MEMORANDUM

TO: Tenure System Faculty and Librarians

FROM: (The Provost?)

DATE:

A joint working group comprised of members of the University Committee on Faculty Affairs (UCFA) and the University Committee on Faculty Tenure (UCFT) convened throughout the summer to consider changes to the faculty discipline, dismissal, and grievance policies. The goal of the working group was to compare the dismissal and discipline policies against other peer institutions and to evaluate whether the policies are serving MSU’s goals, whether changes need to be made, and whether the discipline and dismissal policies should be integrated into one policy. The committee completed its review in early fall semester, 2015, and submitted the attached drafts for endorsement and submission through academic governance. The policies were subsequently reviewed and endorsed by the UCFA, the UCFT, the Faculty Senate, and approved by the Board of Trustees at its December 18th meeting. The policies will be implemented on January 1, 2016.

This memorandum provides a summary of the main substantive changes to the relevant policy documents.

**Summary of Main Substantive Changes: Discipline and Dismissal Policy**

1. Combines the discipline and dismissal for cause policy into one document, observing national standards.

2. Formalizes the requirement that the Department Chair meet with a faculty member to discuss concerns before discipline is imposed.

3. Reinforces the iterative character of discipline and the importance of attempting to resolve disputes early and informally.

4. Reinforces the ability of the faculty member to have an observer or advisor present at meetings.

5. Separates “discipline” into two primary categories and imposes new procedural protections before discipline can be imposed. These procedural protections supplement the current process, which permits a written response before imposition of discipline but no formal review unless and until the faculty grievance process:
a. Minor discipline for cause: requires consultation, at the faculty member’s discretion, with the department advisory committee or chair of UCFA personnel subcommittee before the discipline process is initiated.

b. Serious discipline for cause: creates a disciplinary review panel of UCFA members to hear and consider faculty matters involving serious discipline.

6. Requires the Office of the Provost to arrange training for the applicable panels.

7. Stipulates accommodations (such as alternate communication methods) and explicit deadlines to prevent intentional delays in the process.

8. Establishes an annual, standing 3-person review panel from UCFT to hear dismissal for cause cases rather than the current random selection.

**Summary of Main Substantive Changes: Faculty Grievance Policy**

1. Provides that appeals will be decided upon the written appeal, record of the grievance hearing, responses to the appeal, and the FGO recommendation in order to maintain the current policy directive that appeals are based on the record and not intended to be a second hearing on the merits.

2. Permits the appeal panel to make a decision regarding whether the appeal jurisdictional requirements have been met.

3. Permits the appeal panel to recommend that the grievance be reheard by a new grievance panel if there was a prejudicial violation of the procedures during the initial hearing.