**Reduction in Force of Staff Personnel**

**Introduction**

Mississippi Valley State University is committed to providing a stable and secure work environment by steadily reviewing the financial performance, seeking opportunity for agility and efficiency, and striving to meet the needs of our students and the broader campus community.

These efforts may include the development of new programs, the elimination of others, the restructuring of work units, the creation or elimination of positions, or other decisions necessitated by strategic and operational needs, changes to internal or external funding, or other factors affecting the University.

**Purpose and Scope**

To create equitable and efficient policies and procedures that may be used in the event that a reduction in force is deemed necessary. This policy applies to all permanent full-time and part-time administrative, professional and other staff employees at Mississippi Valley State University.

**Policy Statement**

In the event that a reduction in workforce at Mississippi Valley State University is necessary because of adverse financial circumstance; reallocation of resources; reorganization of academic or administrative structures, programs or functions; curtailment of one or more programs or functions as the University deems appropriate; or the declaration of financial exigency by the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning, a document outlining the reasons for the reduction and the personnel to be affected will be developed.

The primary functions of the staff of the University are to provide the best possible support for academic programs, the effective operation of the University, and the welfare of students. Therefore, the determination of those members of the staff to be terminated will be based upon the needs and priorities of the University or department; the performance and productivity of employees and their ability to contribute to the fulfillment of the University's or department's needs.

The University's welfare and that of the students and faculty it serves may not be best protected by a proportional reduction in all areas of the University. Some categories of support services may be eliminated entirely while others are not reduced at all. The highest priority shall be given to retaining personnel necessary to maintain essential programs and functions, both academic and non-academic.

**Reduction in Force (RIF)**

RIF is a separation from employment due to such reasons as lack of funds, changes in staffing priorities, lack of work, redesign of work processes, redundancy in roles, excess staffing capacity, or department reorganization, with no likelihood or expectation that the individual will be recalled because the need for the position itself is eliminated**.** Determining the retention or separation of an employee includes consideration of the relative skills, knowledge and productivity of the employee in comparison to necessary services. Mississippi Valley State University determines priority for RIF within the following guidelines:

* Temporary employees performing the same work must be terminated before any employee with a probationary or regular full-time appointment, provided that a probationary or regular employee can perform the temporary employee's tasks.
* Reduction in force of full-time regular employees is based on the following factors:
  + Which positions are most critical to the department in the delivery of services
  + Relative skills, knowledge and productivity of employees.
  + Consideration of equal employment factors to avoid adverse impact on affirmative action goals for the University.

**Eligibility**

The reduction-in-force process applies to all regular full-time and part-time staff but excludes staff who have not completed the 90-day orientation and performance evaluation period and staff whose positions are fully funded by grants or term positions for special projects that have a specified end date.

**Employee Notification**

The employee will be given at least thirty (30) calendar days' advance notice that their position is being eliminated. At the discretion of management, the 30-day notice may be working, non-working, or a combination of both (working and non-working). Affected employees whose notice includes any non-working time will be compensated as if working their regularly scheduled hours during the entirety of the thirty (30) day period.

**Procedures**

Should a reduction in force become necessary, the following procedures and guidelines will be applied:

The director, department chair or department head will review all positions (except faculty) within his or her area of responsibility and provide his or her area executive cabinet member with an interim written reduction in force plan to include reasons for the reduction and a listing of persons recommended for termination, as well as comments concerning the basis for the personnel decisions, cost savings to be achieved, and programmatic effects of such terminations. In arriving at these recommendations, directors, department chairs and department heads should consider:

1. the role and importance of the position as it relates to the goals and objectives of the department or unit;
2. performance and productivity of employees measured against the ultimate objective of providing the best programs within funding limitations;
3. the needs of faculty and students; and
4. effect on diversity consideration.

The interim written plan for reduction in force is submitted by the department/head through the appropriate chain of command for review by the Office of Human Resources before being submitted for final approval at the executive cabinet level to include the University President.

After obtaining final approval of the plan, the executive cabinet member will notify the affected employees, in writing, of the reason for the separation and the effective date. Employees selected for separation will be given thirty (30) calendar days’ notice. The Office of Human Resources will assist the responsible administrator with preparation of the necessary paperwork, including notification of separation letters to affected employees. Employees should be referred to the Office of Human Resources for information about benefit coverage continuation.

If the departmental situation changes and open positions become available, the department may rehire separated employees within six (6) months of the effective date of separation without following standard procedures for filling vacancies. Separated employees who are interested in being rehired will be selected for rehire based upon meeting or exceeding minimum qualifications for the position (s) to be filled, their overall rating in the most recent performance appraisal, and length of prior service.

This policy shall be effective on September 1, 2020 and reviewed every three (3) years by the Office of Human Resources.