

THE BRANCH  
COLLEGE OF MINISTRY

FACULTY HANDBOOK

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Revised \_\_\_\_\_

*Branch College of Ministry Faculty Handbook*

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## **SECTION 1.1 – Purpose of the Handbook**

This handbook is designed as a guide for faculty and administration, providing information which is essential to a better understanding of the role of a faculty member at The Branch College of Ministry. This handbook is intended for use in faculty orientation as well as to serve as a ready reference for institutional life and procedure. This handbook has been prepared for the purpose of clarifying faculty responsibilities and privileges and should aid in creating a direct and effective approach to success as a faculty member. It is subject to review and/or revision by the Handbook Review Committee or the Board of Trustees. Faculty members who have questions regarding this handbook are encouraged to consult with the present Academic Dean and the Board of Trustees.

## **SECTION 1.2 – College Mission and Goals**

### **Mission Statement**

The Branch College of Ministry exists to develop, equip, and inspire Christian leaders for excellence in ministry to the Church.

### **Institutional Learning Outcomes**

It is the goal of the Branch College of Ministry that graduates will effectively:

- Teach sound biblical principles for effective Christian ministry
- Provide efficacious pastoral care and counsel
- Conduct competent academic research
- Utilize effective critical thinking skills
- Lead others contextually in authentic Christian ministry
- Exhibit Christ-like maturity for sustainable fruitful service

## **SECTION 2.1 – Board of Trustees and College Administration Section**

### **The Role of the Board of Trustees:**

Designated as the “keepers of the college mission,” the Board of Trustees provides clarity and direction to the president and administration, and assists in the adequate fundraising needed to accomplish its financial goals and objectives. In order to ensure macro-level perspective on the vision and goals of the college, the board meets a minimum of two times per year and performs their work in select committees as needed. This committee work enables each board member to fully engage in dialogue and provide the needed perspective on the goals of the college.

## **SECTION 2.2 –Administration and Staff Duties and Responsibilities**

### **The Office of the President**

The President works under the direction of the Board of Trustees to develop and direct an executive leadership team capable of effectively and efficiently administrating the institution, and to carry out the directives of the Board as expressed in the bylaws, board policies and resolutions. The President also serves as the primary representative for institutional advancement.

#### Essential Functions

1. Performance of all duties related to the office as prescribed by the Articles of Incorporation, or the bylaws, and the exercise of such powers and performance of other duties as may be prescribed by the Board.
2. Assume leadership, direction, and responsibility for all of the affairs of the institution as well as the activities of the officers and delegated parties.
3. Oversight of the recruitment and nomination of officers necessary to fulfill the strategic goals and objectives of the institution.
4. Provide all annually prescribed documents and reports related to core institutional documents, budgeting, and strategic planning in a timely and efficient manner to the Board of Trustees for review and approval.
5. Comprehensive oversight of all curricular and co-curricular functions of the institution, including its operations, finances, and academic programs.
6. Consideration and implementation of any improvements recommended by the Board of Trustees related to the results of the annual evaluation of the President.

#### Qualifications

1. Commitment to the consistent application of Christian values and professional practices to higher education.
2. Commitment to the education, success, and growth of a diverse student population.

3. Provides enthusiastic support for the mission, goals, and objectives of the institution, as well as a strong and consistent sense of vision and direction.
4. Possess significant executive administrative experience in higher education, with demonstrated effectiveness in strategic planning, staff development, and management.
5. Commitment to servant-leadership with clear ability to utilize teamwork to its maximum effectiveness.
6. Have excellent communication skills and the ability to work with diverse constituencies.
7. Skills and ability to build community and collegiality while modeling integrity and ethical practices.
8. Ability to synthesize and evaluate institutional research and assessment data in order to facilitate the development and success of the institution.

### Education and Experience

Earned post-graduate degree, from an accredited institution which is appropriate to the assigned responsibilities, with a minimum of five years of executive leadership and administrative experience in an educational environment of higher education or any combination of experience, education, and training which would provide the level of knowledge, skill, and ability required.

### **The Office of Academic Dean**

The Chief Academic Officer provides primary oversight of the educational functions consistent with the highest standards of Christian ethics, legal and regulatory requirements, and accepted principles and practices of postsecondary Christian education.

### Essential Functions

1. Performance of all responsibilities as stated in the Bylaws.
2. Leadership and direction for all academic programs of the institution.
3. Oversight of the recruitment, assignment, and retention of qualified faculty that demonstrate excellence academically and spiritually, and who are in agreement with the institution's statement of faith.
4. Oversight of the development, review, and assessment of curriculum appropriate to each academic program.
5. Cooperation with supporting administrative services and functions of the institution.
6. Oversight of the publication of core institutional documents necessary for mission fulfillment and consistent with accepted standards for postsecondary Christian education.
7. Development of the academic department strategic plan and budget.
8. Providing leadership in conducting regular meetings of the faculty for the purpose of encouragement and professional development.
9. Teaching of 2 courses per year during each academic year.

## Qualifications

1. Commitment to the consistent application of Christian values and professional practices to higher education.
2. Commitment to the education, success, and growth of a diverse student population.
3. Provide enthusiastic support for the mission, goals, and objectives of the institution, as well as a strong and consistent sense of vision and direction for the academic programs.
4. Possess significant executive administrative experience in higher education, with demonstrated effectiveness course instruction, curriculum and program review, academic assessment, and staff development.
5. Possess executive administrative experience in higher education, with demonstrated effectiveness in strategic planning, staff development, and management.
6. Commitment to servant-leadership with clear ability to utilize teamwork to its maximum effectiveness.
7. Have excellent communication skills and the ability to work with diverse constituencies.
8. Skills and ability to build community and collegiality while modeling integrity and ethical practices.
9. Ability to synthesize and evaluate institutional research and assessment data in order to facilitate the development and success of the institution.

## Education and Experience

Post-graduate degree, preferably an Ed.D, D.Min., or a Ph.D. in education or in a related field (MA will be considered when BA degrees are the highest degree offered by the institution), with five years of leadership and administrative experience in an educational environment of higher education, or any combination of experience, education, and training which would provide the level of knowledge, skill, and ability required, as the President shall determine.

## **SECTION 2.3 – Faculty Member Duties and Responsibilities**

### **Full Time Faculty**

Reporting to the Academic Dean, faculty serve as contracted, full-time instructors providing consistent quality education contributing to the accomplishment of the institutional Mission. Faculty members hold earned degrees from accredited institutions and are assigned courses related to degree discipline and area of professional expertise. Faculty members are expected to exemplify mature Christian character and to serve as mentors and models of authentic Christian ministry and service in keeping with the institution's statement of faith, policies, and practices. Faculty work collegially under the oversight of the Academic Dean to promote student success, ministry development, and educational effectiveness. Faculty members are expected to participate in required meetings, events, assigned areas of academic oversight, and participate in academic assessment.

### Essential Functions

1. Provide 4 courses of academic instruction per academic year consisting of 42 hours of lecture, 21 hours of preparation and grading per course (total of 63 hours per course).
2. Overload of up to 3 additional adjunct courses can be contracted upon approval of the Academic Dean.
3. Maintain 20 hours per week of regularly scheduled office hours and be available for the support of students.
4. Participate in syllabus and course development.
5. Participate in assigned assessment of student learning outcomes.
6. Participate regularly in faculty meetings, annual faculty self-evaluations and supervisor evaluations, committee service as assigned, annual graduation events and commencements.

### Additional Marginal Functions

1. Represent the institution to various external entities and outside agencies regarding mission, goals, and objectives.
2. Foster an environment that promotes respect for others and recognizes initiative and excellence.
3. Support institutional activities and special events through attendance or participation.
4. Communicate an accurate image of the institution to the public, and be a positive and active representative of the institution.
5. Maintain confidentiality of institutional information exposed to in the course of business.
6. Perform such other academic services as assigned by the Academic Dean.

## Qualifications

1. Knowledge of and commitment to the Mission, Statement of Faith, and Philosophy of Education of the institution.
2. Ability to utilize metrics to measure educational effectiveness.
3. Ability to perform satisfactorily in a higher education office work environment.
4. Skill in using the tools of a modern office environment.
5. Skill in making presentations to individuals and groups.
6. Skill in communicating well in both oral and written forms.
7. Skill in interpersonal relations, including the ability to relate professionally to students, faculty, and staff.

## Education and Experience

1. Requires an earned degree (Doctoral degree for graduate programs faculty; M.Div. or equivalent for undergraduate programs with doctoral degree preferred) from an accredited institution in the appropriate discipline.
2. Five to ten years of progressive instructor experience. Must have a demonstrated record of teaching, scholarship and service.
3. Experience with using technology and education resources for teaching and learning, as well as proficiency with online instruction and course management systems.
4. Ability to assist in the evaluation and assessment of student learning outcomes and curriculum review.
5. The individual must be a seasoned professional who can provide exceptional instruction along with demonstrated Christian character.
6. Pastoral or ministry experience preferred.

## **SECTION 3.1 – Fulltime Faculty Recruitment and Appointment**

### **1. Recruitment**

#### **Vacated Positions**

Requests to hire new full-time faculty for vacated positions shall be submitted in writing with appropriate justification by the Academic Dean to the President and the Board of Trustees.

#### **New Positions**

Requests for new full-time faculty positions shall be submitted in writing with appropriate justification by the Dean to the President and the Board of Trustees.

#### **Recruitment Process**

When approvals are granted by the Office of the President to conduct searches, the recruitment process shall be a cooperative effort by the Academic Dean and the President. The Academic Dean will be responsible to prepare a position description which describes the position to be filled including essential functions and secondary duties, and enumerates the qualifications that candidates must possess to assume that position. The Academic Dean will work with the President to advertise the position appropriately. All applicants must complete an application. The Academic Dean should form a check list of criteria for his own use by which all applicants will be evaluated and the list should include those criteria most likely to predict success at The Branch College of Ministry.

References should be contacted by phone. The conversation should be guided by the checklist of criteria and other information the reference wishes to give. Communication related to each applicant should be documented and put in each applicant's file stored on the Branch College's server.

After evaluating all applications and conducting phone interviews with the most promising applicants, the Academic Dean shall recommend one final candidate to the President to be invited for a campus visit and interview with the President. All phases of the hiring process will be appropriately documented.

### **2. Interview Process**

The Academic Dean will be responsible to develop the schedule of activities for the campus visit and serve as host/hostess to the applicants during their stay. The interview schedule should include time for candidates to be with students, faculty, and the President. All final interviews are to be conducted by the Office of the President.

### **3. Appointment**

Offers of appointment to the faculty shall be issued by the President in writing and shall include information about rank, salary, prerequisites, and other conditions and contingencies of employment.

After a position is filled, all applicants will be informed by the Academic Dean. The file containing original documents of the person hired should go to the Academic Dean.

## **SECTION 3.2 – Faculty Contract Information**

### **1. The Faculty Contract System**

#### **a. Description**

Faculty are not under contract but are employed at will. They may leave at any time for any reason or be terminated any time for any reason, but there is an expectation that they would finish instructing the class they began unless otherwise are unable.

#### **b. Contract Periods**

The academic year for the college is from August to the following July and shall be reflected in the faculty contracts.

## **SECTION 3.3 – Workload**

### **1. Introduction**

A full-time faculty position establishes The Branch College of Ministry as the primary place of employment for the faculty member and assures that College-related responsibilities will require the major portion of the faculty member's professional effort.

### **2. Employment outside the College**

Employment outside the College must not interfere with the professor's obligations or reduce the performance at The Branch College of Ministry. If service to The Branch College of Ministry or faculty performance is evaluated as less than satisfactory by the Academic Dean or the President, the faculty member may be required to discontinue outside employment or commitments.

### **3. Office Hours**

Office hours will take place between the hours of 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at The Branch College of Ministry offices. Each faculty member will be responsible for posting their specific hours within this time frame on the syllabus for each class they instruct.

## **SECTION 4.1 – Employee Relations and Grievances**

The College has established processes for handling faculty grievances. The nature of the grievance dictates which process applies to the situation, as follows:

1. Grievances related to behavior of other employees, including discrimination or harassment, are to be directed into Populi at any time and sent to the Academic Dean and the President.
2. Grievances related to academic and/or contractual issues such as academic freedom, Faculty Handbook policies, and/or academic integrity are to be directed into Populi at any time and sent to the Academic Dean and the President.
3. Complaints that a faculty member has about his/her supervisor that do not fall into either of the above bullet points should be referred to the President.
4. Complaints about the College's structures/processes for handling grievances should be addressed with the President.

The College encourages faculty members to pursue informal means of resolution with the appropriate party or parties before utilizing the formal processes listed above. The College prohibits retaliation against any employee who brings a grievance in good faith.

## **SECTION 4.2 – Academic Due Process and Grievance Policies**

Occasionally, situations arise in the academic community in which a faculty member seeks an objective review of a conflict. The following process has been developed to help ensure that all members of the community can follow an orderly process when seeking resolution of concerns that could not be resolved through informal processes. In all cases, faculty should seek to resolve conflicts directly with the individual parties. Only when all such attempts have been exhausted should formal procedures be initiated.

### **Grievance Procedure:**

1. The faculty member must first seek to resolve the conflict informally with the parties directly involved, meeting with the other party or parties as soon as possible after the event causing the conflict. If the faculty member is not comfortable approaching the parties alone, he/she may ask the Academic Dean or a faculty colleague to sit in on the conversation as an informal mediator. If the concern persists, the faculty member should discuss the issue with the President, seeking resolution as a final step before filing a formal grievance.
  
2. If the faculty member has been unsuccessful in resolving the matter informally, and has discussed it with the Academic Dean, the faculty member may formally file a grievance by completing a Grievance Request Form (obtained from the Academic Dean). The form must be submitted to the Academic Dean.
  
3. Within ten (10) working days after receipt of the request, the Academic Dean will meet with the faculty member and review the Grievance Request Form to ensure complete information has been provided. The Academic Dean will then determine the next steps for the grievance.

## **SECTION 4.3 – Termination of Employment**

### **1. Dismissal of a faculty member will be preceded by:**

- a. Discussion between the faculty member and appropriate administrative officers, looking toward a mutual understanding.
- b. A written notice of termination is presented to the faculty member, including date of termination.

## **SECTION 5.1 – Instructional Policies**

### **1. Syllabus**

a. For each class taught, the faculty member must prepare a course instruction plan (syllabus) following the College's syllabus guidelines. These guidelines are available from the Academic Dean and will be presented to all faculty and adjuncts prior to their course being taught. Faculty are required to update their syllabi annually to ensure compliance with current policies and/or new syllabus requirements.

b. Faculty must submit their syllabi to the Academic Dean at the beginning of each semester. The Academic Dean is responsible for reviewing syllabi for courses offered to ensure they are consistent with the College and that course outcomes are aligned with the overall program outcomes.

c. Core student learning outcomes are established for each course by the College and approved by the President. Each faculty has the responsibility of maintaining the integrity of core Student Learning Outcomes across in their specific course offering.

d. In keeping with our Christian commitment, faculty are expected to actively engage in faith integration in each course taught at The Branch College of Ministry where appropriate. Faculty are also highly encouraged to begin their classes with prayer and/or a devotion.

### **2. Copyright Policy**

All faculty members are expected to comply with copyright laws in teaching at The Branch College and when providing written materials for their syllabus or other materials distributed in the course as handouts or electronic files or electronically posted files.

### **3. Early, Late, or Make-up Exams**

a. A faculty member should develop a policy on late or make-up examinations and include it on the course instruction plan.

b. Early final examinations are strongly discouraged. In extreme cases, the faculty member should consult with the Academic Dean of the college for any exceptions.

### **4. Student Attendance Requirements**

A student who misses 3 or more classes will be automatically dropped from the course unless arrangements have been made previously with the instructor due to emergency or extreme circumstances. A student who misses class is responsible for all class notes, assignments and any exams that occurred during their absence. It may or may not be possible to make up these assignments, at the discretion of the instructor. Please consult individual syllabi for class requirements.

## **SECTION 5.2 – Academic Advising Procedures**

Students will meet with the Academic Dean at the beginning of their degree to determine the best possible course selection and load to effectively and efficiently completing their degree. Students will then be contacted by the Academic Dean prior to each semester to advise in continued course selection.

Faculty are encouraged to advise students in conjunction with the Academic Dean and as to what is in the best interest of the student.

## SECTION 5.3 – Grading, Incomplete and Grade Change

### 1. Grading

- a. Grades are due to the Academic Dean by the deadline date as given in Populi.
- b. Online grading is the mandatory grade submission method.
- c. Instructors should retain personal grade records for a minimum of four (4) years.
- d. Faculty who fail to submit grades by the deadline date will be notified in writing of their noncompliance by the Academic Dean. Repeat offenses will be noted in the faculty member's department records.

### 2. Incomplete Policy

- a. The grade "incomplete" is to be given only under special circumstances upon recommendation of the professor with the permission of the Academic Dean. An incomplete may be granted for up to 4 weeks from the date of issue. Extension beyond the 4 weeks requires a petition and is subject to review by the faculty member and the Registrar. Forms for filing the incomplete (and petition) can be obtained from the Academic Dean.

### 3. Grade Change Policy

- a. Grades reported to the Registrar are considered official and final except for I (Incomplete grades), IN (incomplete, no paperwork), and FN (failure, non-attending). Faculty should not change grades except in the rare case of proven mathematical or recording error or in the case of a grade appeal in which the faculty member acknowledges an error or has a considered change of professional judgment. Work completed after the close of the grading period does not justify a grade change.
- b. When necessary to change a grade, the faculty member should complete the Grade Change form and submit it to the Academic Dean for approval and signature. The grade will be changed on the official grade report and on the student's transcript.
- c. In the case of grade appeals, students must file grade appeals within 30 days after the end of the semester in which the grade is received. All grade appeals should be addressed first to the instructor of record, either verbally or in writing. Failure to resolve the matter at that point requires a written appeal and should be submitted to the Academic Dean.
- d. The faculty of record has the responsibility and right to determine students' grades based on professional judgment. In rare circumstances (e.g., as the result of a successful student appeal), the Academic Dean may change a student's grade administratively.

## **SECTION 5.4 – Independent Study Option**

Independent study is provided for the benefit of students to help them finish their degree in a timely manner. Often a student may need one or more classes to graduate but that class is not offered until the following year. The independent study option will provide the opportunity for the student to finish without having to wait.

1. The student and the faculty member under whom the student wishes to study should submit a written proposal to the Academic Dean. The “Independent Study Application,” should be used and can be obtained from the office of the Registrar.
2. Students may only receive credit for a maximum of nine units of independent-type study to be applied to their undergraduate degree program.
3. There is a limit of five independent-study students per teacher, per registration period. This limit is monitored by the Academic Dean.
4. Students are assessed a fee of \$125 per course for independent-type study. The faculty member does not have the right to waive the fee for independent study.
5. Faculty are responsible to ensure that the learning objectives for each independent study course is met before assigning a grade.
6. Faculty are to place a copy of the students “Independent Study Application” with the office of the Registrar.

## **SECTION 5.5 – Textbook adoption and management**

### **1. Textbook Adoption**

The textbook chosen for each course will be at the discretion of the faculty. The faculty will be responsible for choosing textbooks that are academically and Biblically sound in regard to their subject matter and do not conflict or oppose with The Branch College of Ministry's statement of faith.

### **2. Textbook Management**

For each course the instructor will be required to provide a full reference of the necessary textbooks and suggested reading to students along with a suggestion of where they may be purchased.

## **SECTION 5.6 – Procedures for the procurement of equipment and supplies**

Faculty will be provided a classroom during their scheduled class time equipped with multiple whiteboards, markers, erasers, and a projector. Faculty will have access to one copy machine to print copies for class. Any additional equipment must be purchased by the individual faculty member. For any questions about current equipment or additional needed supplies the faculty are responsible to see the Academic Dean.

## **SECTION 5.7 – Academic Integrity**

Expectations of academic integrity of Branch College students must be predicated upon by academic integrity on the part of Branch College faculty members. Faculty members are expected to model the rules of scholarship giving credit to ideas taken from other sources. Established academic dishonesty on the part of a faculty member is grounds for termination.

The Branch College desires to cultivate in each student the academic skills that are required for their particular degree. A breach of academic integrity is viewed not merely as a private matter between the student and the professor, but rather as an act which is fundamentally inconsistent with the purpose and mission of the entire College.

A specific academic integrity policy exists and is indicated on each syllabus for each class. Academic integrity infractions must be reported by faculty to the Academic Dean and the President. Upon a student's notice of an integrity infraction by a faculty member, he/she should report it to the Academic Dean who will then investigate the claim. If the matter cannot be resolved or decided upon, the Academic Dean will report it to the President who will also investigate and make the final decision.

## SECTION 5.8 – Relationships with Students

### 1. Interactions with Students

a. The faculty-student relationship is foundational to the mission of the College. Faculty responsibilities with respect to students may include but are not limited to the following:

i.) Nurture students' holistic development.

ii.) Be available to students through the maintenance of regularly scheduled office hours that accommodate the majority of the students in the classes the faculty teach.

iii.) Maintain professional discretion.

a. Information intercepted in advising students, officially or unofficially, is confidential in nature and must not be discussed with other students or those outside the College community. If information is disclosed that indicates the student is a potential danger to him/herself or others, it must be reported to the appropriate office (e.g., Dean of Students). Any necessary discussion must be conducted with the greatest of consideration for the welfare of the student as well as the student's personal rights.

b. Faculty members should avoid criticism of fellow faculty to students. (Justifiable criticism should be taken up with the colleague him/herself or proper authorities of the College.)

c. Borrowing or loaning money, cars, equipment, or other property with students is discouraged. This policy will avoid potential problems.

d. Involvement in student spiritual mentoring activities, where students receive ministry credit, should be cleared with the Dean of Students.

## **SECTION 6.1 – Provisions for faculty Development**

Faculty development is provided by, the faculty evaluation system, faculty organization, and faculty meetings. Sections 7.1 – 8.2 define these areas of provisions.

### **SECTION 7.1 – The Faculty Evaluation System**

1. The faculty will be evaluated by the Academic Dean in the Dean Evaluation for Teaching Faculty. This academic assessment will further provide outside perception and support to their strengths and weaknesses while providing tangible ways to improve.
2. The faculty will participate in the Faculty Satisfaction Inventory (FSI) annually giving concrete feedback to their satisfactions and struggles.
3. Course evaluations will be filled out by the students following each course. The goal of the evaluation is to rate the instructor, the material taught, and the instructor's ability to teach it. Specific questions on a numbered scale will be provided for the students to objectively grade the faculty.

## **SECTION 8.1 – Faculty Organization**

Sharing in the governance of the institution is a faculty privilege and obligation. The following are principles that will guide faculty participation in the governance of the institution.

1. The faculty has primary responsibility for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction and delivery, evaluation of student performance, and standards for admission of students.
2. The faculty complies with degree requirements and qualifies students when the requirements have been met to the Academic Dean and President to grant the degrees thus achieved.
3. Faculty must exercise diligence and provide oversight to ensure that its agencies act in keeping with its policies and recommendations, and that they are implemented in an appropriate manner.
4. The faculty may consider any subject pertaining to the interests of the College and make recommendations to the College administration.
5. Additional appropriate areas for faculty consultation include significant changes in existing institution-wide policies that deal with faculty evaluations and development.

## SECTION 8.2 – Faculty Meetings

### Faculty Meetings

#### 1. Calling Meetings of the Full Faculty

- a. The faculty shall meet at once individually and once with all faculty prior to the start of each semester with the Academic Dean for purposes of organizational development and spiritual growth.
  
- b. Meetings of the Faculty, both individual and corporate, shall be called by the Academic Dean.
  
- c. The Academic Dean may call additional meetings of the faculty as needed.

#### 2. Agenda

The Academic Dean will be responsible for setting the agenda. A notice and agenda for each business meeting of the full faculty shall be sent to all members on the Friday prior to the meetings.

#### 3. Attendance

To the extent that it is possible, all present teaching faculty are expected to be present at all faculty meetings, and they shall have the right to participate in discussion.

#### 4. Rules of Order

Faculty present are expected to act in accordance with Biblical principles and Christ-likeness.

## **SECTION 8.3 – Handbook Review Committee**

### **1. Handbook Review Committee**

- a. The purpose of the committee is to ensure that the Faculty Handbook provides clear and consistent procedures for faculty as they fulfill their duties at The Branch College of Ministry.
- b. The committee shall be comprised of the Academic Dean and two representative full time faculty.
- c. Duties
  - i.) Undertake a yearly review of the Faculty Handbook to ensure consistency and effectiveness in processes and procedures.
  - ii.) Receive proposed changes from the President.
  - iii.) Ensure that requested changes do not create inconsistency in procedures.
  - iv.) Forward recommended changes to the President for final approval.