are intended to enhance learning experiences and provide additional opportunities for cooperative research, and the exchange of students, faculty, and staff. The initiation of contractual agreements is typically the result of individual faculty interest and knowledge of a specific institution and its programmatic offerings. The process of executing a contractual relationship with an educational institution begins in the Office of International Programs and Development, which is an administrative unit of USA's Academic Affairs and the School of Continuing Education and Special Programs. All pending contracts and supporting information, such as course descriptions and faculty credentials must be reviewed by the International Affairs Committee (IAC). The IAC is composed of representatives from all of USA's colleges. The language of the contractual agreement outlines the duties and responsibilities of both parties to the contract, which includes the level of control assigned to the affiliating institutions. In addition, the level of individual faculty interest and knowledge of a specific institution, coupled with onsite visitations by USA faculty, enables faculty to observe the way in which various programs are conducted (verbal communication with Director, International Programs and Development, May 30, 2001).

## **Conclusion**

Compliance.

## **Recommendation**

None.

#2 of 3

## **Evaluation of Consortia and Contracts**

*(Page 50, Line 18): All consortia and contracts **must** be evaluated regularly.*

### Clinical Education Affiliations

Hospital and other health-related affiliates are regularly evaluated through feedback from students and through professional evaluations by the faculty coordinators of clinical education. Results of evaluations are used in decisions regarding continuing and discontinuing affiliations.

### Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium (MESC)

Because all members of the group are fully accredited by SACS, regular evaluations result from the accrediting process. In addition, students and faculty surveys are conducted on a regular basis. Formal review of MESC resides with the Dean of the Graduate School who serves on the MESC Board of Directors, and a designated University Faculty Liaison who serves on the MESC Program Committee (Academic Programming) (verbal communication from Dean of the Graduate School, May 29, 2001).

### Foreign Institutions Contractual Agreements

Evaluation of agreements with foreign educational institutions occurs through feedback from students and through professional judgments of the faculty program coordinators. The results of these evaluations are used to improve the programs.

### British Studies Program

Formal evaluation of the program rests with USM, an institution fully accredited by SACS. As previously mentioned, USA faculty are on site in England every summer and observe the program operation. The consortial agreement with USM, as well as affiliation contracts with foreign institutions, is reviewed annually by the Director of International Programs and Development (verbal communication with Director of International Programs and Development, May 30, 2001).

### **Conclusion**

Compliance.

### **Recommendation**

None.

#3 of 3

### **Substantive Changes**

*(Page 50, Line 20): If an institution plans to participate in consortial relationships or enter into contractual agreements for education programs, it **must** follow reporting policies and procedures related to substantive changes.*

USA has no immediate plans to participate in new consortial relationships or enter into new contractual agreements for educational programs (verbal communication from Assistant Vice President for Institutional Research and Planning, May 26, 2001).

### **Conclusion**

Compliance.

### **Recommendation**

None.

### **4.9.1 Consortial Relationships**

#1 of 4

#### **Regionally Accredited Institutions**

*(Page 50, Line 26): A member institution seeking to participate in a consortium degree or certificate program **must** enter into such a relationship only with regionally accredited institutions offering degrees or certificates at the same level.*

#### **Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium**

All members are accredited by SACS (verbal communication with Executive Director, Dauphin Island Sea Laboratory, June 1, 2001).

British Studies Program

USM is accredited by SACS (verbal communication with the Director of International Programs and Development, May 30, 2001).

**Conclusion**

Compliance.

**Recommendation**

None.

#2 of 4

**Exceptions to Accreditation**

*(Page 50, Line 30): Exceptions **must** be approved by the Commission in advance of the formation of or participation in the consortium.*

All consortial participants are accredited by SACS. There are no exceptions (verbal communication with Assistant Vice President for Institutional Research and Planning, May 26, 2001).

**Conclusion**

Compliance.

**Recommendation**

None.

#3 of 4

**Maintenance of Quality**

*(Page 51, Line 1): The member institution **must** maintain the quality of all courses/programs offered through the consortium.*

Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium

USA faculty teach courses and are directly involved in research; in administration of MESC, and in the operation of the Dauphin Sea Lab facility. Student evaluations are conducted regularly. All member institutions are accredited by SACS (verbal communication with Executive Director, Dauphin Island Sea Laboratory, June 1, 2001).

British Studies Program

USA faculty spend summers in England and observe the progress of courses. The program is part of USM, which is accredited by SACS (verbal communication with Director of International Programs and Development, May 30, 2001).

**Conclusion**

Compliance.

**Recommendation**

None.

#4 of 4

**Related to the Teaching Purpose**

*(Page 51, Line 3): Educational courses/programs offered through a consortial relationship **must** be related to the teaching purpose of the institution and comply with the **Criteria**.*

USA's Goals and Purposes Statement provide insight to the institution's regard for consortial relationships: "The University reaches outward to the international community and encourages a wide exchange of knowledge and cultural relationships with other peoples. Relations are maintained with colleges and universities, for the purpose of sharing resources and responsibilities in teaching, research, and service" (*Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletin, 2001-2002, p.4*). Therefore, consortial relationships support the teaching purpose of USA by fulfilling a significant part of the institution's stated goals and purposes.

**Conclusion**

Compliance.

**Recommendation**

None.

**4.9.2 Contractual Agreements**

# 1 of 3

### **Supporting Institutional Purpose**

*(Page 51, Line 6): Educational services and programs offered through a contractual agreement with another institution or organization **must** support the purpose of the institution.*

Contractual agreements with other institutions provide students with additional learning opportunities in essentially the same way as consortial relationships. Providing additional learning opportunities serves to fulfill an important aspect of the purpose of USA, which is to “serve as a major center of high quality and accessible undergraduate, graduate and professional education for metropolitan Mobile, the State of Alabama, the Gulf Coast region, and the southeastern United States” (*Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletin, 2001-2002, p.3*).

A variety of contractual agreements exist between the University and various entities, all of which support the purpose of the institution. Examples of such agreements include affiliations with health agencies for the purpose of providing vitally important clinical education for students in health sciences, and affiliations with schools to provide teaching internships experiences for students in teacher education.

### **Conclusion**

Compliance.

### **Recommendation**

None.

#2 of 3

### **Program Quality**

*(Page 51, Line 8): The member institution **must** maintain the quality of programs/courses offered through the contract and ensure ongoing compliance with the **Criteria**.*

The quality of program and courses offered through affiliated institutions is the responsibility of the University of South Alabama. Individual USA faculty are typically responsible for initiating interest in establishing contracts with educational institutions based on their knowledge of the institution's quality of course offerings. Finally, onsite faculty visitations help to ensure that the quality of the affiliation agreement is maintained.

### **Conclusion**

Compliance.

### **Recommendation**

None.

#3 of 3

### **Teach-Out Agreements**

*(Page 51, Line 14): If an institution enters into a teach-out agreement with another institution, it **must** submit the agreement to the Commission for approval.*

USA does not participate in teach-out agreements with other institutions (verbal communication with Assistant Vice President for Institutional Research and Planning, May 26, 2001).

**Conclusion**

Not applicable.