

**Bylaws of the  
Mid-Florida Research and Education Center  
University of Florida  
As Approved: June 23, 2010**

**Preamble**

The shared goals of the faculty and administration of the Mid-Florida Research and Education Center (MREC) are to attain excellence in research, extension, teaching and to attain national and international recognition for these programs. These goals can best be achieved with a governance structure from the MREC level to the University level that fosters collegiality, collaboration, mutual responsibility and accountability, and transparency.

**Article I – Governance of the MREC**

These Bylaws establish the general principles by which the MREC shall be governed. These Bylaws are governed by and are subordinate to the Constitutions of the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences and the University and the policies and directives of the University of Florida's Board of Trustees and the Florida Board of Governors. Operating within the context of these Bylaws, the governance of the MREC shall be shared between the administration and the faculty.

**Article II – The Faculty**

**Section 1 – Faculty Membership**

The faculty of the MREC shall consist of individuals in University of Florida faculty positions. Faculty are defined by the University of Florida Constitution and Senate Bylaws and includes the various ranks of professor, scholar, lecturer, research scientist and extension scientist.

**Section 2 – Faculty Rights**

Faculty have the right to know the expectations of their job assignment and how they will be evaluated. Faculty have the right to assemble without limit to discuss issues of concern.

Faculty have the right to open academic discourse without fear of retribution. Faculty have the right to pursue grievance against the Director of the Mid-Florida Research and Education Center if their rights set forth in these by-laws are violated (See Appendix E).

### **Section 3 – Faculty Responsibilities**

Faculty are responsible for planning and conducting teaching, research, extension and service in a competent and professional manner according to their appointment. Faculty are responsible for contributing to the governance of the MREC, the IFAS, the University, and their professional societies. Faculty are responsible for contributing to the operations of the MREC, including building, infrastructure, public relations, outreach and social functions. Faculty are responsible for the professional development of students.

### **Section 4—Director Responsibilities**

The MREC is headed by a Director appointed by the Senior Vice President for Agriculture and Natural Resources in accordance with the University Constitution. The Director serves as chief executive and administrative officer of the MREC and provides financial planning and policy, and supervises routine operations of MREC including faculty and staff evaluations (see Appendix A for more complete description). The Director is responsible to the Senior Vice President for Agriculture and Natural Resources for administration of the MREC and is the agent of the MREC faculty for execution of academic policy. The Director is expected to operate the MREC in the spirit of shared governance and seek faculty input, consider it, and provide feedback and rationale about final decisions. The Director may maintain a program of teaching, research and/or extension as time permits.

### **Article III –Committees**

#### **Purpose and Classification**

Service on MREC committees is the primary means by which faculty can participate directly in the governance of the MREC. Faculty shall have the opportunity to participate in all MREC Committees through which the major governance of the MREC occurs.

### **MREC Committees**

The MREC committees can be formed by the Director or by faculty, as needed. Members of these committees shall volunteer for the assignment. The chairperson is either elected by the committee from among their members, or appointed by the director, if a Chair is deemed necessary. Current MREC committees include:

1. Mentoring committees

A mentoring committee for a particular faculty member shall be formed by at least two members of the faculty at the Associate or Full Professor level (see Appendix B) within 6 months of hiring. One member, chosen by the Director, will serve as chair of the Committee and will be responsible for all required documentation of the Committee's activities. The second member will be chosen by the mentee. The mentee may seek advice from the Director and faculty colleagues on selection of faculty to serve on the committee. Committee members will meet with the mentee as often as the mentee requests, but at least once a year, individually or as a group. Committee members should review the mentee's annual evaluation packet and meet with the mentee at this time. Committee members will submit a written annual evaluation to the Director discussing the faculty's progress towards tenure.

1. Peer evaluation of teaching committee

Faculty members requesting that their courses be evaluated will form a committee of three members of the tenured faculty (from within or outside the MREC, as appropriate) one of whom will be the Chairperson. Committees will meet with the faculty member whose course is being evaluated before the semester begins to discuss the course history

and provide evidence and course materials. Committee members will observe at least two lectures and at least two laboratories (if applicable) with prior notice, and will meet with the faculty member for a final summary and feedback session. The committee will provide a written evaluation to the faculty member. (See Appendix D for further guidelines).

#### **Article IV – Faculty Meetings**

The faculty meeting is the primary means of fostering communication among all faculty within MREC. Faculty meetings should be held at least twice annually and as needed by the Director, or by request of any MREC faculty member. Faculty and administration have the right to place items on the agenda for discussion by contacting the Director in a timely fashion. The agenda should be distributed at least two days before the faculty meeting. When appropriate, UF Senators and members of the IFAS Faculty Council and other IFAS governing bodies should email to all faculty short summaries of critical items of relevance to MREC being discussed before those bodies and placed in the MREC faculty meeting agenda before each faculty meeting so that dialogue can be initiated on these items.

The faculty meeting is the most important venue for discussion of policy issues, changes in curriculum, new positions, and other issues relevant to our academic mission. MREC faculty, plus emeritus, courtesy, and affiliate faculty may speak on any issue before the faculty. Voting on most matters shall be restricted to MREC faculty.

Regarding new hires, after all candidates for new faculty positions have interviewed, the merits of each candidate will be discussed in a faculty meeting. Any faculty member may also complete a written evaluation for a candidate for use by the Director in faculty hiring decisions. The Director will solicit the recommendations on candidates from all faculty and select the candidate to offer the position after reaching a consensus from all faculty.

#### **Article V – Ratification and Amendments**

Section 1. These Bylaws shall become effective upon their ratification by the faculty of the MREC with a two-thirds majority vote of all MREC faculty, concurrence of the Director, and approval of the Senior Vice President for Agriculture and Natural Resources of the University of Florida.

Section 2. Proposals for amendments to these Bylaws may be made to the Director by any faculty member.

Section 3. Changes in these Bylaws shall be made by a two-thirds majority vote of all MREC faculty.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **MREC Director Position Description**

The MREC Director serves as the faculty's representative to the UF/IFAS administration, and the administration's representative to the faculty. The primary role of the Director is to develop excellence in the MREC by functioning as a facilitator, guiding and overseeing the MREC's personnel in providing needed services to the residents of the State of Florida.

The MREC Director provides coordination, accountability, and administrative functions by:

1. Providing leadership to faculty, staff, and students in carrying out the IFAS mission and the Land-Grant philosophy, fostering an appropriate tone, developing a set of policies, and promoting MREC programs in instruction, research, extension, and service;
2. Developing and managing human, fiscal, and physical resources in support of MREC instruction, research, extension, and service activities, within the constraints imposed by resource availability;
3. Developing and maintaining networks and relationships, both internal and external to the MREC, including fostering interagency, interdisciplinary, and private partnerships in support of the academic and other functions of the MREC;
4. Evaluating and rewarding excellence in all forms of scholarship. The Director is directly accountable to the IFAS Deans for the quality and direction of MREC programs, to the Senior Vice President for Agriculture and Natural Resources for administrative matters and for the overall administrative efficiency of the MREC, and to the faculty for internal program management of space, personnel, and other resources provided.

### **Specific Tasks and Duties of the MREC Director**

#### **1. Governance**

- Facilitate development and administration of MREC policies, goals, and objectives.
- Conduct faculty meetings.
- Establish MREC committees.
- Use committees effectively.
- Delegate administrative responsibilities to faculty and/or committees.
- Facilitate development and administration of MREC policies, goals and objectives.
- Help determine services to be supplied by the MREC to College, University, and State.
- Serve as an advocate for the MREC and its personnel.
- Monitor acquisitions, and other resources and services that affect the quality of the MREC and its programs.
- Enhance diversity of the MREC and oversee compliance with affirmative action plans of the University.

## **2. MREC Programs**

- Communicate and facilitate the vision of MREC directions and programs to faculty, students, staff, and administration. Provide oversight of graduate student activities and research. Work to assure availability of space and equipment to meet needs for teaching, research, and extension efforts.

## **3. Faculty Activities**

- Set a tone of high professional, ethical, and scientific excellence in the MREC.
- Reward academic scholarship in all forms, including discovery, dissemination and application of knowledge.

- Establish processes for recruitment and selection of faculty members.
- Assign faculty responsibilities such as teaching, research, committee work.
- Provide oversight of peer evaluation process.
- Facilitate coordination and cooperation among faculty.
- Monitor and evaluate faculty performance in teaching, research, extension, service, and citizenship.
- Deal with unsatisfactory faculty and staff performance.
- Maintain communication with other units of the university.
- Reduce, resolve, and prevent conflict among faculty members.
- Encourage, when appropriate, faculty participation in MREC, Department, college, and university activities, including governance

#### **4. External Communication**

- Serve as interface between the MREC and deans, and other administrators.
- Serve as interface between the MREC, USDA, State units of Agriculture, and other agencies and groups as necessary.
- Serve as contact for outside groups requesting information about the MREC and its programs.
- Provide for the completion of forms and surveys.
- Oversee production of MREC advertising and recruitment material

#### **5. Budget and Resources**

- Communicate MREC needs to administration.
- Administer MREC budget (state and federal funds allocated by deans).
- Provide oversight of faculty contract and grant budgets.
- Review travel expenditures, especially foreign travel.



- Coordinate special requests to deans for funding.
- Encourage submission by faculty of grant and contract proposals.
- Reallocate space and support staff to meet changing needs and requirements.

## **6. Facilities and Office Personnel Management**

- Manage MREC facilities, including inventory control.
- Initiate and supervise new construction projects and renovation, as necessary.
- Provide for building and grounds security, safety, and maintenance.
- Hire, supervise and evaluate staff.
- Supervise record-keeping and accounting functions by MREC personnel.
- Compile information for productivity reports.

## **7. Professional Development**

- Foster the development of each faculty member's interests and talents, and help in blending them into a functional program.
- Encourage faculty personal development, including participation in self improvement programs, faculty development leaves, consulting, and international experiences.
- Foster excellence in research, extension, teaching and service.
- Promote affirmative action.
- Encourage faculty to contribute to the enhancement of the MREC's and institution's visibility and reputation.

## **8. Personal Development**

- Keep current with developments in field of expertise.
- Contribute to productivity and reputation of the MREC through participation in the MREC's programs in instruction, research, extension, and/or service.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Mentoring of Junior Faculty**

1. All tenure-track faculty must select a mentoring committee composed of at least two tenured faculty members from within MREC (with additional members from outside the MREC, if appropriate). A chairman will be selected by the MREC Director.
2. Mentees should provide their mentoring committee members with their annual plan of work and report of accomplishments.
3. Mentors provide an annual written assessment of the mentee's progress towards tenure to the Director.
4. A mid-career review will be conducted for faculty members in the tenure probationary period no later than the end of the third year of academic service.
5. As part of the mid-career review, junior faculty will prepare a tenure and promotion packet (without external letters).
6. All MREC tenured faculty are invited to review the packet and discuss the strengths/weaknesses of the packet. An ad hoc committee (three members) to include at least one member of the mentoring committee, synthesizes the comments of the faculty summarizing the faculty member's strengths and weaknesses and progress towards tenure.
7. Director shares this assessment with all tenured faculty (via email) and with candidate (in person).

**APPENDIX C**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**Evaluation of Prospective Faculty**

You are invited to evaluate the candidate according to the requirements and qualifications stated for this position and his/her suitability to serve in the role. These evaluative comments will be kept confidential, summarized for use by the Director of the MREC, and then destroyed.

Please indicate your rating and comments and return this form as soon as you have completed the interviewing process. Your help in this important matter is very much appreciated. Additional comments are very useful.

Candidate:

Position:

Rating: \_\_\_\_\_ Recommend highly and without reservation

\_\_\_\_\_ Recommend with reservation

\_\_\_\_\_ Do not recommend

Please state what factors influenced the above rating:

Other comments regarding this candidate's suitability for the position:

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**Please return form to MREC Center Director**

## APPENDIX D

### Guidelines for Peer Evaluation of Teaching

#### Peer Teaching Evaluation Program

- 1. Review Team Structure:** Three members: (a) the unit Director, (b) a unit faculty member appointed by the faculty member being evaluated, (c) a faculty member appointed by the Director. Faculty (c) may be from outside or inside the unit.
- 2. Observation Frequency:** Classroom activities may be assessed at least once before each promotion, depending on the allocation of the teaching component. For allocations of teaching  $\geq 40\%$ : evaluations should occur at least once early in the pre-promotion period and once later in the pre-promotion period. The faculty member should initiate the evaluation program by conferring with the unit Director at the beginning of the appropriate semester(s).
- 3. Assessment Format:** The review team will meet with the instructor prior to the classroom visits to discuss course history, goals, organization, examination and grading policy, etc. The instructor will furnish to the review team the course syllabus, representative handouts, representative exams (including student responses to questions, if available), course grade summaries if available, and other items the instructor believes of relevance to course quality. The review team will visit the class during the assessment period or in the case of distance education courses view the course material and visual content provided to the student, with the instructor receiving 3 days notice of visits. The instructor will notify the review team immediately if the proposed visit coincides with an exam or other event inappropriate for observation.
- 4. Committee Report:** To be presented in oral and written format by the committee as soon as possible to the instructor after the scheduled classroom visits. If changes are recommended by the review team a written Action Plan should be provided to the

instructor. Follow-up evaluation should be done by the review team after an appropriate time period for the specific course in question. The instructor may respond, in writing, and the response will become part of the evaluation document.

Observation Team Summary	In need of Improvement	Satisfactory	Outstanding
1. Course level <sup>a</sup>			
2. Unit “fit” <sup>b</sup>			
3. “Fit” as a service course for other units <sup>c</sup>			
4. Course organization			
5. Syllabus			
6. Other handouts			
7. Quizzes and exams			
8. Final grade distribution			
9. Instructor enthusiasm			
10. Classroom technique			
11. Innovation			
12. Student involvement/ Participation			
13. Overall course rating			

Operational Definitions

Outstanding - performance far surpasses the expected level for such activities in most respects.

Satisfactory - performance meets expected level for such activities in most respects.

In Need of Improvement - performance fails to meet expected levels for such activities in several key respects.

Footnotes

a - Course level numbering is consistent with content and work load, course description and student enrollment.

b - Course complements other course offerings in unit (not applicable to service courses).

c - Course complements other course offerings in College or University.

## Appendix E

### Guidelines for pursuit of grievance

A faculty member may initiate a grievance against the Director if they believe they have been discriminated or unfairly sanctioned by the Director and have corroborating evidence, which could include memos, or verbal communications if observed by other members of MREC. To pursue a grievance, a faculty meeting shall be called and the member pursuing the grievance shall make their case to the faculty, without fear of reprisal from the Director. Afterwards the Director shall appear before the faculty, hear the charges leveled against them, and respond to the charges and provide any additional, non-confidential supporting information. After hearing both sides, faculty not involved in the grievance shall consider the information available to them and vote by secret ballot whether the grievance is valid or not. If valid, the faculty shall write a letter to the Vice-President of IFAS outlining the charges and evidence and request a review by the IFAS Faculty Senate or committee thereof. Recommendations of the Senate shall be forwarded to the VP. The process from start to completion shall be accomplished within 60 days.

## Appendix F

It is not necessary to ratify a new MREC Bylaws to add or delete a committee, change individuals within committee, or appoint a new chair. Current MREC committees include the following: Awards, Extension, E-News, Education / Library, Facilities operation, Farm / operations, Information technology, Landscape, Publications, Seminar, Social / bereavement, Statistics, Research, Safety and security, and Tour.