To the UCO Faculty,

I am pleased to introduce this handbook which contains the current policies and procedures for effective management and operation of the University of Central Oklahoma. Included are those policies and procedures unique to UCO as well as those established by the Regional University System of Oklahoma and the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

I encourage you to review the handbook through which you can engage effectively in university processes, inquire, recommend changes and influence policies. Your feedback is encouraged and I believe these opportunities offer faculty members ways to participate in decision making at UCO.

Best wishes,

Patti Neuhold-Ravikumar
President
PROVOST’S STATEMENT

Dear Faculty Members and UCO Community:

Welcome to another transformative year at the University of Central Oklahoma and, along with it, a new edition of the UCO Faculty Handbook.

The Handbook remains a dynamic and living document that invites your input for its enhancement. It represents a remarkable culmination of work that has resulted from decades of contributions by our colleagues from across the UCO campus. These include UCO Faculty Senators as well as other academic representatives such as deans and chairs of departments. Our times require a constant mixture of input and revisions to find the balance that only shared governance affords an institution. It is this synthesis of the standards that our academic community creates each year that affirms the authentic nature and authority of this document on such important standards as peer review for tenure and promotion processes, among others.

As the context for Higher Education in Oklahoma changes within a milieu of economic and social forces, the Handbook serves as a poignant reminder of the intrinsic value of a strong liberal arts education as well as the increasingly relevant high-impact learning experiences we value on our campus. Indeed, I cannot thank the Faculty Handbook Editorial Board enough for their professionalism and the dedication they display toward the shared governance principles that must be respected in order to form a coherent and thoughtful response to these ever-changing forces. I believe that our campus was, once again, recognized by the Chronicle of Higher Education’s “Great Colleges to Work For” survey for these very values that we hold, together, at UCO.

As another academic year emerges on our campus, I wish to express my gratitude to my colleagues across campus for their never-ending support of our core mission of helping students learn. I also welcome President Neuhold-Ravikumar and our colleagues in the President’s Cabinet to another year and thank them for the role they have in supporting our institution’s continuing commitment to supporting our learning mission. Let us work together to continue this commitment to students and the academic freedoms that support our mission as we continue to adapt to the changing but rewarding world of Higher Education.

Thank you for all you do, and please know how proud I am to serve you as the Chief Academic Officer of the University of Central Oklahoma.

With very best wishes,

John F. Barthell, Ph.D.
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
The University of Central Oklahoma (University) is committed to an inclusive educational and employment environment that provides equal opportunity and access to all qualified persons. The University will continue its policy of fair and equal employment and educational practices without discrimination or harassment because of actual or perceived race, creed, color, religion, alienage or national origin, genetic information, ancestry, citizenship status, age, disability or handicap, gender, marital status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state, or local law. Discrimination or harassment in violation of this policy should be reported to the Affirmative Action Officer (Office of Legal Counsel) in person at 114D Lillard Administration, or by phone at (405) 974-3377 or fax at (405) 974-3807. After office hours or on holidays, the report may be made by contacting University Police Services at (405) 974-2345.

*Please note that “sexual orientation” and “gender identity” are not protected personal characteristics under federal or state law, but were added to the Equal Opportunity Statement by the University.

Approved by Cabinet & President June 25, 2015
The University of Central Oklahoma (UCO)’s explicit commitment to diversity is essential in fulfilling the university’s mission to provide transformative educational experiences to students so that they may become productive, creative, ethical and engaged citizens and leaders serving the global community.

Diversity encompasses a range of values, personal experiences, and worldviews that arise from differences of culture and circumstance, including differences of actual or perceived race, creed, color, ethnicity, geography, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, religion, alienage or national origin, genetic information, citizenship status, socioeconomic status, language, ability/disability, status as a veteran, marital status, learning style and immigration status, among other forms of diversity.

Diverse backgrounds broaden and deepen the educational experience and scholarly environment that are essential to achieving academic excellence. UCO promotes academic excellence and enhances the scholarly and creative environment by systematically pursuing the following goals:

- To promote diversity by encouraging students from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds to enroll at and to graduate from UCO.
- To recruit and retain faculty and staff from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds.
- To foster an institutional culture that values a diverse community and that invites authentic interaction among the members of that community.

UCO recognizes that enhancing diversity in service to the university’s mission and goals requires leadership, commitment and consistency. Leaders at all levels have an obligation as they build upon this commitment to embrace and sustain diversity in every area of the university.

UCO vigorously fosters diversity on its campus and in the communities it serves. By valuing and promoting diversity, the university acknowledges uniqueness, similarities, and differences among its stakeholders while providing transformative learning experiences for its students.

UCO celebrates its tradition of inclusion and recognizes that strengthening and expanding diversity on its campus is essential to the university’s continued success.

Effective February 2011; Updated August 2017
The UCO Faculty Handbook has been prepared by the Office of Academic Affairs to provide a reference for all faculty members. It contains information, policies, and procedures relevant to the academic functions of the university. The Academic Policy Manual serves as an additional resource for the faculty, university administration, and staff and complements the information in the Faculty Handbook.

NOTE: Policies and procedures by federal law, state statute, the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education and the Regional University System of Oklahoma (RUSO), relevant to the operation of this university, are italicized, as shown in this note. They are hereby distinguished from policies and procedures established by the University and repeated verbatim. In case of a discrepancy between RUSO and UCO policies, RUSO policies will supercede UCO policies.

Changes in the Faculty Handbook will become effective at the beginning of each new academic year (August 1), unless put into effect immediately by written authorization from the president. The Faculty Handbook may be modified, initiated, revoked, or amended only in writing by authorization of the president. Substantive changes to the handbook will require written promulgation.

The Office of Academic Affairs will provide an annual review of the handbook and post the current version on the AA website after August 1 each year. New faculty members will be provided with the URL for the document.

Academic deans will receive a printed copy.

This edition of the UCO Faculty Handbook supersedes all previous handbooks.

Effective: August 1, 2019
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