



# THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

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Office of the Provost and  
Vice President for Academic Affairs

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TO: USM Faculty and Staff

EMAIL DATE: February 22, 2018

Dear Colleagues,

On January 12, 2018 the faculty and staff reorganization committees presented their proposals to the University community in Bennett Auditorium. More than 50 dedicated faculty and staff members of these committees – from across all campuses, teaching, and research sites – were represented on stage. An additional 250 faculty and staff were in attendance or viewing from the coast via IVN. We truly were humbled to see that crowded stage of committed leaders, and we sincerely appreciated all of you who took the time to be present for this important event.

The implementation proposals shared that day were the culmination of the tireless efforts of the many faculty and staff members who came together from across the University to guide this transformation of Southern Miss, both those actively serving countless hours on reorganization committees and those who provided them with input. In the three weeks following the proposal presentations, strong and productive feedback was again submitted that will guide the next phase of implementation.

On February 6, 2018, President Bennett approved [my recommendation](#) to move forward with establishing an implementation committee to work expeditiously throughout spring 2018 in order to put critical pieces in place by July 1, 2018, and to identify the timeline by which remaining proposals will be addressed over the next two years. We are thus now moving into Phase II, implementation of the proposals.

The Reorganization Implementation Committee has since been hard at work developing the strategies that will guide these next steps. Soon the faculty and staff initiatives drafted in the fall will begin a second vetting and refinement stage as we begin the actual implementation of new practices, guidelines, and configurations. This phase will include the formation of Gulf Coast-focused committees to explore local implementation at Gulf Park.

Many of us are naturally a bit anxious about the uncertainty inherent in any time of change. Still others want to move quickly to closure to define the structures and procedures that will guide our campus in the future. I want to assure you that the process is working as it should. We may not complete every facet by July 1, 2018 when the

structural changes begin, but we will have made sufficient progress to have what we need to operate. For items still in process, we have our current structure and policies to guide us.

I am proud to be at The University of Southern Mississippi. We are undertaking a reorganization—now commonplace in institutions of higher education—but we are doing so on our own terms and involving faculty and staff in unprecedented ways. I recently attended a national meeting of academic leadership from state colleges and universities, where our approach to reorganization was a lively topic of conversation, precisely because of the intentional ways in which we have sought to be as inclusive as possible while being as expeditious as necessary.

Thanks to all of you who are excited by the progress and thanks to all of you who express your apprehensions: both perspectives are essential to meaningful dialogue and will ensure an optimal outcome. Together, we have begun down a path that is unprecedented for Southern Miss, and with your help, participation, and support we will create a strong foundation for our future success as a thriving public institution. I look forward to continuing our dialogue and supporting the truly exceptional work of the implementation committee as we move forward.

Sincerely,

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**Steven R. Moser, Ph.D.**  
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

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\*To stay up to date on Vision 2020, please visit [www.usm.edu/provost](http://www.usm.edu/provost) and select the [Reorganization](#) link.