

 **RESPECT** | GRADUATE
SCHOOL

FACULTY HANDBOOK

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About This Handbook

This handbook is designed to provide guidance primarily to faculty. In addition to this faculty handbook, most of the information in the Administration and Staff Handbook also applies to faculty. The information and policies contained in these two handbooks include vital information about Respect Graduate School's (Hereafter RGS) commitment to create a safe and positive work environment, to deal fairly with its students and its employees, and to operate within both the letter and the spirit of federal and state laws. We hope you will familiarize yourself with its contents.

While this handbook in no way represents an employment contract, it does serve as a vehicle to communicate the general guidelines and policies under which you are employed.

If there are oversights or errors in the drafting or publishing of this document, such mistakes do not constitute a new practice or policy, and normal institutional practice or policy will prevail. RGS reserves the right to amend, eliminate and modify these policies at its discretion without notice. Minor edits for clarity may be made without explicitly notifying employees; substantial changes will be communicated by email or through other campus wide communication channels. While changes to the handbook are made by Human Resources (HR), other offices may have significant oversight over the content.

While we have made every effort to provide detailed policies, information and guidance in this handbook, there is no way it can be completely exhaustive or cover every circumstance. If you have questions, suggestions, or need additional information about your employment at RGS, contact the Human Resources office at 610-419-1751.

RGS handbooks receive approval from the Board of Trustees (hereafter referred to as the Board). The institution remains dedicated to continuously assessing its policies and benefits. Consequently, RGS expressly retains the right to review, modify, interpret, or discontinue any of these policies, programs, and procedures, following the amendment procedures outlined below.

1 Respect Graduate School: Mission and Goals

1.1 Respect Graduate School

Respect Graduate School is a legally incorporated graduate school in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. It is independent of any other entity or organization. The institution is governed

through its Board of Trustees (the Board). The Board's authority, duties and functions are indicated in the RGS By-laws. The By-Laws are published on the RGS website, are on file in the RGS Library, and may be obtained on request from the Director of Operations and HR.

1.1.1 Degree-granting Authority

The Pennsylvania Department of Education granted Respect Graduate School the authority to grant the Master of Arts in Islamic Studies in June 2023.

1.1.2 Accreditation

Respect Graduate School is currently engaged in the Middle States Commission on Higher Education's (MSCHE) process for determining its eligibility for accreditation (pre-accreditation, and candidacy status granted in 2025). MSCHE is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). MSCHE accepts complaints and third-party comments for institutions engaged in the applicant and candidacy processes. MSCHE provides an online form for the submission of complaints or third-party comments on the Complaints page of its website <https://www.msche.org/complaints/>. Please visit MSCHE's website at www.msche.org for more information.

1.1.3 Graduate Level Education

Respect Graduate School provides a graduate level of education in Islamic Studies. RGS expects its faculty and students to engage successfully in the rigors of graduate level study and research, to be knowledgeable about traditional positions as well as recent developments in the relevant subject areas, and to communicate their understandings and ideas effectively. As freedom of expression is essential in stimulating genuine thought, RGS faculty encourages the exchange and critique of ideas as fundamental to a graduate education. The aims of our graduate education include gaining broad and deep knowledge of the central fields of Islamic studies, demonstrating capabilities in research and further learning, and formulating positions and perspectives that withstand analysis and critical engagement.

1.2 Mission

Respect Graduate School is an academic institution which specializes in Islamic Studies aiming at excellence in teaching, learning and scholarship. With genuine appreciation for and study of

traditional Islamic disciplines, RGS applies interdisciplinary and creative approaches to equip students to respond to contemporary social and intellectual challenges in the global context. Fostering respect and dialogue with diverse communities, RGS also offers moral and spiritual service to all.

1.2.1 Respect Graduate School Goals

The goals of RGS are

1. To endow students with broad and deep knowledge in Islamic Studies from both traditional and modern perspectives.
2. To prepare students to conduct research in Islamic studies and related fields by providing them with the necessary analytical, critical, methodological, and interpretive skills.
3. To provide the broader society with life-long learning opportunities and beneficial services.

To accomplish its mission, goals, and commitments, RGS offers a graduate program leading to the degree of Master of Arts in Islamic Studies. In addition, RGS serves the wider community by offering a large array of continuing education courses and spiritual development events and has a mosque open to the community where daily prayers are performed as well as Friday congregational prayer.

1.3 Respect Graduate School's Education and Service Philosophy

Respect Graduate School is an academic institution in which people of diverse backgrounds put their different and, at times, opposing ideas into respectful dialog. The name of our school expresses our foundational commitments in the present and for the future. Respect for people, ideas, and differences are essential for everything we do at our institution. Respect begins with relationships among students, faculty, and staff. We endeavor to center decisions, plans and actions on our students to stimulate their intellectual growth, personal well-being, social responsibility, and positive social interactions.

RGS students are expected to be respectful members of the Lehigh Valley and Bethlehem communities and to behave positively.

1.4 Respect Graduate School Foundational Commitments

1.4.1 Respect for Difference, Diversity, Dialog, and Pluralism

Respect Graduate School is a welcoming community. We embrace and value the diversity of all members of the campus community. RGS is committed to maintaining an academic environment that fosters pluralism, appreciation of divergent views, and awareness of the importance of individual rights. To this end, the institution reasserts the importance of civility and the valuable contribution that diversity in race, ethnicity, religion, and culture brings to the community, and therefore we strongly encourage and support racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious pluralism.

1.4.1.1 Statement on the Inclusivity of the Islamic Tradition

Inspired by the inclusivity of the Islamic tradition, Respect Graduate School is committed to promoting excellence as aligned with Islamic social teaching. We will work intentionally to create inclusive and equitable approaches that support our unique experiences and identities, while being home to a diverse community of learners, practitioners, and scholars that is reflective of our local, national, and global communities. This commitment is essential to our mission which creates a campus community that aims at “fostering respect and dialogue with diverse communities,” and “offers moral and spiritual service to all.”

1.4.2 Wholistic Student Development

Respect begins with relationships among students, faculty, and staff. We endeavor to center decisions, plans and actions on our students to stimulate their intellectual and spiritual growth, personal well-being, social responsibility, and positive social interactions.

1.4.3 Service to Humanity

We believe that knowledge bears fruit through practice; and knowledge that is not realized through action is incomplete. Knowledge actualized through service to God and humanity is elevated to the level of wisdom. Islamically understood, the best place to put knowledge into action is in service of humanity, for the best among us are those who benefit society the most.

1.5 Governance and Administration

1.5.1 The Board of Trustees

The "President and Trustees" constitute the ultimate corporate authority responsible before the law for the College's policies and programs. A current Trustee serves as the chair, the presiding officer of the Board, and the President is an *ex officio* member of all its committees. There are twelve (12) board members currently. In addition to a religiously, racially and ethnically diverse board of trustees drawn from the wider community, a faculty member, an alumna, and an RGS master's student serve on the Board of Trustees. The Board meets four times a year.

1.5.2 The President

Reporting to the Board as the chief executive officer of the College is the President, who is also a member and the presiding officer of the faculty of the College. Reporting directly to the President are the Dean of Academics; the Dean of Students, Institutional Planning and Accreditation; the Vice President of Operations and Finance; the Dean of Continuing Education; and the Director of Religious Services.

The President is a non-voting member of the Board, responsible for the management and governance of the institution, setting the direction and tone of the institution, and carrying out and interpreting the policies of the Board. In this capacity, the president works with diverse groups of RGS stakeholders including trustees, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and a diverse group of community members. The president is the chief spokesperson for RGS and responsible ultimately for the vision of the institution and its strategic plan.

1.5.3 The Vice President of Operations and Finance

The Vice President of Operations and Finance is responsible for institutional finance and accounting, the institutional budget, institutional marketing, debt financing, acquisitions, and the physical campus of RGS as well as other administrative operations. The Vice President oversees several administrative offices including Facilities, Business Operations, Human Resources, Budget, Information Technology and Services, the RGS website, Safety and Environmental Compliance, Investment and Institutional Development, and the College Counsel.

1.5.4 The Dean of Academics

The Dean of Academics reports to the President and leads the Division of Academic Affairs and its Master of Arts in Islamic Studies (MAIS) degree program. The dean leads and collaborates with MAIS faculty on curriculum development and related matters, faculty recruitment and development, and evaluation of teaching effectiveness. In the area of program review and outcomes assessment, the dean directs and participates in course and program review as well as developing and overseeing academic support services, and academic advising. The dean collaborates with faculty in academic policy development and the development of the annual academic division budget.

The Dean of Academics is responsible for the policies and procedures affecting all academic departments. The Dean oversees the annual budgets of the academic division and its programs and activities; leads curricular and faculty development; and, in consultation with the faculty, makes recommendations on the membership of committees to the President. The Dean also works closely with the Office of the President on budgetary and compensation matters. In addition, concerns about professional conduct of faculty members are the Dean of Academics' responsibility.

1.5.5 The Dean of Continuing Education and Certification Programs

The Dean of Continuing Education and Certificate Programs reports to the President, plays a dynamic leadership role at RGS, and is responsible for the strategic development, implementation, and oversight of comprehensive continuing education initiatives and certificate programs. This position involves collaborating with various stakeholders to identify market needs, designing and refining curriculum content to meet industry standards, and ensuring the quality and relevance of educational offerings. The dean manages program budgets, leads student recruitment efforts, and fosters partnerships with industry professionals, businesses, and external organizations. Additionally, the role involves staying informed about regulatory requirements, conducting data analysis to assess program effectiveness, and facilitating professional development opportunities for faculty and staff. The Dean of Continuing Education and Certificate Programs plays a pivotal role in advancing the institution's commitment to lifelong learning and professional development overseeing the Quran School, the Family School, Risale and Hizmet Studies, and the Clinical Pastoral Education program.

1.5.6 The Dean of Students, Institutional Planning, and Accreditation

The Dean of Students, Institutional Planning, and Accreditation reports to the President and has primary responsibility for the Division of Student Services which is comprised of all aspects of MAIS

student life. The Dean of Students oversees compliance with all related federal, state, and local statutes. Reporting to the Dean is the Registrar/Admissions Officer, overseeing student recruitment, admissions, and registration and the applicable laws concerning student rights to privacy and the confidentiality of student records. The Library Manager/Library also reports to the Dean of Students. The Dean provides guidance and advocacy to the Student Council and Student Activities and organizations. The Dean serves as a member of the Admissions Committee, the Committee on Academic Standing, the Discipline Committee, the Admissions Committee, the Scholarship Committee, and ad hoc committees as needed. The Dean, in collaboration with the President of Respect and the Board of Trustees President, and other members of the senior management team, guides institutional planning, data collection and analysis, and assessment of educational effectiveness. The Dean of Students also directs and responds to communication with the Pennsylvania Department of Education and leads the accreditation effort as the Accreditation Liaison Officer between the RGS and the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

1.5.6.1 The Authority of The Dean of Students

The Dean of Students oversees and manages policies and procedures related to students' right to privacy, student academic achievement, student services, as well as student conduct.

The Dean of Students also supports trainings related to student safety and security and addresses situations that could disrupt normal operations.

The Dean of Students implements procedures to ensure timely, fair, and equitable resolution of misconduct complaints.

1.6 The faculty

The faculty of Respect Graduate School has the responsibility of providing the leadership of the Master of Arts in Islamic Studies and its course offerings, advising and mentoring students, maintaining, establishing and improving the academic curriculum, academic policies and standards, and in initiating consideration and recommendations on any matter of faculty concern. They undertake such legislative and advisory functions in connection with the work of the institution as may be referred to it by the President and Board of Trustees. They engage in advancing knowledge and scholarship in their fields and maintain communication with the senior administration.

1.6.1 Composition

The faculty is comprised of full-time and part-time members led by the Dean of Academics, who is also a full-time faculty member. The faculty meets as the Academic Affairs Committee regularly according to a semester calendar at mutually convenient times to discuss academic issues and takes votes or arrive at consensus as agreed among the members. Adjunct faculty members are welcome to attend faculty meetings and offer their input. Other members of the institution may be invited to attend faculty meetings or portions thereof and may be asked to present or provide input, but only full-time faculty members may vote on proposals presented for a vote.

1.6.2 Officers of the Faculty

The Chair of the faculty meetings is the Dean of Academics. The Chair shall normally preside at all meetings of the faculty, although the President of the College may preside at the President's pleasure.

If the need for a Vice Chair of the faculty arises, the Vice Chair shall be elected and retains the right to vote.

The Dean of Academics or a designated staff member shall record the minutes of the faculty meetings and forward any decisions taken to the President. At the completion of every academic year, faculty members submit a report of their activities to the dean who in turn submits a written report of the faculty's activities to the faculty and the President.

1.6.3 Committees of the Faculty

Most of the work of the faculty is performed by Standing committees. Ad hoc Committees are established by the faculty as the need arises. Members of the administration may serve on these Committees, but the Chair must be elected from among the faculty members.

1.6.4 Procedural Policy of the Faculty

The faculty will meet at least twice per semester and more frequently, if necessary, subject to the Dean of Academics' decision. A simple majority of the total membership shall constitute a quorum.

The Dean will forward resolutions and reports to the President, who forwards them to the Board of Trustees as appropriate. Certain routine matters, however, may be forwarded at the discretion of the faculty to an appropriate administrator through the Office of the President.

The faculty may adopt rules and regulations for its own operation not inconsistent with the bylaws of the College.

1.7 Respect Graduate School Student Council

The Student Council is a body of elected graduate students who represent the interests of the student body in the RGS Master of Arts in Islamic Studies program. It aims to address the concerns, interests, and opinions of RGS students by acting as a conduit between students, faculty, staff, and administration. Additionally, the Student Council functions as an advocate for enhancing academic policies, campus life, community relations, event publicity, and social welfare. It supports student activities and organizations by allocating funding from the Student Activities Budget.

1.8 The Fiscal Year and the Academic Year

The fiscal year (hereafter FY) begins on July 1 and ends on June 30 of the calendar year. The Academic Year (hereafter AY) begins on the last Monday or Tuesday of August and ends on July 30.

1.9 Semesters

There are two semesters of fifteen weeks each. Normally, the First or Fall Semester begins on the last Monday or Tuesday of August, and the Second or Spring Semester begins on the first Monday or Tuesday of February. At the discretion of the Board, the President, Dean of Academics and involved faculty, RGS may offer summer session(s) and a January intensive session. The President, in consultation with the Board, Dean of Academics, Dean of Students and Vice President, sets the schedules for the timing of school closings and re-openings related to religious observances, breaks, reading periods, final examinations and deadlines for the submission of semester grades by the faculty. The academic year and calendar schedule will be made public by July 1.

1.10 Inclement Weather/Emergency Situations and School Closings, Delayed Openings, Early Dismissals

In the event of concerns related to weather conditions or emergencies, the President or his designated representative is to make the final decision on whether to close the building and to determine when classes are to resume. Due notification to employees and students is to be sent by text message through the Populi Information System alert.

2 Faculty

2.1 Full-Time Faculty Classification (PL.HR.67)

Full-time faculty members shall be classified as Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Full Professor . They are appointed by the Board of Trustees. The Dean of Academics is a full-time faculty member with a portion of time assigned for administrative duties. Full-time faculty members may be engaged by and compensated by other institutions and organizations as teachers, speakers and consultants with due notice and consultation with the Dean of Academics if such efforts do not impact negatively on the faculty member's RGS teaching and other responsibilities. Such arrangements will be reviewed each semester in consultation with the Dean of Academics.

Policies and procedures leading to the recruitment and appointment of full-time faculty are indicated below. Exceptions may be made under special circumstances that reflect the RGS mission, goals, and foundational commitments.

2.2 Part-Time and Temporary Faculty Members Classification (PL.HR.68)

2.2.1 Visiting Professors

A visiting professor is a noted scholar or leader who has joined the RGS for a limited time not to exceed one academic year and who may teach in the academic program, conduct research, and provide at least one significant public lecture. The person's compensation, responsibilities and privileges are to be stated clearly in the contract. The person is to be appointed by the Board of Trustees on the recommendation of the President.

2.2.2 Adjunct Faculty

Adjunct faculty are lecturers who teach at RGS part-time on a semester course contract. They have the appropriate doctoral degree in the subject area that they will teach unless a reasoned exception is made by the President. They are to be appointed by the President on recommendation of the Dean of Academics on a semester basis. Normally, the minimum enrollment in the contracted course will be five RGS students. Adjunct faculty may act as thesis advisors and/or readers if appointed by the Dean of Academics. Compensation for such responsibilities will be agreed upon by the Dean of Academics and the adjunct lecturer. Adjunct lecturers may be appointed to RGS committees where they will have seat and voice. They are also invited to faculty meetings and their input is welcome, though they do not have a vote.

2.2.3 Administrators with Faculty Status

The President, Vice President, and Dean of Students are senior administrators with faculty rank commensurate with their academic qualifications. The Dean of Academics is a full-time faculty member with a portion of time assigned to administrative duties. If senior administrators teach in the RGS program, the person's teaching performance is evaluated as a faculty member. In the instance of the Vice President, Dean of Students, and Dean of Academics, the classroom evaluation will be done by the President. The Vice President or Dean of Students will conduct the review of the classroom teaching of the President. Unless otherwise stipulated in the individual's contract, senior administrators who teach in the RGS academic program do not receive additional compensation for carrying out teaching, advising, or thesis responsibility.

2.3 Faculty Hiring and Governance

2.3.1 Standards for the Hiring of Faculty (PL.HR.69)

To be chosen for the full-time faculty position of lecturer, a candidate will hold an earned doctorate in the appropriate field of Islamic Studies and will have a minimum of two years of supervised and evaluated teaching experience at a college or university. In rare cases, a lecturer may be hired as RGS faculty with another terminal professional degree and significant professional experience related to the subject they will teach.

As a young institution, RGS currently does not implement a tenure system. Faculty are designated as Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Full Professor. Faculty contracts are annually renewable.

The faculty have oversight of all academic policies as a body led by the Dean of Academics. Faculty Meetings are held regularly for the purposes of conducting the business and discussing the concerns of the faculty. Proposals on academic and faculty matters are voted on by the faculty with the Dean serving as Chair and in an ex-officio capacity. The Dean may vote in case of a tie vote of the faculty members. Proposals and decisions of the faculty are forwarded by the Dean to the President for his signature, except on matters that, according to the by-laws, require Board of Trustees approval in addition to that of the President.

2.3.2 Faculty Hiring Policy (PL.HR.40)

When the need for a full-time faculty member is established as a result of a needs analysis reviewed by the Executive Committee and recommended for approval by the Board of Trustees, once approved, a national search for a faculty member with the needed qualifications commences, and a search committee is formed, consisting of faculty, staff, students, board, and community members. The Search Committee establishes the hiring criteria and notice of the position vacancy is posted on academic and other professional job boards, on the RGS website, social media and LinkedIn page, and is widely circulated to other appropriate organizations and academic list-serves.

Initial hires are generally one-year at will contracts renewable at the end of the academic year or at the 1- year point of employment. In the case of faculty with senior qualifications in terms of publications and teaching experience, the initial contract may be three years renewable at the end of the term.

An at-will contract of 3 years may be offered after the first year of successful employment to a junior faculty member.

Visiting Faculty from other universities may be appointed on a semester or 1- year contract to fulfill subject area needs.

Adjunct Faculty may be hired to teach courses on a semesterly basis. They are paid on a per-course basis.

3. Faculty Policies

3.1 Faculty Academic and Intellectual Freedom Policy (PL.HR.76)

Faculty members shall perform their duties in a climate of academic and intellectual freedom, moral responsibility, and cognizant of the institution's mission, goals, and commitments. The following definition of academic freedom reflects the 11th Edition of the American Association of College Professors' Policy Documents and Reports, page 14. The following statement serves as the operative principles regarding RGS faculty Academic Freedom. "Faculty members are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into the teaching controversial matter which has no relation to the subject." RGS imposes no limitations on academic and intellectual freedom related to religious concerns. Faculty members are expected to bear in mind the RGS mission, goals, and commitments in all their relationships in and through the school, including presentations and discussions in the classroom, in advising students, and in collegial contacts.

Faculty members prioritize the time given to their course preparation, teaching and related academic duties such as assessment of student progress and communication of assessment with students. Faculty are entitled to full intellectual and academic freedom in their research and in the publication of the results. Any research involving pecuniary return should be based on written understandings with the Dean of Academics. Faculty members are citizens, members of a learned profession, and officers of an educational institution. When they speak or write as citizens, they are free from institutional oversight, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As scholars and educators, they should remember that the public may judge their profession and the institution by their utterances. Hence, they should always be accurate, exercise appropriate restraint, show respect for others' opinions, and make every effort to make clear that they speak as individuals and are not speaking on behalf of the institution.

Faculty members are bound by the provisions of all RGS policies published in this and other RGS handbooks, and by federal, state and local statutes.

3.2 Student Academic and Intellectual Freedom & Freedom of Expression Policy (PL.HR.77)

The following commitments are based on the relevant section of Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students (American Association of University Professors, page 382). The Joint Statement was endorsed by the American Association of University Professors, United States Student Association, Association of American Colleges and Universities, National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, and the National Association of Women Deans and Counselors (page 381).

In the classroom, advising, discussions and programs, RGS faculty and administrators are to encourage free discussion, inquiry, and expression. Student performance is to be evaluated solely on an academic basis, not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards; and, RGS students are free to take reasoned exceptions to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled.

3.3 Nondiscrimination Policy (PL.HR.25)

Respect Graduate School is a welcoming community. We embrace and value all members of the campus community. RGS does not discriminate against any person based on actual or perceived race, color, sex, religion, ancestry, genetic information, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial status, marital status, age, mental or physical disability, use of guide or support animals and/or mechanical aids, or on any other basis protected by applicable local, state, and federal laws.

3.4 Harassment Policy (PL.S.9)

Harassment consists of unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, physical or visual, that is based on a person's protected status, such as race, color, sex, national origin, religion, disability, or age, or based on any other characteristic protected by local, state, or federal law; and which has the effect of interfering unreasonably with another's work or academic performance, or creating an intimidating, offensive or hostile environment.

Harassing conduct may involve, but is not limited to, slurs; negative stereotyping; ethnic jokes; offensive written or graphic material; displaying offensive objects or images; or threatening or intimidating acts that denigrate or show hostility or aversion towards an individual because of membership in a protected group. Harassment of any kind is prohibited.

RGS strives to maintain an environment where all employees and students are free from harassment. The school will not tolerate harassment of any type. No employee or student will be discriminated or retaliated against for bringing alleged issues of harassment to the attention of the school, and employees and students are encouraged to do so. Employees of the school are encouraged to consult with the Vice President of Operations and Finance in determining if they have grounds for an EEOC or sexual harassment complaint. Students are encouraged to consult the Dean of Students for assistance. These individuals have been trained in issues involving EEOC and sexual harassment.

3.5 Sexual Harassment (PL.S.10)

Sexual harassment is specifically prohibited. This includes unwelcome or unwanted sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; and other verbal, physical or visual conduct of a sexual nature, when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of a community member's employment, education, or other participation in the community.
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by a community member is used as the basis for decisions affecting the community member's employment, education, or other participation in the community; or
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a community member's work or academic performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or academic environment.

RGS will respond promptly to complaints of harassment of any type. In keeping with this, the Institution strongly encourages any member of the community who believes he or she has been the target of harassment or inappropriate conduct to promptly report, in writing, the harassing or improper conduct. In addition, every member of the community is strongly encouraged to report, in writing, any harassment or inappropriate conduct he or she observes, whether he or she is the target of the harassment or not. A prompt written report will enable the institution to respond rapidly in investigating the allegations and, where it is determined that harassment or inappropriate

conduct has occurred, to take the necessary steps to eliminate the objectionable conduct or condition and to impose corrective action where appropriate.

3.5.1 Procedures for addressing harassment or inappropriate conduct

(PR.HR.11)

If any community member believes they are being harassed or subjected to inappropriate conduct, they may directly and immediately notify the offender that the behavior is unwelcome and offensive and must stop. However, if for any reason a community member does not wish to discuss the matter directly with the offender, or if the discussion does not successfully end the harassment or inappropriate conduct, it is the community member's duty to report the conduct immediately to the appropriate member of the RGS senior administration. Faculty, staff, contractors or members of the public, should report the issue to the VP of Operations and Finance. Students should report the issue to the Dean of Students. The institution is committed and required by law to act if it learns of alleged harassment or inappropriate conduct, even if the aggrieved community member does not wish to formally file a complaint.

Depending on the identities of the complaining community member and the individual alleged to have engaged in prohibited conduct, a report should be made to the Vice President. If a community member is not comfortable reporting the conduct to the designated individuals, they may contact another member of the senior administration.

A complaint of harassment will be investigated promptly in a fair and expeditious manner. To the extent practicable, care will be taken to protect the identity of the complaining party and of the accused party or parties, consistent with a thorough and appropriate investigation.

The institutional investigation will include a private interview with the person reporting the complaint and any witnesses. It will also include an interview with the person alleged to have engaged in the harassment or inappropriate conduct. It is vitally important that all community members and others refrain from discussing all aspects of the investigation, whether on or off campus. If, after the investigation, it is determined that harassment and/or inappropriate conduct has occurred, the institution will act promptly to eliminate the offending conduct and, where appropriate, will impose corrective action.

The institution will, to the extent appropriate, inform the person filing the complaint and the person alleged to have engaged in the harassment or inappropriate conduct, of the results of the

investigation and what corrective actions will be taken. The complaining party may not be informed of the specifics of any discipline imposed, to the extent that revealing this information might constitute an invasion of the privacy of the alleged perpetrator.

False statements made in connection with a complaint of harassment or inappropriate conduct, or during the course of an investigation, whether by a complaining party, a person alleged to have engaged in harassment or inappropriate conduct, or any other community member, will constitute the basis for appropriate corrective action, up to and including termination of the individual's relationship with the institution.

This policy includes full-time and part-time faculty, staff and students; and independent contractors, consultants, visitors and others working on RGS premises and/or with them. The scope of this policy includes, but is not limited to, all settings in which members of the campus community may find themselves in connection with their employment, education and other institutionally related activities, such as off-site meetings, conferences, social events, etc., including the time spent traveling and socializing on the way to and from, and while at, such events. It also extends to other interactions between or among members of the RGS community, to the extent that a community member's right to a campus community free from harassment or other inappropriate conduct is involved.

3.6 The Respect Graduate School Credit Hour Policy (PL.A.7)

3.6.1 Background

The U.S. Department of Education (34 CFR Section 600.2) defines "credit hour" as: "...an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than:

- (1) one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or,
- (2) at least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution, including internships, practical, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours."

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (22 Pa. Code Section 31.21) states that a “semester hour represents a unit of curricular material that normally can be taught in a minimum of 14 hours of classroom instruction, plus appropriate outside preparation or the equivalent as determined by the faculty.”

RGS complies with the above standards for the assignment of credit hours as established by the U.S. Department of Education and by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. In addition, RGS is in compliance with policies set forth by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education on the assignment of credit hours.

The number of credits for each course is included with the course description in the RGS Catalog and on the website. All MAIS courses at Respect are 3-credit courses. Information about the number of credits for any course, meeting dates and times, classroom location, and mode of delivery is published online and made available to students prior to registration.

Unit of Measurement All RGS graduate courses are assigned credits as a unit of measurement for curricular material regardless of time frame or mode of delivery. A credit is the equivalent of one hour (50 minutes) of face-to-face classroom instruction per week for a semester of approximately 15 weeks or equivalent if a course meets for a different number of weeks. There is an expectation of two hours of outside study by the student for each hour of classroom instruction.

Academic Period and Instructional Time: The traditional academic year consists of a fall and spring semester that are approximately 15 weeks including a week for final summative assessment activity. As stated above one credit is awarded for one hour (50 minutes) of classroom instruction per week for the semester of approximately 15 weeks with a minimum of 14 hours of instruction. If a course meets for three 50-minute class periods or two 75-minute class periods per week, or one 150-minute class period per week, it is said to be a three-credit course and has a minimum of 42 hours of classroom instruction with an additional 3 hours in the 15th week for a summative assessment such as exam or final paper.

3.7 Faculty Contractual Matters (PL.HR.70)

The Board of Trustees sets the base salaries of full-time faculty members (Bylaws, Article 10, Section 1a, v). The President, after consultation with the faculty, shall recommend the renewal of faculty contracts to the Board. The President and the Dean of Academics will provide the Board in executive session with recommendations for the next contract term salary of each full-time faculty member.

Normally, letters of contract renewal will be tendered to full-time faculty members before the end of the First Semester and will include the amount of salary and other benefits, and other contractual arrangements. If the faculty member accepts the terms, faculty members are expected to return signed contracts before the start of the Spring (Second) Semester.

The renewal of full-time faculty contracts shall be recommended by the President and submitted to the Board of Trustees for its approval. Full-time appointments to RGS faculty are made by the Board, upon the recommendation of the President. In the process of developing the recommendation, the President consults with the Vice President and the Dean of Academics.

Recommendations for renewal are based on overall performance, student evaluations, observation of the faculty member's instructional performance, research and publication activity, and service on RGS committees and projects. Changes in the conditions of employment, such as salary increases or benefits, are announced in writing by a Board resolution, whenever appropriate, usually during the spring.

3.8 Faculty Compensation and Benefits Policy (PL.F.22)

3.8.1 Salaries for Fiscal Years 2023-2026

Full-time faculty are paid between \$50,000 and \$90,000 depending on their qualifications and teaching experience.

Adjunct faculty receive \$5,000 to \$8,000 per three (3) credit course.

3.8.2 Benefits

Paid time off: Personal leave, Sick leave, Vacation

During the first year of service at RGS, faculty members accrue one (1) day of sick leave time, per month up to the maximum of ten (10) days of sick leave time. Unused sick leave may be banked.

In addition, faculty are entitled to two (2) personal leave days, and twelve (12) days of vacation time after the first full year of service.

Complete information about Personal, Sick and Vacation paid time off can be found in the Administration and Staff Handbook.

3.8.3 Mandated employer contributions

In accordance with federal, state, county, and local laws, the RGS pays mandated employer contributions such as state and local taxes as well as Social Security, Medicare, Unemployment Compensation, and Workers' Compensation benefit programs.

3.8.4 Employer Paid Benefits

A simple IRA is available to which the institution contributes 3% of the faculty member's salary.

3.8.5 Payroll schedule

Payment of salaries for all faculty shall be made on the first (1st) business day of the month through automatic direct deposit into the faculty member's bank checking account. The salaries of the full-time faculty will be paid for the twelve (12) months in equal installments each month. Adjunct faculty and lecturer's salaries will be calculated in equal installments for each semester during which the person is teaching at RGS. Normally, the adjunct faculty will receive one-half of their salaries six weeks into the semester and the other half when final grades are submitted to the Registrar.

3.8.6 Healthcare Insurance

Health insurance contributions are incorporated into the gross salary of full-time faculty members upon execution of the employment contract.

3.9 Full-Time Faculty Teaching Load (PL.A.37)

The normal teaching load of full-time faculty is six three-credit courses per academic year. A credit hour is defined consistent with federal, Middle States Commission of Higher Education and PA Department of Education requirements: RGS has adopted the credit hour as the unit measure of instruction for awarding credit. A credit hour is equivalent to one hour of classroom instruction (50 minutes) with a normal expectation of two hours of outside study for each class session. A three-credit hour course meeting for 45 total hours over 15 weeks requires 90 total hours of out of class academic engagement. RGS adheres to the Federal standard of a total expectation of 45 total learning hours (15 hours for every 1 credit earned) in a semester regardless of format or delivery. The six-course annual full-time faculty teaching load may be spaced over the two regular semesters (Fall and Spring), the January term, and the summer term. In addition to teaching, faculty supervise student theses, advise students regarding course selection, mentor students as developing scholars

and intellectuals., and engage in research, academic colloquia, and publication of their work. Faculty duties also include service on institutional committees where faculty representation is needed such as admissions and recruitment, strategic planning, student conduct/discipline, and grade appeals.

Normally, course enrollment will be at least five RGS master's students, exclusive of auditors. If enrollment in a course falls below this minimum, the faculty member, Dean of Academics and President may agree to offer the course to enable students to graduate from the program on time. If a course is cancelled for lack of enrollment, the faculty member may be assigned by the Dean to alternative academic-related projects based on the needs of the institution and commensurate to the time and effort of having a reduced course load. Normally, independent study courses shall not count as equivalent to teaching a course with five students or more but will be counted as part of the faculty member's academic duties.

3.10 Concerning Full-Time Faculty Teaching, Research and Service (PL.A.38)

*Teaching encompasses all aspects of the educational process as it relates uniquely to each discipline, reflects changing pedagogies, and responds in service to our students and their thesis research and writing.

Research involves ongoing learning and scholarship within one's field of study, the development of new knowledge, the expression of new skills, publication, and active commitment to, and participation in, one's affiliated national and international professional societies.

Faculty may enrich and benefit the RGS community and beyond by sharing their knowledge in presentations, lectures and panels on topics of mutual interest and concern.

3.11 Support for Students with Disabilities (PL.A.28)

Respect Graduate School adheres to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, Amendments Act of 2008 in ensuring the accessibility of its programs and services. The Dean of Students is responsible for assisting in providing reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities enrolled in RGS courses and serves as a resource for other RGS departments serving individuals with disabilities, as needed.

A disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, even with the use of mitigating measures such as glasses, medication, prostheses, or hearing aids. Major life activities include, but are not limited to, functions such as breathing, caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, learning, exercising cognitive abilities, sitting, standing, lifting, reaching, and working. RGS will provide reasonable accommodations, upon request, to students whose conditions meet the legal definition of a disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and who are considered otherwise qualified for the MAIS program and provide appropriate documentation of their disability. Students with disabilities should contact the Dean of Students for further assistance and information.

The first floor and lavatory facilities of the RGS building are completely accessible to students with special needs, and RGS is committed to keeping the building compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The RGS campus has ramps, large restrooms, an automatic main entrance door with sensors, and classrooms that can accommodate wheelchairs. The Dean of Students is the ADA Coordinator of RGS and is responsible for providing all necessary accommodation for students with special needs, in accordance with ADA guidelines.

Accessible classroom setups, alternate testing, physical campus alterations, and other accommodations for students with documented disabilities are available on a case-by-case basis. It is the responsibility of students with disabilities to self-identify, provide the necessary documentation, and request accommodation through the Dean of Students.

Students with sensory, medical, or physical disabilities are to provide a letter from a diagnosing and/or treating physician to verify the existence of a disability. The letter is to include the credentials of the evaluator, and it must be dated and legibly signed. The letter is to include information on:

1. The diagnosis and the methodology used to diagnose the condition
2. How long the individual has had the condition
3. How long the condition is expected to last
4. Treatments used to manage the condition
5. The condition un-medicated versus medicated (if applicable)
6. Accommodations and/or interventions that would facilitate access to the RGS experience with a rationale for each request

The student is responsible for requesting the accommodation well in advance of the need, in order to give RGS a reasonable amount of time to evaluate the documentation and implement the

request. Accommodations must be requested for each semester for which it is needed and must be made personally by the student to each professor from which the accommodation is needed. Classroom accommodations require written notification to the faculty member teaching a course for which the student is registered. The notification is to be placed in a confidential portion of the student's file. The notification is to state the nature of the disability, and the accommodation requested. The student, faculty member and the Registrar are to sign that they have received the notification, and that the student and faculty member have agreed to the conditions of the accommodation. A copy of the agreed upon accommodation is retained by the faculty member and is not to be shared with others unless required by the Code of Conduct procedures, and the student is to retain a copy. The copy retained by the Registrar is part of the confidential portion of the student's folder and is subject to the protection of such materials indicated below.

If the student feels that the accommodation has not been met, the student is to speak first to the instructor to resolve any issues. If that fails to resolve the issue, the student is to speak with the Dean of Students who is to confer with the faculty member. Failing that route, the student may file a complaint and initiate the related Code of Conduct procedures stated in this handbook.

3.12 Academic Honesty and Integrity Policy (PL.A.16)

Respect Graduate School assumes and expects that students will be honest on examinations and in acknowledging sources used in all assignments. With respect to academic work and other Institution business, the Institution expects students to represent themselves and their work honestly to their instructors and other Institution representatives.

Breaches of the Institution's standards for Academic Honesty include but are not limited to cheating on examinations or papers; plagiarism; misrepresenting the nature and extent of one's own research; offering work done by others as one's own; employing words and/or ideas originating with others without proper acknowledgment]; and/or submitting the same work for more than one course without the clear prior consent of all instructors. Further details on "Consequences of Violating the Academic Honesty Policy".

3.12.1 Consequences of Violating the Academic Honesty Policy (PL.A.23)

Any violation of this policy may result in a range of penalties, depending on the severity and frequency of the offense, including a lower grade, failure of the assignment, disciplinary action, or

academic suspension. Any suspected violation of this policy will be investigated by the appropriate authorities, and students may be required to provide additional evidence or information.

A faculty member who suspects a student of violating the academic honesty policy regarding an assignment, requirement, examination, test, or quiz shall:

1. Inform the student of the perceived violation, explaining the reasons for the allegation and its consequences; and
2. Listen to the student's explanation. If the faculty member considers that the student has violated the academic honesty policy, the faculty member may take one or more of the following steps:
 - a. Grade the work as a zero, require the student to resubmit the work or its equivalent, and inform the student that any further infractions will be reported to the Dean of Academics for disciplinary action.
 - b. Grade the work submitted as a zero, inform the student that any further infractions will be reported to the Dean of Academics for disciplinary action, and consider the incident to be a learning experience for the student.
 - c. Grade the work as a zero and report the alleged violation to the Dean of Academics and the student's advisor, together with a written memorandum explaining the violation and with any evidence that a violation has occurred. The faculty member shall inform the student verbally and in writing of the faculty member's decision to transmit the material to the Dean of Academics.

If the student accepts and does not appeal the faculty member's decision, and it is the first time that the student has violated the RGS Academic Honesty Policy, the Dean of Academics shall:

1. Consult with the faculty member about the student's situation;
2. Speak personally with the student about the nature of personal integrity as well as academic and professional honesty, and explain the consequences for any further violations of RGS policy;
3. Include in the student's file a notation concerning the violation. If the student does not incur any further violations of the academic honesty policy while at RGS, the notation will be removed and destroyed.

If the student appeals the faculty member's decision, the Dean of Academics shall consult with the student and their academic advisor, advising them of the procedures involved. If the student decides to pursue the appeal, then the Dean and process will proceed as indicated:

1. Obtain from the student and the faculty member waivers to provide any necessary documents or resources that may be relevant to the appeal.
2. Obtain from the student and the faculty member written statements explaining the alleged violation.
3. Convene a hearing committee within twenty-one business days following the student's decision to proceed with the appeal.

The hearing committee will proceed as follows:

1. Membership of the hearing committee will include two RGS faculty members who are not the involved faculty member and a staff member.
2. The Dean of Academics will attend the hearing, participating only to clarify procedures. A member of the hearing committee will take the minutes of the meetings of the Committee.
3. The hearing committee shall deliberate and come to a majority recommendation that shall be transmitted to the Dean within two business days of the hearing. The recommendation shall be the committee's judgment as to whether or not a violation took place.
4. If the decision sustains the faculty member's position, the Dean of Academics will determine the consequences for the student. These consequences may range from a notification in the student's file, as indicated above, to a failing grade in the course.
5. If the recommendation is that a violation did not take place, the Dean will arrange a meeting between the faculty member, the student and the student's advisor to clarify the original situation and to establish respectful relations between the persons involved.
6. If a student who has incurred a first violation of the Academic Honesty Policy is alleged to have violated the policy again, the same procedure described above is to be followed. If the second allegation is sustained, the Dean of Academics may recommend to the President penalties that range from a failure in the course to suspension for at least one semester to expulsion from RGS. The President shall then review the materials and the minutes of the hearing committee and accept or modify (but not increase) the recommended penalty. The

decision of the President will be final, and the President will notify the student of the decision within two business days.

3.13 Class Recording Policy (PL.A.32)

The Respect Graduate School Class Recording Policy provides guidelines for audio and/or visual recordings in RGS classes. The goal of this policy is to protect the rights of students and faculty intellectual property and to ensure compliance with federal law concerning approved accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

These guidelines limit the recording of classes and the dissemination of those recordings to:

1. protect student and faculty dignity and privacy;
2. respect the integrity and effectiveness of the classroom experience; and
3. comply with copyright and other pertinent laws.

3.13.1 Who may initiate Class Recordings?

The purpose of recording class is to facilitate the achievement of learning outcomes and/or educational access, as a teaching/learning tool. Class recordings may be initiated by a course instructor or, in the case of an approved accommodation, by the Dean of Academics in keeping with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and other pertinent laws.

Students are prohibited from initiating recordings unless advance written permission is obtained from the class instructor. An instructor may give permission to an entire class as part of the course syllabus or, alternatively, grant permission to select individuals. The instructor may rescind previously granted permission to record at any point during the course, provided that doing so does not compromise an approved accommodation. Instructors will not be required to permit recording except under requirements of law.

3.13.2 Who can access Class Recordings?

Access to class recordings created by the institution is restricted to the students in the recorded class who have been given permission by the instructor or for whom recording has been approved as a reasonable accommodation by the Dean of Academics. Instructors may retain a recording on the condition that all identifying student audio and images are edited out of the recording.

Classes recorded by the instructor will be controlled via our secure course management platform and other password protected systems. Access will be restricted to students as specified above and the instructor. Students will only have access to these recordings during the period of time the course is in session.

3.13.3 Dissemination of Class Recordings

Class recordings may not be reproduced, transferred, distributed, or displayed. Students may not share authorized recordings from class with anyone outside the class. This includes, but is not limited to:

1. sharing recordings with other students;
2. sharing recordings with parents or guardians;
3. sharing recordings with friends;
4. sharing recordings through social media;
5. posting recordings online;
6. e-mailing recordings to anyone; and
7. retaining downloaded recordings.

Permission to allow class recording is not a transfer of any copyrights in the recording or related course materials. Materials contained within the class recordings, including but not limited to videos and other web-based media, may also have their own copyright protection for which there may be separate prohibitions under the law against dissemination.

3.13.4 Consequences of Policy Violations

Distribution of class recordings or other course materials may constitute copyright infringement in violation of federal or state law, or institutional policy. Violation of this policy may subject a student to disciplinary action, including but not limited to failing the class under the RGS Academic Honesty Policy, in addition to any legal consequences that may apply.

Faculty must comply with current federal law regarding approved accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

3.13.5 Statement for Syllabi

By registering for or attending Respect Graduate School courses, individuals consent to the recording of classes within the scope of the RGS Class Recording Policy.

3.13.6 Definition of Terms

Approved Accommodation: Institutions of higher education are required provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations. Students must provide appropriate documentation for the diagnosis of disabilities prior to receiving accommodations based on that disability. Reasonable accommodations will be determined and approved by the Dean of Academics.

Class: A class is defined as a regularly scheduled time(s) when students meet with an instructor for instruction, learning, and/or assessment.

Course Materials: Lecture notes, outlines, slides, PowerPoint presentations, readings, or other content made available to students by the instructor or presenter via Populi or Teams, in-class handouts, and the like.

Documented Disability: The ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) requires that accommodations be developed on a case-by-case basis, in a deliberative process between the institution and the person with disabilities. Recent and appropriate documentation of the disability and related functional limitations for which they are requesting accommodations must be provided to the Office of the Dean of Students. The Office of the Dean of Students will approve reasonable accommodation based on appropriate documentation and will consult with the Dean of Academics to finalize an accommodation plan.

Recording: A video or audio replication or photographic image recorded on devices including, but not limited to, audio recorders, video recorders, phones, digital cameras, media players, computers, Smart Pens, and other handheld devices that record images and/or sound.

3.14 Faculty Development (PL.HR.71)

RGS expects each full-time faculty member to submit a proposal for each academic year, outlining one's expectations for ongoing learning within one's field of study, the development of new knowledge or teaching expertise, and active commitment to and participation in one's research, and planned contributions to fulfilling the RGS Strategic Plan and the Academic Division's Annual

Operational Plan. Faculty will also include in their proposals any training plans that will enhance teaching skills or expand their knowledge in areas they know they need to acquire. Proposals are to be submitted to the Dean of Academics within three weeks before the beginning of the Fall (First) semester. The Dean of Academics and the faculty member will review the progress in meeting the proposal's objectives at the time when the faculty member's overall performance is assessed.

In addition to the faculty development program mentioned above, RGS seeks to gain funding for faculty research initiative grants. Such grants are intended to support excellence in scholarly work, by providing funding for selected faculty research projects, particularly to those that involve graduate students. The Dean of Academics, working with a review committee, will make awards in response to the research proposals submitted. The guidelines are available through the Office of the Dean of Academics.

At the end of the Spring Semester, faculty must submit a report of their accomplishments in relation to the plan they submitted and indicate initiatives of the Academic Division's Annual Operational Plan and the RGS Strategic Plan they contributed toward or completed.

RGS recognizes and encourages both faculty and student research efforts by establishing a faculty and student awards program. As resources permit, this program will provide grants for fieldwork and for travel and accommodations to both faculty and students, in support of attendance and presenting at conferences. Faculty and student applicants for the awards are to submit to the Dean of Academics a narrative detailing an explanation of the trip and expected outcomes or deliverables, a budget indicating how the money will be spent, and any supporting documents that can support the application.

3.15 Sabbatical Leave (PL.HR.72)

The sabbatical leave program is designed to foster the professional development of faculty members and enhance their academic contributions to the College. The granting of sabbatical leave is a privilege and is not automatically assured. To be eligible for sabbatical leave, faculty members must present a well-defined program of activities that align with and advance the objectives of the program, as detailed in the following sections.

3.15.1 Eligibility for Sabbatical Leave

Faculty members can apply for sabbatical leave if, at the proposed commencement of the leave, they are in good standing (i.e., not undergoing disciplinary actions) and have completed at least six

years of service as a full-time RGS faculty member. Following the use of a sabbatical leave, eligibility for another leave is reinstated after six more academic years of full-time faculty service at the RGS, starting from the previous sabbatical leave's conclusion. Cases where a leave is postponed or deferred for administrative reasons but is later approved, the six-year eligibility period for subsequent leave begins at the originally scheduled end date of the postponed or deferred leave.

3.15.2 Sabbatical Leave Plan and Compensation

Faculty members must choose between two plans for their sabbatical leave: (1) two semesters at 50 percent of their academic year salary or (2) one semester at 100 percent of their salary. Approval from the Dean of Academics is necessary for any compensation exceeding 100% of the academic year salary during a two-semester sabbatical leave. In cases where a faculty member's base contract includes the full summer as one of the semesters, both summer terms in the same calendar year are considered a single semester. Throughout the sabbatical leave, faculty members continue to receive the employee benefits outlined in their contract.

3.15.3 Application for and Approval of Sabbatical Leave Process and Schedule

The applicant for sabbatical leave is required to submit a comprehensive proposal to the Dean of Academics. This proposal should include detailed information on the planned activities, objectives, and location of the leave, a timetable specifying the start and end dates, a statement outlining all sources of leave funds, and a description of essential arrangements, including benefits, when the applicant will be a visitor to another organization. The submission deadline for the proposal is on or before December 1.

Following the evaluation process, the Dean will provide a recommendation to the President. The President's decision constitutes the final evaluation outcome.

Annually, before the spring semester ends, the Academic Dean will inform faculty members eligible for or becoming eligible for sabbatical leave, encouraging them to apply for the upcoming academic year. These faculty members will receive a report detailing the previous year's sabbatical program, including the number of eligible faculty, applicants, and granted leaves.

Simultaneously, the Dean will establish the timeline for reviewing sabbatical applications and the transmission of recommendations at each stage. This timeline will accompany the Dean's notification to eligible faculty during the spring semester.

Applicants for sabbatical leave will receive notification of the President's decision by January 15 of the academic year preceding the intended leave. The Dean has the authority to consider a faculty member's sabbatical application outside the established timeline. Those whose applications are denied, postponed, or deferred can appeal to the Dean within two weeks of notification. In case of an appeal, which the Dean and President will review, the decision of the President will be final.

3.15.4 Obligations to Respect Graduate School following the Sabbatical Leave

Upon rejoining RGS after a sabbatical leave, faculty members must submit a written report detailing their activities during the leave to the Dean. Furthermore, faculty members should resume their regular responsibilities at the institution for at least one academic year following the end of the sabbatical leave.

3.16 Paid Research Leave In Summer Policy (PL.A.46)

The Paid Research Leave in Summer program is designed to support the scholarly productivity and research advancement of faculty members during the summer term. This leave enables faculty to pursue focused research, writing, or creative activities that contribute to their academic field and enhance the intellectual profile of RGS. The granting of Paid Research Leave in Summer is a privilege and is not automatic. Eligibility and approval are contingent upon the submission of a clearly articulated research plan that aligns with the objectives of this policy, as outlined below.

3.16.1 Eligibility for Paid Research Leave in Summer

Faculty members may apply for Paid Research Leave in Summer If person is a full-time faculty. During the research leave, the faculty member must obliged to do administrative works, if S/he is asked by Dean of Academics.

3.16.2 Paid Research Leave in Summer Plan and Compensation

Paid Research Leave in Summer is granted for one summer term and is compensated at up to 100 percent of the faculty member's base summer salary.

During the period of Paid Research Leave in Summer, faculty members retain their contractual employee benefits in accordance with institutional policies.

3.16.3 Application for and Approval of Paid Research Leave in Summer: Process and Schedule

Faculty members seeking Paid Research Leave in Summer must submit a detailed written proposal to the Dean of Academics. The proposal should include:

- A clear description of the proposed research or scholarly activities
- The objectives and anticipated outcomes of the research
- The location(s) where the research will be conducted
- A timetable specifying the start and end dates of the leave
- A description of any necessary arrangements, including institutional affiliations and benefits, if the faculty member will be a visiting scholar at another organization

The deadline for submission of applications is on or before April 1 of the academic year preceding the proposed summer leave.

Following review of the applications by Academic Affairs Committee, the Dean of Academics will constitute the final determination.

Each year, prior to the conclusion of the spring semester, the Dean of Academics will notify faculty members who are eligible or become eligible for Paid Research Leave in Summer and will encourage them to apply.

The Dean retains discretion to consider applications submitted outside the established timeline. Faculty members whose applications are denied, postponed, or deferred may submit an appeal to the Dean within two weeks. Appeals will be reviewed in the President's Cabinet in two weeks; the President's decision will be final.

3.16.4 Obligations to Respect Graduate School Following Paid Research Leave in Summer

Upon completion of Paid Research Leave in Summer, faculty members are required to submit a written report to the Dean of Academics summarizing the research activities undertaken and outcomes achieved during the leave. Faculty members are also expected to resume their regular academic responsibilities at RGS in the subsequent academic year.

3.17 Additional Faculty Responsibilities

3.17.1 Office Hours (PL.A.34)

All faculty members shall inform the Dean of Academics, include in their syllabi, and post on their office doors the days and times during which they will be available to consult with their advisees or any other students. Faculty members are expected to maintain these times, whether through online technology or in person. Every effort should be made to provide face-to-face office hours with full-time students studying on the RGS campus, while distance-learning students should be met online during planned office hours, considering time-zone differences.

3.17.2 Syllabus Preparation Requirements (PL.A.33)

Every faculty member shall prepare a syllabus using the RGS syllabus template for each course listed in the RGS Catalog that the faculty member is scheduled to teach, in accordance with a schedule established by the Dean of Academics. The Dean may suggest and/or request changes in the syllabus in the interest of clarification. The finalized complete syllabus for each course is due to be submitted to the Dean and to be posted in Populi no later than the first meeting day of the course each semester.

The syllabus and its appendices for each course shall include the following elements:

1. a course description approved by a vote of the faculty prior to the start of the semester and based on the listing in the RGS Catalog, or for a course not yet listed in the Catalog but approved by the faculty,
2. The RGS Mission, Goals, and Commitments statements, along with RGS' Master of Arts in Islamic Studies mission, program objectives and program learning outcomes,
3. a list of required and recommended texts or resources, with full titles, publishers and sources, and ISBN numbers, as appropriate,
4. a statement of the learning outcomes to be achieved by the students by the conclusion of the course,
5. a set of requirements to be met or other activities/assignments to be fulfilled by students, with due dates, instructions for formatting written work and anticipated penalties for late submissions, together with the weighting of the requirements and activities in arriving at a final grade. Note that no single factor shall count more than 30 percent of the course grade.

6. a roster of readings and projected topics for class sessions as part of the class session schedule, the institutional Policy Concerning Course Grades, appended below,
7. a clear statement of the faculty member's policies regarding student attendance, excused and unexcused absences, and the late submission of required materials, the faculty member's telephone number(s), email address(es) and office hours.

3.17.3 Faculty Absence from Class (PL.A.35)

Faculty who cannot attend class must notify the Dean of Academics and the students as soon as possible. If needed and if possible, the Dean will seek a temporary replacement for the faculty member. Appropriate causes for an absence from teaching duties may include illness on the part of the faculty member, illness or causes covered by the federal Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, jury duty, the death of a family member and funeral leave, and attendance at a previously approved academic professional meeting. If no faculty member can substitute for the ill faculty member, missed classes may be made up at a time convenient for the faculty member and most students in the class if possible.

3.17.4 Student Advising (PL.A.26)

The quality of education that graduate students receive is greatly enhanced if students receive good academic advising at all stages of their program. Their advising needs vary depending on the type of program they are pursuing and their situation as they progress through it. Faculty will be assigned MAIS student advisees.

Full-time faculty members as academic advisors share their thorough knowledge of the MAIS degree requirements, RGS policies, and other information that will facilitate student progress through their degree program. The advising process will provide students with specific and accurate information, advice, and counsel, and will enable students to develop a personal relationship with their advisors. Faculty advising duties at RGS can be classified as follows:

Advising before Enrollment: The Admissions Officer will provide accurate, up-to-date information to prospective students about their academic program, the research interests of the faculty, and degree requirements. Information such as the average time it takes to obtain the MAIS degree, the overall cost of the degree, and the average amount of scholarship aid available.

Advising New Students: The Dean of Academics will assign to each student a faculty advisor, who, in consultation with the student, will plan a program of study and research in accordance with RGS

guidelines. Students will be provided with advice on courses to be taken during the first year; clear maps of the requirements they must meet, including those involving course work, languages, research tools, examinations, and thesis writing; and a delineation of the amount of time expected to complete each step.

Advising Continuing Students: Faculty advisors shall evaluate student progress and performance on a regular basis (i.e., no less than once per semester) in an informative and supportive manner. In these evaluations, advisors should inform students about their performance in relation to the expectations of normal progress and to the norms associated with successful degree completion and placement after graduation. Over time, faculty advisors will help students develop their career plans for post-graduation.

3.18 Faculty Resignations (PL.HR.60)

A faculty member proposing to resign his or her office should give at least three (3) months written notice to the President, unless relieved by the President from giving such notice. Normally, the resignation is to be effective at the end of the semester during which the resignation is tendered. The President is authorized to accept resignations and shall report resignations to the Board.

No faculty member shall be deprived of his or her office without at least three (3) months written notice unless the person is terminated for causes indicated below. Among the reasons for a termination that triggers the three-month notice are institutional financial exigency and institutional reorganization that eliminates the position held by the faculty person.

The President is authorized to suspend any faculty member from the active duties of office. If the President suspends a faculty member, the President shall notify the Board. Grounds for a suspension are described in the RGS Administration and Staff Handbook.

3.19 Intellectual Property Policy (PL.T.1)

Academic research yields novel insights, opening avenues for additional inquiry and discovery. When the outcomes of such research possess commercial possibilities, RGS is committed to safeguarding the interests of all parties engaged in the process.

RGS is dedicated to upholding the freedom of its faculty, staff, and students to openly publish the findings of their scholarly pursuits.

3.19.1 Objectives

This policy is formulated to address the definition, ownership, and commercialization of various types of intellectual property originating at RGS. It recognizes that inventions, discoveries, copyrightable works, and other creative outputs may arise from the efforts of RGS employees in the course of their duties and individuals utilizing institutional resources such as facilities, equipment, funding, or others.

RGS places high value on the contributions of faculty and staff in producing creative works through their scholarly endeavors. The policy aligns with the following objectives:

1. Foster an environment conducive to creativity, incentivizing research, creative expression, and the generation of new knowledge at RGS.
2. Sustain and enhance the educational mission of RGS through research initiatives.
3. Translate new ideas, methods, theories, and technologies into practical applications for the public benefit.
4. Ensure that, for federally supported inventions, rights allocation adheres to the stipulations of the Bayh-Dole Act.

3.19.2 Key Terms

Intellectual Property: The term "intellectual property," as used in this context, encompasses a broad spectrum of elements, including but not limited to inventions, discoveries, know-how, show-how, processes, unique materials, copyrightable works, original data, and other creative or artistic expressions, as well as any property interest recognized under common law. This definition extends to protectable entities defined by statute or legislation, such as patents, copyrights, trademarks, service marks, trade secrets, mask works, and plant variety protection certificates. Moreover, it encompasses the tangible manifestations of intellectual effort, such as models, machines, devices, designs, apparatus, instrumentation, circuits, computer programs, visualizations, biological materials, chemicals, other compositions of matter, plants, and records of research.

Creator: This term denotes an individual or a collective of individuals who engage in the act of making, conceiving, reducing to practice, authoring, or significantly contributing intellectually to the creation of intellectual property. It encompasses the definition of "inventor" employed in U.S. patent law and aligns with the meaning of "author" as defined in the U.S. Copyright Act.

Copyright: Copyright, as defined by law, typically encompasses original works of authorship that have been preserved in a tangible medium of expression. In contrast to a patent, copyright safeguards the "expression" of a work rather than the patentable "idea" of an invention. Examples of copyrightable material encompass, but are not confined to, literary and scholarly publications, musical scores, computer programs and software, video or motion pictures, sound recordings, photographs, sculptures, and other artistic creations wherein the embodiment or illustration of an idea is evident.

Proceeds: Proceeds encompass all forms of compensation received by the College arising from royalties, the sale, license, or any other transfer of intellectual property rights. This includes, but is not restricted to, royalty percentage payments, initial licensing fees, milestone payments, shares of stock, and any other financial considerations exchanged for the rights to institutional intellectual property. Notably, this definition excludes any compensation received by a Creator for traditional academic copyrightable works and any compensation derived from other forms of intellectual property where it has been established that the institution lacks ownership rights.

Employee: Within the context of this Policy, the term Employee encompasses all academic personnel (faculty; administrative/professional staff in academic roles, faculty associates); other administrative/professional staff; civil service staff (both part-time and full-time); student employees; and graduate assistants. Additionally, the definition extends to individuals with adjunct, emeritus, or "no salary" appointments, as well as others granted access to institutional resources. This inclusion applies when intellectual property created by such individuals meets one or more of the following criteria: it is produced with Substantial Use of Institutional Resources, qualifies as a work for hire under copyright law, results from research supported by Federal funds or sponsored research, or the individual explicitly agrees in writing to adhere to this policy.

Substantial Use of Institutional Resources: Any significant utilization of institutional equipment, facilities, time, personnel, or financial resources by an employee or individuals not affiliated with the institution is deemed a substantial use of institutional resources. This does not encompass resources routinely provided to faculty and staff, such as salary, offices, library facilities, and standard telephone, computer, and network support, or those governed by formal agreements between the institution and external entities. For instance, resources not considered "usually and customarily provided" encompass substantial funds acquired by RGS through a contract or grant, funds allocated from internal discretionary pools beyond the norm, support staff assistance outside a Creator's department or unit, or support staff assistance within a Creator's department that significantly exceeds the usual support provided to others in the department or field.

Traditional Academic Copyrightable Works: "Traditional academic copyrightable works" constitute a subset of independently created copyrightable works generated by the Creator for traditional academic purposes. In these works, the Creator, rather than the institution, holds authority over the subject matter, intellectual approach, direction, and conclusions. Examples of such works, owned by the Creator, encompass class notes and syllabi, books, theses and dissertations, educational software (also known as courseware), articles, non-fiction and fiction works, poems, musical compositions, dramatic works (including any accompanying music), pantomimes, choreographic works, pictorial, graphic, and sculptural works, or other imaginative artistic creations. These "traditional academic works" may exist in various physical mediums, including paper, audiovisual, or electronic forms, and are distinguished by their origin as independent initiatives rather than institutional endeavors.

Student Theses and Dissertations: Unless expressly stipulated otherwise in writing, a student, acting as the individual Creator of a work, possesses the copyright for their thesis or dissertation. It is the student's responsibility to obtain written permission from copyright holders when incorporating copyrighted materials into their work. As a prerequisite for conferring a degree, the institution retains a royalty-free right to preserve, use, and distribute a specified number of copies of the thesis. Additionally, the institution holds the right to mandate the publication of the thesis for archival purposes.

Student Entrepreneurship Activities: Numerous campus initiatives assist students in launching start-up ventures by offering modest funding, space, and additional resources. In instances where students independently initiate and direct these start-ups, they maintain ownership of the intellectual property arising from their endeavors, despite utilizing limited College resources.

Student Class Projects: In academic courses where students generate copyrightable or patentable subject matter, the College does not assert ownership rights over creations produced as part of the course. This applies as long as the only institutional resources employed are those regularly provided to all students enrolled in the course by the institution or a department within it.

EXCEPTION: In cases where student class projects are generated within a course sponsored by an external entity offering funding or support, the sponsor may seek intellectual property protections for the resulting works. In such instances, a written agreement outlining ownership rights must be established before any collaborative efforts commence. If the course is a mandatory degree requirement, instructors are obligated to present participating students with a selection of projects, ensuring that some options allow students to preserve rights to their inventions.

3.19.3 Employee Consulting Agreements

Business relationships that employees engage in with external entities are governed by RGS Bylaws and Policies, as well as other relevant laws and institutional regulations addressing conflicts of commitment and/or conflicts of interest. It is the responsibility of all employees to obtain approval for any contract or agreement that may pose a conflict or create the appearance of a conflict with this policy or the institution's intellectual property rights. Activities outside RGS that may potentially conflict include, but are not limited to, affiliations with research sponsors, significant ownership interests, or serving in an executive or managerial role in a company conducting business with the institution, including those that have licensed RGS Intellectual Property.

All employees intending to enter arrangements leading to conflicts of interest or commitment (if non-faculty) must consult with the Director of Operations and HR, disclose the activity, and secure approval from RGS before proceeding.

Tangible Research Property ("TRP") refers to physical (corporeal) items, distinct from intangible (intellectual) property, generated during the course of research activities. To provide examples, TRP encompasses items associated with an invention, such as biological materials, technical drawings, schematic diagrams, integrated circuit chips, prototype devices, and equipment. Notably, TRP does not encompass items falling under traditional academic copyrightable works.

3.19.4 Ownership

Copyrightable Works: With exceptions specified in this Policy, RGS does not assert ownership over copyrightable works, including those falling under the category of traditional academic copyrightable works or student theses and dissertations. Absent specific written agreements or policies to the contrary, Creators are at liberty to manage the rights to these works as they see fit.

Institutional Copyright Rights: As outlined in this Policy, the Creator retains all copyright rights, except in cases where the work falls into one or more of the following categories:

1. Considered a work for hire, leading to copyright vesting in the institution under applicable copyright law; or
2. Supported by a direct allocation of funds from the institution for the explicit purpose of creating a designated work for the institution's benefit, unless agreed otherwise;
3. Produced within the framework of an external institutional grant, contract, or other agreement with a third party;

4. Commissioned by the institution; or
5. Assigned to the institution for utilization according to a written agreement;
6. Any work generated by a team of faculty, staff, or students of such magnitude or duration that determining a discrete number of creators would be unfeasible, impractical, or potentially unfair; or
7. Subject to institutional and/or third-party contractual obligations specifically related to the work.

RGS employees can determine whether they have been explicitly employed or obligated to create a work by referring to factors such as their job description. For instance, faculty members may be mandated by their institutions to generate specific materials for departmental use, and in some instances, faculty members may be hired to produce designated materials, like online course materials for a particular class or department. In such cases, RGS assumes ownership of the copyright in the materials and any resulting intellectual property.

Professionals, faculty members, researchers, or students employed to produce specific intellectual property, or engaged in general intellectual property creation, are encouraged to review and sign a brief acknowledgment document. This serves to clarify the ownership status of the works they create.

Tangible Research Property: The institution asserts ownership over all tangible research property resulting from the use of RGS or external sponsorship materials, funds, or equipment. Unless expressly stated otherwise in a written agreement, RGS retains all relevant ownership rights to tangible research property generated with institutional resources.

Joint Ownership: In instances of joint ownership involving the institution, a student, and/or an institutional employee, the allocation of rights will be determined by a specific written agreement at the time of establishing joint ownership, in accordance with applicable law.

IP Clarification: In cases where an RGS employee is uncertain about whether a particular intellectual property falls under ownership, they may seek guidance from the Director of Operations and HR. Creators, including students, will retain ownership of intellectual property when none of the conditions outlined in this Policy for institutional ownership are applicable.

3.19.5 Administration

Intellectual Property ("IP") Committee:

Any employee intending to engage in an arrangement that could pose a conflict of interest or commitment (if non-faculty) must consult with the Operations and HR office, disclose the activity, and secure approval from the administration before proceeding.

The IP Committee will consist of faculty members appointed by the Dean of Academics and a student representative chosen by the Student Council. The student member will serve for one academic year, while other committee members will be appointed for three-year terms. The staggered terms ensure the addition of at least one new member to the IP Committee annually.

All disclosures will undergo scrutiny by the IP Committee, assessing potential implications before making decisions regarding the disposition of institution-owned intellectual property. The IP Committee will provide recommendations for the management of the institution's intellectual property assets in alignment with this policy as the need arises.

The management of institutional intellectual property will consider the input of the IP Committee, although the final decisions on the institution's ownership of intellectual property rests with the Vice President of Operations.

Concerning the College's role in safeguarding intellectual property to which it holds ownership rights, the College can maintain ownership and bear the expenses associated with protecting the intellectual property. Alternatively, RGS may choose to forfeit its rights in favor of another party, which may include the Creator(s). RGS also reserves the right to take any other action authorized by law in this regard.

3.19.6 Commercialization

Disclosure Process: Any creation of intellectual property by RGS employees or individuals covered by this policy, wherein RGS may have an ownership stake, must be promptly reported in writing through the completion of the Disclosure Form (referred to as "Disclosure"). This form should be submitted to the Director of Operations and HR. The Creator(s) are responsible for providing additional information or executing necessary documents to safeguard, promote, or license the invention. It is important to note that no disclosure is required for works falling under the definition of traditional academic copyrightable work.

Assessment: The Director of Operations and HR will initially evaluate the disclosures, followed by a review by the IP Committee, before the Vice President of Operations and Finance makes the final decision regarding the commercial potential of any such invention. If an Inventor disagrees with a

decision on pursuing patent protection, the President will appoint an ad hoc review committee, comprised of two faculty and two staff. This committee will examine the materials and issue a recommendation on patentability, which becomes effective unless there is a further appeal by the individual(s) involved or by the Vice President. Should there be an appeal to the review committee's decision, the committee will present the matter, along with documentation and recommendations, to the President, whose decision on patentability will be conclusive and binding for all parties involved.

Protection: If the institution opts to retain ownership of an invention, the Inventors or Creator(s) will collaborate with the VP of Operations and Finance, along with external parties as necessary, to pursue suitable protection for the invention. A Creator may express a desire for the intellectual property they developed to be publicly accessible without usage restrictions. The VP of Operations will examine whether such a request can be accommodated or if the intellectual property should be safeguarded. The Intellectual Property Committee will review and weigh a Creator's or Inventor's request with broad discretion, giving consideration consistent with the overarching goals of the Intellectual Property Policy, legal requirements, agreements with research sponsors, and the rights and interests of co-Creators or co-Inventors.

3.19.7 Licensing Process

If the College decides to pursue protection for an invention, a licensing agreement may be sought. The Creator(s) or Inventor(s) will collaborate with the VP of Operations to assess market potential, fields of use, and potential licenses. The VP of Operations will lead all licensing negotiations for institution-owned creations disclosed by the Inventor.

When considering potential licensing arrangements for the institution, the VP of Operations will strive to achieve the following objectives:

Collaborate with Inventors to identify effective licensing or distribution models for each invention, aiming to enhance public availability and utilization.

Make sincere efforts to inform faculty researchers who may be affected and involve them meaningfully in early-stage negotiations regarding invention management and intellectual property.

Make optimal efforts to incorporate an irrevocable, non-exclusive license for research and education purposes, including the right to grant sublicenses to non-profit entities for collaborative research.

Evaluate the impact of any licensing arrangements on other institutional research initiatives.

3.19.8 Distribution of Revenue

Unless otherwise specified in a signed written agreement between the Creator and RGS, all proceeds will be distributed as outlined below after recovering any expenses incurred in the pursuit, protection, or licensing of the technology by RGS. In situations involving multiple Creators, the Creator's share will be evenly divided among all Creators, unless there is a signed agreement indicating a different percentage split.

Allocation:

1. 45% to the Creator(s)
2. 55% to be overseen by the President or a designated representative to support research, scholarship, and the academic enterprise at RGS.

3.20 Faculty Recruitment, Hiring Procedures and Appointment

3.20.1 Full-Time Faculty Member Hiring Procedure (PR.HR.17)

The President and Dean of Academics identify the need to add or replace a full-time faculty member and develops the rationale, job title, position description, and responsibilities, which is presented for approval to the Board of Trustees.

If the Board accepts the recommendation, the Board authorizes a search to fill the position clearly stating the position title and description, responsibilities and qualifications required; appoints a Search Committee composed ideally of a Board member, the Dean of Academics, one full-time faculty member, one full-time staff member, one student and, if possible, one alumnus/a. The Board authorizes publishing notices of the opening in appropriate higher education job boards, print and electronic media. The Dean of Academics will chair the Search Committee.

The position description shall include the non-discrimination statement, the job title and its responsibilities, the required and preferred qualifications, and the items to be submitted by interested parties, deadlines for submissions, etc.

The Director of HR shall receive responses by interested persons, develop a file for each respondent and forward these to the Dean of Academics who shall acknowledge the receipt of the applicant's submitted materials, and engage in other contacts with applicants as needed. The Dean of

Academics shall convene the Search Committee, explain the process and timeline for the review and selection of applicants for interview. The Search Committee will then collaboratively formulate appropriate questions to be asked of interviewees, collaboratively develop the matrix or rubric for candidate evaluation, and set and communicate the dates and times for applicant interviews.

The full Search Committee will consider the applications, rank the candidates according to the matrix, and decide by majority vote the best-qualified applicants to invite to an initial on-campus or electronic interview. Then, after review of all factors and submitted materials, including proof of credentials, interview results, through discussion and by consensus, semi-finalists are chosen to be interviewed in person by the Dean and the President.

From this pool of semi-finalists, the President will then interview the two top candidates and make a recommendation of the top candidate to the board if he/she is satisfied with the candidate. If the President is not satisfied with either of the candidates, the President may recommend that a new search be initiated.

If the candidate chosen by the President is approved by the Board, the President will contact the candidate to proffer the position. In the event the person declines the position, the President may offer the position to the second candidate with Board approval.

The new faculty member will be welcomed to the campus and RGS community, provided an orientation and introduction to the full Board, before taking up his or her duties.

3.20.2 Part-Time Faculty Hiring Policy (PL.HR.16)

The President is authorized by the By-Laws to appoint adjunct faculty. The process of obtaining the services of part-time faculty reflects similar procedures as with full-time faculty except that the Board is informed of such appointments and need not authorize a search or appoint the individuals.

The Dean of Academics discerns the need to add or replace instructional staff at the part-time level within the constraint of fiscal resources. The Dean develops the rationale, position description, and responsibilities.

The President authorizes the Dean of Academics to conduct a search to fill the position. The Dean includes a student, if available, a full-time faculty member and a staff member to serve on the Search Committee. The position description shall indicate the non-discrimination statement, the job title and its duties, the required and preferred qualifications, and the items to be submitted by

interested parties, deadlines for submissions, etc. The Dean arranges for the placement of notices of the opening in appropriate print and electronic media. The Dean of Academics or a designated faculty member chairs the Search Committee.

The Director of HR shall receive responses by interested persons, develop an applicant file for each respondent and forward these to the Dean of Academics who shall acknowledge the receipt of the inquiry and the submitted materials, and engage in other contacts with applicants as needed. The Dean of Academics shall convene the Search Committee, explain the process for selection of applicants, collaboratively decide the questions to be asked in interviews, collaboratively develop the matrix or rubric for candidate evaluation, and set and communicate the dates and times for applicant interviews.

The Search Committee considers the applications and recommends candidates that the Dean invites to an on-campus or electronic interview. Then, after a review of the candidates' qualifications, the Dean may choose to offer the part-time position to a candidate.

The President will contact the first ranked candidate to offer the position to her or him. In the event the person declines the position, the President may move to the second candidate.

The new faculty member will be welcomed to the campus and RGS community, provided an orientation and introduction to the faculty and staff.

3.20.3 New full-time faculty

3.20.3.1 Probationary Period (PL.HR.19)

New faculty members at RGS are typically hired on a probationary 1- year appointment. This probationary period may be extended several years (commonly three years) during which faculty members are evaluated for their teaching, research, and service contributions. After satisfactory completion of the probationary period, the faculty member may be extended a longer contract. Satisfactory performance as a full-time faculty member will include evidence of the following:

1. Teaching Excellence: Evaluation of teaching effectiveness includes classroom observations, student evaluations, peer reviews, and evidence of curriculum development.
2. Research or Creative Activity: Faculty members are expected to demonstrate a record of scholarly research or creative activity. This could include publications in peer-reviewed journals, presentations at conferences, chapters published in edited books, faculty-authored

books, and other contributions to the academic field such as leadership and service in professional academic organizations.

3. Service: Service is another key criterion for faculty re-appointment at RGS. Service includes participation in institutional committees, academic advising and mentoring of students, attendance at RGS events, serving on a rotating basis on the Board of Trustees, or representing RGS as needed.

3.21 Evaluation of Faculty Members (PL.A.36)

RGS' mission, goals and values guide our criteria and procedures for evaluating faculty members. Evaluation is an on-going-process as well as set of discrete steps that are intended to be a positive collegial effort aimed at assessing and continually improving both the individual's skills and abilities as well as providing insights into the institution's strengths and areas needing improvement. The three areas a faculty member, and, implicitly, RGS are evaluated on are teaching, scholarship, and service.

3.21.1 Evaluation Criterion 1. Teaching

RGS' highest priority is to be an excellent academic institution whose students are respected as colleagues in learning. Excellence in teaching involves using effective pedagogical skills to communicate the content and the relevance of subject material so that students understand and can respond intelligently and coherently to what is presented. Excellent teachers recognize the ability levels of students and the varying ways in which they learn to adapt the styles, methods, and content to students. Excellent teachers recognize that students learn from one another through peer projects and discussions so that the teacher knows when to guide and when to step back from involvement in such projects and discussions. Excellent teachers model ethical conduct in speech and action, reliability in responding in timely ways to student inquiries and submitted assignments, engaging in program reviews, and educational effectiveness, and integrity in carrying on their scholarly activities.

3.21.2 Evaluation Criterion 2: Scholarship

RGS faculty, as scholars and intellectuals, maintain currency in their areas of expertise in the field of Islamic Studies and in related fields. They research, write, present, and collaborate with colleagues globally, producing new knowledge and furthering the study of received knowledge within the Islamic tradition. RGS faculty participate in regional, national, and international academic

professional organizations and conferences through membership, leadership, and publication. RGS provides and encourages its faculty to access opportunities for intellectual and scholarly development, presentation, and engagement.

3.21.3 Evaluation Criterion 3: Service

Respect Graduate School faculty balance teaching and student mentoring and advising with service to the RGS community. Faculty embody the RGS value of service in several ways. Preparing excellent courses and teaching well is their first priority. A concomitant priority is advising and mentoring students as persons, as scholars, and as intellectuals. Faculty assist students in choosing their courses and developing their scholarly and professional interests. Thesis advising and assistance with thesis development is a major commitment of the faculty.

Faculty also serve as partners in shaping and developing the strategic goals, vision, values and plans of RGS. They serve on standing and ad hoc committees, task forces, and contribute their expertise to special projects of the institution. Faculty support student recruitment by providing input on its programs' marketing, participating in RGS Open Houses, and encouraging potential students to study at RGS.

Faculty also contribute their knowledge and expertise to RGS programs, speak and present to mosques, dialogue centers, churches, synagogues, and other colleges, and universities.

3.21.4 The Evaluation Process (PR.HR.18)

1. During one of the semesters, the Dean of Academics shall advise the faculty member that the Dean will visit (not during examination time or the student presentations of student projects) one of the faculty member's courses for the purpose of observing the class and the faculty member. Within a week after the visit, the Dean will send the faculty member the Dean's reflections on the visit. The faculty member will be encouraged to respond in writing to the Dean's observation. Both the Dean's reflections and the faculty member's response will be part of the faculty member's personnel file and will be part of the annual evaluation.

2. During the last week of each semester, students are to complete an anonymous questionnaire that provides an evaluation of the course, how its stated objectives were met, the time they spent each week to prepare for class, the perceived effectiveness of the instructor, the instructor's availability for consultation and timely return of papers, tests, assignments, and any student submissions for the course, the effectiveness of the physical or electronic accommodations, the

instructor's use of visual and other modalities of instruction, and suggestions for the improvement of the course and points that would help the instructor better achieve course objectives.

The Registrar will tabulate and graphically show the results of the questionnaire and will forward a summary of the forms to the Dean of Academics.

3. Within three weeks of the end of the semester, the Dean of Academics and the faculty member will confer about the course evaluation.

4. Annual Faculty Self-Evaluation and Objective-Setting

On or before June 1, each faculty member is to prepare a four-part document.

Part A is to be a Self-Evaluation of the Faculty member's candid view of how they assess the effectiveness of their teaching, experience with students in the courses the faculty member taught.

Part B is the faculty member's indications for proposed changes or continuities for when the courses is taught again as well as changes in the styles and methods of instruction in courses he or she will be teaching in the next academic year.

Part C includes reflections on factors such as the curriculum, technology desired for more effective teaching, and comments on the kinds of support the member considers helpful for teaching purposes in the future.

Part D is to be the member's projection of what he or she plans to accomplish in the next academic year regarding teaching, scholarship, and service. The statement is to include estimates of required costs, time, and equipment.

The Dean and the faculty member will discuss the faculty self-evaluation. The Dean will send a copy of the document with the Dean's comments back to the faculty member who will be invited to respond in writing. The evaluation will be signed by the Dean and the faculty member in acknowledgement that the evaluation had been completed and that both parties had read all parts of it. The signatures are solely for this purpose; the faculty member's signature does not signify that they agree with the evaluation.

The Dean will forward the document, the Dean's comments, and the faculty member's response (if any) to the President for consideration as the budget for the next FY and contract renewals are considered prior to the next meeting of the Board. The Academic Dean will file the finalized

evaluation with all its parts to the faculty member's professional file which shall be kept in a secure location, locked in the HR office. The President and Dean may request a meeting with the faculty member to discuss issues raised in the evaluation process. Likewise, the faculty member may request a meeting with the Dean and/or the President to discuss issues raised in the evaluation process.

3.22 Faculty Promotion Policy

3.22.1 Faculty Appointment Guidelines

Respect Graduate School has a faculty ranking system that uses the following titles. The qualifications that are generally associated with these titles follow and serve as guidelines for making full-time faculty appointments.

Lecturer: ABD (All but Dissertation) expecting to earn a PhD within one year of hire. Other requirements as determined by the Search Committee.

Assistant Professor: Earned PhD and 1-3 years higher education teaching experience in Islamic Studies (or closely related field) as teaching assistant, Lecturer, Instructor, or Assistant Professor at a university with overall positive teaching evaluations and 3 academic recommendations. May have publications. Other requirements as determined by the Search Committee

Associate Professor: Earned PhD and 5 or more years teaching and research experience in Islamic Studies (or closely related field) at a university with overall positive teaching evaluations, published works, and 3 academic recommendations. Other requirements as determined by the Search Committee.

Full Professor: Earned PhD and 10 or more years teaching and research experience in Islamic Studies (or closely related field) at a university with overall positive teaching evaluations, published works, and 3 academic recommendations. Other requirements as determined by the Search Committee.

3.22.2. Point-Based Academic Promotion Criteria

General Guidelines

- A total of 100 points is required for promotion to each rank.

- Categories include Academic Qualifications, Teaching, Research & Scholarship, Service, and Professional Growth.
- Faculty must meet the minimum threshold in each category, even if they exceed points in another.

1. Lecturer

Only criterion is holding PhD or ABD

2. Assistant Professor (Total: 100 Points)

Minimum Requirements: Must earn at least 10 points in each category.

Category	Criteria	Points
Academic Qualifications	PhD or ABD in relevant field	20
	2 years teaching experience	10
Teaching	Each course taught (per semester)	5
	New course design	10
	Positive student evaluations	5
Research & Scholarship	Peer-reviewed article	10
	Conference presentation	5
	Book chapter	10
	Published book	40
	Citation	0.5 for each in one publication
Service	Advising students (per semester)	5
	Institutional committee membership	5
	Organizing academic events	10
Professional Growth	Attending academic workshop/seminar	5
	Obtaining teaching certification	10
Total Required for Promotion:	100 Points Minimum	

2. Associate Professor (Total: 200 Points (100 points from assist. professorship))

Minimum Requirements: Must earn at least 15 points in each category.

Category	Criteria	Points
Academic Qualifications	PhD with 5+ years experience	20
	Postdoc experience	20

Teaching	Each course taught (per semester)	5
	New course design	10
	Mentoring junior faculty	10
Research & Scholarship	Consistently positive student evaluations	10
	Peer-reviewed article	10
	Conference presentation	5
	Book chapter	10
	Published book	40
	External research grant	15
	Citation	0.5 for each in one publication
Service	Chairing an institutional committee	10
	Community engagement (e.g., interfaith events, outreach programs)	10
Professional Growth	Organizing faculty workshop	10
	Developing institutional policies (e.g., faculty handbook)	10
	Leadership role in professional organization	10
Total Required for Promotion:		200 Points Minimum

3. Full Professor (Total: 300 Points (200 points from assist. and assoc. professorship))

Minimum Requirements: Must earn at least 20 points in each category.

Category	Criteria	Points
Academic Qualifications	PhD with 10+ years experience	20
	International recognition in field	25
Teaching	Each course taught (per semester)	5
	Curriculum development for new program	20
	Mentoring junior faculty	10
	Excellence in teaching award	15
Research & Scholarship	Peer-reviewed article	10
	Conference presentation	5
	Book chapter	10
	Published book	40
	External research grant	15

	Editorial role in academic journal	20
	Citation	0.5 for each in one publication
Service	Chairing faculty senate	15
	Leading accreditation process	20
	Major contribution to institutional growth	20
	Organizing national or international conference	20
Professional Growth	Invited keynote speaker	20
	Serving on national/international advisory boards	20
	Leadership role in interfaith or academic diplomacy	20
Total Required for Promotion:		300 Points Minimum

Because faculty ranks for existing full-time faculty have not been established at Respect Graduate School prior to 2024-2025, faculty who are currently employed full-time faculty at RGS, may apply for promotion to the rank whose qualifications they meet. Applications for promotion should include the following and should be submitted to the Dean of Academics by August 1, 2025. A Promotion Committee will convene in August 2025 to review promotion applications, and a decision will be rendered by August 15, 2025. Promotion will be effective August 25, 2025.

- A complete Promotion Application
- Documentation showing how each criterion for promotion is met

For faculty hired in 2025 and beyond, the requirements to apply for promotion are as follows:

1. **Assistant Professor**-2 years teaching and researching in rank at RGS. In the 3rd year in rank or after, apply for promotion by filling out the Promotion Application and providing a portfolio of accomplishments showing how each requirement for promotion to the next rank is met; Application is ranked on the established criteria using the established points system by a Promotion Committee consisting of at least 1 faculty member, 2 staff members, and the Dean of Academics. Promotion requires Presidential approval and recommendation to the Executive Committee (EC). If the EC approves, they recommend promotion to the Board of Trustees. The new rank goes into effect the following academic year.

2. **Associate Professor**—2 years teaching and researching at Assistant Professor rank at RGS. In the 3rd year in rank or after, apply for promotion by filling out the Promotion Application form and providing a portfolio of accomplishments showing how each requirement for promotion to the next rank is met; Application is ranked on the established criteria using a points system by a Promotion Committee consisting of at least 1 faculty member, 2 staff members, and the Dean of Academics. Promotion requires Presidential approval and recommendation to the Executive Committee (EC). If EC approves, they recommend promotion to the Board of Trustees. The new rank goes into effect the following academic year.

3. **Full Professor**-3 years teaching and researching in Associate Professor rank at RGS. In the 4th year or after, apply for promotion by filling out the Promotion Application form and providing a portfolio of accomplishments showing how each requirement for promotion to the next rank is met; Application is ranked on the established criteria using the established points system by a Promotion Committee consisting of at least 1 faculty member, 2 staff members, and the Dean of Academics. Promotion requires Presidential approval and recommendation to the Executive Committee (EC). If EC approves, they recommend promotion to the Board of Trustees. The new rank goes into effect the following academic year.

3.22.3 Calendar for the applications

Applications March 1st

Decision by the promotion committee March 30th

Executive Committee evaluation April 15th

Board decision – in June

3.22.4 Suggested Faculty Salary Scale 2025-2026

2025-2026 suggested salaries for each rank:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Lecturer -\$58-68K | |
| 2. Assistant Professor-\$69-79K | PA average: \$77,851 |
| 3. Associate Professor-\$80-89K | PA average: \$99,837 |
| 4. Full Professor- \$90K-99K | PA average: \$139,941 |

It is suggested that the average for PA faculty should be taken into consideration as well as the fact that at present RGS does not offer health insurance to employees. Employees must pay for their own health insurance.

3.22.5 Benefits

RGS offers a simple IRA with a 3% of salary contribution from RGS.

After the first year of employment, faculty are entitled to 12 paid days of vacation, 10 days of medical leave time, and 2 days personal leave time annually. During the first year of employment, one medical leave day per month of service is accrued. Holidays are paid according to the Holiday Calendar. RGS recognizes the following paid holidays for all full-time employees:

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Eid al Fitr
- Eid al Adha

3.22.6 Faculty course load

Four (4) 3-credit courses per calendar year over Fall, Spring, J-term, Summer term. Course assignments are determined by the Academic Dean. Faculty rank is taken into account with regard to assigned teaching schedule each semester but the needs of the institution remain first priority.

3.23 Policy on Faculty and Student Relationships (PL.HR.79)

Respect Graduate School recognizes the potential for exploitation and conflicts of interest that can arise in faculty and student relationships due to the power disparity between them. Therefore, RGS strictly regulates and, in some cases, prohibits consensual sexual or romantic relationships between faculty members and students to ensure a safe and equitable learning environment.

Prohibited Relationships and Behaviors

1. Sexual or romantic relationships between instructors and students currently enrolled in their classes are prohibited.
2. Sexual or romantic relationships between faculty advisors and their current advisees are prohibited.
3. Any form of sexually suggestive, intimidating, or harassing behavior is prohibited.

3.23.1 Definition of Student Status

A student is considered a student of a particular instructor when:

1. The student is registered in a course taught by the instructor and has not yet received a final grade.
2. The student is assigned to be advised by the instructor or academic advisor, including graduate advising or membership in a thesis or dissertation committee.
3. The instructor has a supervisory or evaluative role over the student's activities at RGS.

3.23.2 Ethical Principles for Faculty

In situations where faculty members indirectly affect a student's academic evaluation or career opportunities, the following ethical principles must be observed:

1. Faculty members must refrain from expressing sexual or romantic interest in a student.
2. Faculty members must not imply, explicitly or implicitly, that academic rewards or punishments could result from a student's response to sexual or romantic advances.
3. If a consensual sexual or romantic relationship develops between a student and an instructor, the instructor must not participate in any activity involving the evaluation of the student's academic work or progress without prior permission from the student's dean.

3.23.3 Reporting and Complaint Procedures

A student who believes they have experienced harassment or witnessed a violation of this policy can make an informal or formal complaint to the Dean of Students.

A faculty or staff member who believes they have experienced harassment or violation of this policy by a student or member of the staff can make an informal or formal complaint to the HR office.

RGS is committed to maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students and faculty, and this policy aims to prevent potential conflicts of interest and protect the rights of all members of the RGS community.

3.24 Non-Renewal of Faculty Contracts vs. Dismissal of Faculty

3.24.1 Departures of Faculty from Respect Graduate School (PL.HR.74)

The manners through which faculty members depart from an institution include resignation, non-renewal, and dismissal. Suspension from responsibilities is a step that may or may not result in the person's leaving the Institution.

Resignation has been discussed in Section 7. Unless otherwise agreed upon with the President such as in instances whereby the faculty member must resign for health or serious personal reasons, the person is to complete the course(s) she or he is teaching (including submitting final grades), return library materials, vacate any office space, and give to the Director of Operations and HR keys and other equipment that belongs to the RGS. The final paycheck will be withheld until these obligations are met.

3.24.2 Non-Renewal of Faculty Contract (PL.HR.73)

Non-renewal of the full-time faculty contract refers to non-re-appointment which may be based on the faculty member's overall performance, or it may be based on a change in the institution's programs, goals, directions, or resources. Ethical considerations and respect for the person lead RGS to inform the individual either within the contract that his or her services will not be needed in the next and/or future semester(s) or at least by the eighth week of the semester in which the person is teaching.

RGS does not have a tenure system. Currently, faculty are offered annual or multi-year contracts. Due respect for the person, academic process, and RGS' mission, goals and values call upon the RGS to provide advice and assistance to faculty members through periodic (at least annual) evaluations that have clear criteria. The evaluation procedure has been presented above. As a result of performance evaluation, when a faculty member has been given a minimum of three semesters to meet the expectations mutually agreed upon between the Dean of Academics and the faculty member, and the Dean sees that these expectations are not being met, the Dean may inform the person one semester in advance of the contract's end that his or her appointment will not be

renewed. The evaluation procedure includes an appeals process that involves the President and the Board of Trustees, and the faculty member may opt to utilize the appeals process.

3.24.3 Dismissal of faculty (PL.HR.75)

Dismissal refers to termination for cause. The following considerations and procedures reflect the recommendations of the 11th Edition of the American Association of College Professors' Policy Documents and Reports, pages 91-93 and serve as the adapted operative principles and steps to be used by the RGS in conjunction with the Handbook's Section 5's provisions under "Charges of Misconduct."

3.24.4 Faculty Dismissal Procedure (PR.HR.22)

When questions or accusations arise concerning the fitness and/or conduct of a faculty member, the faculty member is to be advised about the allegations and is to engage in a conversation about the matter with the Vice President and/or Dean of Academics. If the matter is resolved due to such a meeting(s), it is closed by mutual consent.

If the matter is not resolved, the President will appoint a Hearing Committee of full-time faculty who do not hold administrative positions. The Hearing Committee shall keep a full record of its proceedings.

The Hearing Committee and the faculty member shall be presented with a statement that gives the details of the issues and accusations that have been raised.

The Hearing Committee shall hold sessions during which evidence is presented and witnesses are heard concerning the allegations. The faculty member is to be present and may be assisted by an advisor and given opportunities to respond verbally and/or in writing to the witnesses and evidence.

The Hearing Committee will render its decisions and offer its recommendations to the President and to the faculty member. The recommendations may range from formal written reprimand to mandated psychotherapy to dismissal.

The President and the faculty member may accept the recommendation. If the President declines to accept the recommendation, and chooses another option, the President is to state the reasons for that decision and so notify the Hearing Committee and faculty member. If the faculty member declines to accept the Hearing Committee recommendation and the President's response, the faculty member may appeal to the Board.

In the event of such an appeal, the faculty member and President are to provide the Board with clear statements of their respective positions and the Hearing Committee is to provide the Board with its record of the hearings. The President, the faculty member and an advisor shall have the opportunity to address the Board. The decision of the Board shall be final.

If a faculty member is shown to have committed a serious violation of the RGS Community Standards, his or her faculty contract shall be terminated. Upon the conclusion of any appeals process, the person is expected to return any library or institutionally owned materials, vacate any office space, and give to the Director of Operations and HR keys and other equipment that belongs to the RGS. The final paycheck will be issued after these obligations are met.

3.24.5 Suspension of Faculty for Significant Violations of Standards, Policies or Law (PR.HR.21)

Suspension refers to the temporary removal of a faculty member from the classroom and from the campus. The suspension period is in force while the person is responding to a charge of a significant violation of RGS' Community Standards, policy, or criminal allegations, or when his or her presence is considered to present risks to the safety or well-being of until the situation is resolved, the person's remuneration is to be continued.

3.24.6 Charges of Misconduct (PR.HR.3)

Charges of misconduct include charges of any type of harassment or discriminatory behavior by anyone. Questions concerning this policy should be directed to the Dean of Academics (if regarding Faculty), the Dean of Students (if regarding students) or the Vice President of Operations (if regarding staff).

3.25 Faculty Grievance Policy and Procedure (PR.HR.23)

3.25.1 Policy

Disputes may emerge within the RGS community involving faculty or others. These disputes might encompass allegations of inequitable treatment, infringement upon academic freedom, or violations of institutional policies and procedures. Administrators are urged to exercise caution to prevent such situations, and if they do arise, to diligently seek resolution before they escalate into formal grievances.

Similarly, faculty members should recognize that initiating a formal grievance involves a substantial commitment of their colleagues' time and should reserve the procedure for addressing significant issues. In the event of a dispute, it is crucial for the involved parties to collaboratively work in good faith toward an informal resolution as promptly as possible. The aggrieved faculty member is encouraged to meet with the individual at the center of the dispute to engage in discussions and seek resolution. If an amicable resolution is not achieved, the next step is to meet with the Dean. If the Dean is unable to resolve the matter, the faculty member should then meet with the Vice President of Operations and Finance to communicate the situation and explore potential paths to resolution. If, despite these efforts at informal resolution, the faculty member remains dissatisfied, they may proceed formally within the established grievance procedure.

3.25.2 Definitions and Eligibility

Definition of "Grievance": A grievance is characterized as a complaint raised by a faculty member alleging that they have experienced a violation, misinterpretation, or inequitable application of the provisions outlined in the Faculty Handbook or other published policies or procedures of the College or its units. It may also pertain to instances where the faculty member believes they have been treated unfairly or inequitably in some other manner.

3.25.3 Applicability of the Grievance Procedure

This grievance procedure is accessible to all faculty members. It is not applicable, however, in cases where dismissal proceeding or any subsequent final actions resulting from them occur since dismissal is only for cases where a faculty member or other employee has been shown to have more likely than not violated RGS Community Standards, Policy, or law. In instances where a grievant alleges discriminatory acts prohibited by law or institutional policy, the grievance must follow the specified grievance procedures. Once this initial process is concluded, any unresolved aspects of the grievance may be brought under the grievance procedure's purview.

3.25.4 Grievance Procedure

3.25.4.1 Step One: Filing a Grievance

The faculty member is required to initiate a grievance within three months of becoming aware of the associated event. Within this timeframe, the grievant should make efforts to address the matter

informally. If an informal resolution is not achieved, a formal grievance, in written form, is submitted to the Dean of Academics.

In the formal grievance, the grievant is expected to clearly outline the nature of the grievance, identify the party against whom it is filed, and specify the desired remedy.

3.25.4.2 Step Two: Mediation by an ad hoc Faculty Committee

Upon receiving notice of a grievance, the Dean of Academics expeditiously appoints an ad hoc Mediation Committee comprised of two faculty members.

The ad hoc Mediation Committee assumes a neutral and impartial stance while attempting to mediate the dispute. Throughout this phase, the committee may suggest potential resolutions but refrains from making formal findings except to ascertain whether the grievance falls within the defined parameters or is insubstantial/frivolous. The committee oversees meetings in steps two and three, and the absence of one member at these meetings does not alter prescribed time limits.

Shortly after the ad hoc Mediation Committee's formation, its chair schedules meetings with relevant parties to seek a resolution. During these meetings, the grievant may be accompanied by an advisor from within RGS.

After the initial meeting with the grievant, the committee, through majority vote, determines whether the grievance meets a threshold for mediation. If the entire grievance or some issues do not meet this threshold, the committee informs the relevant parties and the Dean of Academics. In the latter case, mediation proceeds only for the remaining issues, while non-grievable issues are excluded from mediation and arbitration.

During mediation, the committee may require the attendance of individuals involved in the grievance, including the person responsible for the alleged actions.

If mediation fails without the Dean's participation, the committee mandates the Dean's attendance for at least one meeting. If no resolution is achieved within ten working days of the last Step Two meeting or if the committee perceives no forthcoming resolution, the Chair of the ad hoc Mediation Committee arranges a meeting with the Dean, the grievant, and the committee. The committee may request the attendance of the party responsible for the grievance and other relevant individuals. The grievant may bring a member of the RGS community.

If no resolution is reached after this meeting, the ad hoc Mediation Committee may propose a resolution to the parties involved in the grievance.

3.25.4.3 Step Three: Request for Arbitration

Should the grievant find the Step Two resolution unsatisfactory or if no decision is rendered within ten working days after the meeting with the Dean or within the same timeframe following receipt of a proposed resolution formally submitted by the ad hoc Mediation Committee, the grievant may, in writing, request arbitration from the Chair of the ad hoc Mediation Committee. Failure to submit an arbitration request within 30 working days after the Step Two disposition and/or meeting, or the transmission of the Committee's proposed resolution, results in the closure of the grievance.

Within ten working days of receiving the arbitration request, the ad hoc Mediation Committee, through a majority vote, determines whether the grievance will proceed to arbitration. The Committee's role is not to assess the merits of the grievance but solely to decide if arbitration is appropriate. The Committee evaluates whether the claim falls within the definition of a grievance, whether the remaining issues are neither insubstantial nor frivolous beyond any settlement offered by the Dean, and whether the sought remedy falls within the arbitrator's jurisdiction. If these conditions are met, the Committee approves arbitration.

If the ad hoc Mediation Committee deems the grievance unsuitable for arbitration, it is closed.

Should the Committee identify needed improvements in institutional policies, practices, or procedures through the grievance, it forwards recommendations to the Dean of Academics and the President. If the ad hoc Mediation Committee decides the grievance should proceed to arbitration, it instructs the Dean's Office to initiate arbitration proceedings.

3.25.4.4 Step Four: Arbitration

If the grievance progresses to arbitration, the ad hoc Mediation Committee will inform both the Dean and the grievant.

Within fifteen calendar days of notifying the Dean, the Dean (or their designee) will meet with the grievant to explain the process of filing a demand for arbitration with the American Arbitration Association. At the request of either party, the ad hoc Mediation Committee's Chair may also attend this meeting. The institution must file the demand within 15 calendar days after this meeting, provided the escrow requirement of subsection 5(d) has been fulfilled, or within 5 days after College Counsel receives notice that the grievant has met the escrow requirement, whichever occurs later.

Failure to meet the escrow requirement within 90 calendar days of the arbitration demand results in the grievance being considered withdrawn.

The arbitrator, chosen from a list maintained by the American Arbitration Association or a comparable acceptable agency, must be qualified for academic arbitration through current or past service as a faculty member or academic administrator. The proceedings will adhere to the rules of the American Arbitration Association.

The arbitrator's decision, within their jurisdiction, is final and binding on the parties and the College. However, the arbitrator lacks the authority to mandate an action prohibited by law, override judgments on faculty qualifications made by relevant academic committees or alter provisions of the Faculty Handbook or other pertinent institutional policies and procedures.

Costs of the arbitrator or their associate will be distributed as follows:

1. If the grievance is upheld, the College bears these costs.
2. If the grievance is denied, the grievant covers 1/3 of the American Arbitration Association's fees and arbitrator costs, with the College assuming the remaining costs.
3. Each party is responsible for its own expenses, services, and fees, except for the American Arbitration Association's costs and the arbitrator's fees.

To meet the conditions of the section above, the grievant places funds equal to half of the American Arbitration Association's processing fee and half of one day's arbitrator's fee into a non-interest-bearing escrow account at Wells Fargo Bank. Instructions for establishing the account are set by the Dean of Academics and available in the faculty. The escrow account, controlled by the Dean, releases funds to the grievant if the grievance is upheld or transfers them to the College if the grievance is denied. In the case of a split decision, the arbitrator determines the proportional distribution of costs and the distribution of deposited funds.

3.25.4.5 Miscellaneous Matters

Extension of Grievance Filing Deadline: The three-month time limit for filing a grievance, as outlined above, may be extended with the written agreement of the Dean and the grievant for due cause.

Timely Processing of Grievances: It is crucial to process grievances promptly, and the specified number of days at each step should be regarded as a maximum. Every effort will be made to expedite the process. However, mutual agreement may extend the time limits, particularly if forming an ad hoc mediation committee proves challenging due to the time of year.

Summer Term Considerations: Forming an ad hoc Mediation Committee during summer months is challenging, so the clock for Steps Two and Three is typically suspended. Nonetheless, the filing of a Step One grievance must occur within three months of the grievant becoming aware of the grievable event(s).

Response Time and Waiver: A grievant has two weeks to respond after each step. Failure to respond within this time limit will result in the grievance being considered withdrawn. Involuntary delays, such as illness or mail delivery issues, do not waive or withdraw the grievance. If there is a dispute over whether a grievance has been waived, the parties continue to follow the procedure, and the arbitrator, in the case of arbitration, will make the final determination.

Formal Findings by Mediation Committee: Unless the grievance has been resolved, withdrawn, or otherwise terminated, the ad hoc Mediation Committee refrains from making formal findings or reports before the end of Step Two.

Arbitration Decision: Copies of the arbitration decision are sent to the grievant and the Dean.

Representation and Confidentiality: No outside counsel is allowed in Step Two mediation meetings, but all parties may be represented by counsel in arbitration proceedings. The institution provides relevant materials to the grievant.

Assistance and Confidentiality: The Dean of Academics gives the names of faculty members or others who can help prepare and present the case upon request. Testimony and deliberations under this procedure are to be kept confidential by all parties involved in resolving the grievance.

Withdrawal of Grievance: If the grievant decides to withdraw the grievance, they must do so in writing to the Dean of Academics.

Employment Termination during Grievance: If the grievant's employment terminates for any reason during the grievance, the grievance is discontinued, except when it involves non-renewal of a contract, allowing the grievant to request continuation in writing to the Dean of Academics.

3.25.4.6 Unresolved Complaints

Anyone who has not been able to resolve a dispute at Respect Graduate School through the dispute resolution/grievance process outlined in this handbook, may file a complaint with the Pennsylvania Department of Education by submitting their complaint at this link.

<https://paggcdc.powerappsportals.us/pdecontactus/>

You may also write to The Department of Education of PA at the Forum Building, 607 South Drive, Harrisburg, PA. 17120.

3.26 Conflicts of Interest (PL.HR.33)

Conflict of interest is defined as any activity or interest that has direct or indirect financial consequences and impairs, or may be seen to impair, an individual's independent, unbiased judgment in the performance of his or her responsibilities to the RGS. This definition also applies to any activity or interest conducted by family members, such as a spouse or domestic partner, child, parent, etc.

Employees of RGS are not to be involved in any employment decisions that may result in a direct benefit to their relatives. In addition, a relative is not to have direct supervisory responsibility over another relative (this includes student employees). In all cases of potential conflicts of interest, staff are required to remove themselves from any decision-making processes that may directly affect their relatives and partners. Employment decisions include, but are not limited to, those relating to initial appointment, reappointment, performance appraisal, and changes in salary. A relative, for the purposes of this policy, is a spouse, domestic partner, parent, child, sibling, grandparent, in-law, nephew, niece, cousin, aunt, or uncle. This policy applies to family members of the Board, vendors and those who engage in contractual relations with the RGS.

Faculty and staff are expected to conduct personal business and personal activities in a manner that avoids conflict with the interests of RGS.

A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment or family,

1. an ownership or investment interest in any entity with which RGS has a transaction or arrangement, or
2. a compensation arrangement with RGS or with any entity or individual with which RGS has a transaction or arrangement, or
3. an actual or potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which RGS is negotiating a transaction or arrangement.

Compensation includes direct and indirect remuneration, as well as gifts or favors that are more than incidental. The term family refers to a spouse, parent or other relative, domestic partner, a sibling (or spouse/domestic partner of same), child (or spouse/domestic partner of same),

grandchild (or spouse/domestic partner of same) or great-grandchild (or spouse/domestic partner of same), or any other relative, if the latter resides in the same household as the interested person.

Upon initial association with RGS, trustees, faculty members and staff shall be required to sign a statement acknowledging the existence of actual or possible Conflicts of Interest. Board members, administrators and faculty members will be required to renew this acknowledgement annually.

3.27 Use of Electronic Facilities (PL.T.2)

Respect Graduate School provides faculty, administrators, students, and staff with access to institutional electronic facilities for use in conducting the Institution's business, academic work, research, and communication relevant to the mission and vision of the Institution. Electronic facilities include, but are not limited to, telephones, voicemail, dictation equipment, pagers, cellular telephones, digital assistants, copiers, standard and electronic facsimile devices, e-mail, instant messaging and Internet access, computers (laptops and desktops), peripheral equipment, network equipment, and all software provided by the institution. The institution shall, at its sole discretion, determine whether and to what extent its personnel should have access to electronic facilities. Personnel not granted access to some or all electronic facilities shall not utilize such electronic facilities. Personnel shall not afford or facilitate third party access to any electronic facilities at any time.

3.27.1 Manner of Usage of Electronic Facilities

The electronic facilities that are the property of the Institution are provided to the Institution's personnel to enable them to better conduct the business of the institution and to promote the interests of the Institution. The institution's personnel are required to use electronic facilities solely for these purposes and in a professional, ethical, and lawful manner, cognizant of the risks that may arise from their use. The use of RGS electronic facilities for personal communications and use is strongly discouraged.

3.27.2 Purposes for Using Institutional Electronic Facilities

The electronic facilities of Respect Graduate School can only be used for purposes of, or in support of, education and research, and administrative and other support activities considered consistent with the RGS' mission.

3.28 Academic Conference Policy (PL.A.42)

3.28.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidelines for planning, organizing, and implementing academic conferences at RGS. Conferences serve as vital platforms for advancing scholarship, fostering dialogue, and promoting the School's mission of education, service, and community engagement.

3.28.2 Scope

This policy applies to all academic conferences organized, co-sponsored, or hosted by RGS, including both in-person and virtual events. It encompasses all stages of the conference cycle—proposal, planning, approval, execution, and evaluation.

3.28.3 Definitions

- **Conference:** A formal academic gathering where scholars, practitioners, and students present research, exchange ideas, and discuss topics within RGS' mission and academic disciplines.
- **Organizing Committee:** A group appointed to plan, coordinate, and oversee the implementation of the conference.
- **Conference Chair:** The faculty or staff member designated as the main coordinator responsible for conference leadership and reporting.
- **Call for Papers (CFP):** A public announcement inviting proposals for presentations, panels, or papers.

3.28.4 Policy

3.28.4.1 Alignment with Institutional Mission

All academic conferences must align with the mission, vision, and strategic priorities of RGS, emphasizing scholarship, ethical leadership, interfaith dialogue, and community service.

3.28.4.2 Approval and Oversight

- Conference proposals must be submitted to the Academic Affairs Committee at least six months prior to the proposed date.

- Final approval rests with the Dean of Academic Affairs and the EC.
- Conferences involving external partners or co-sponsors require a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) approved by the administration.

3.28.4.3 Financial Management

- A detailed budget plan must be submitted with the proposal, outlining anticipated expenses and revenue (including registration fees, sponsorships, or grants).
- The Finance Office must review and approve all budgets prior to commitment of funds.
- All external sponsorships or donations must comply with RGS' Financial Policies.

3.28.4.4 Academic Standards

- The organizing committee ensures peer review of submitted abstracts or papers.
- Ethical standards of research, presentation, and citation must be upheld.
- Conference themes must contribute to RGS' academic reputation and foster meaningful scholarly engagement.

3.28.4.5 Inclusivity and Accessibility

- Conferences must be inclusive and open to diverse perspectives and participants.
- Reasonable accommodations must be provided to ensure accessibility in line with RGS' Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

3.28.5 Academic Conference Procedure (PR.A.7)

3.28.5.1 Step 1: Proposal Submission

- The proposer (faculty or department) submits a Conference Proposal Form to the Academic Affairs Committee including:
 - Title and theme
 - Objectives and target audience
 - Tentative dates and format (in-person, online, hybrid)
 - Proposed budget
 - Keynote speakers (if known)
 - Organizing Committee members

3.28.5.2 Step 2: Approval and Scheduling

- The Academic Affairs Committee reviews proposals for academic quality and feasibility.
- Upon approval, the date is added to the RGS Academic Calendar and event planning may begin.

3.28.5.3 Step 3: Planning and Logistics

- The Organizing Committee manages:
 - Venue and technology arrangements
 - Speaker invitations and communication
 - Marketing and outreach (website, flyers, social media)
 - Registration process via the RGS platform
 - Coordination with Facilities and IT teams

3.28.5.4 Step 4: Call for Papers and Program Development

- The Call for Papers is published at least four months before the event.
- Abstracts are peer reviewed by a Scientific Committee or assigned reviewers.
- A finalized conference schedule, keynote list, and presenter roster are prepared.

3.28.5.5 Step 5: Implementation

- The Conference Chair oversees the event's operation, ensuring adherence to the schedule and proper documentation (attendance lists, photos, session recordings).
- The IT Department supports virtual sessions, if applicable.
- If the conference is organized by partnership, the partner should provide noticeable service to the conference.
- RGS is a relatively small institution operating with minimal number of staff members. Therefore, the organizers should take the operational capacity into consideration when planning for the conference.
- Due to the general capacity of RGS, the academic affairs committee should put a cap for the number of conferences per year.
- A responsible person should be assigned for the assessment of conference which must be conducted during the conference for reporting purposes.

3.28.5.6 Step 6: Reporting and Evaluation

- Within 30 days after the conference, the Chair submits a Conference Report to the Dean of Academic Affairs, including:
 - Attendance summary
 - Financial statement
 - Evaluation feedback
 - Recommendations for future events
- A brief conference summary is published on the RGS website.

3.28.6 Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Conference Chair	Overall leadership, coordination, and reporting
Organizing Committee	Planning, communication, and logistics
Academic Affairs Committee	Approval and academic oversight
Finance Office	Budget review and expenditure control
Marketing Team	Publicity, website, and promotional materials
IT Department	Technical setup and recording

3.28.7 Review and Revision

This policy shall be reviewed every three years by the Academic Affairs Committee to ensure alignment with institutional goals and best practices in academic event management.

4 Amending the Handbook (PL.PD.2)

4.1 Policy Statement

The institution maintains handbooks, policies, and procedures to ensure effective governance, operational clarity, and regulatory compliance. These documents may be amended as necessary through a defined review and approval process to maintain accuracy, consistency, and institutional integrity.

4.2 Minor Revisions

Editorial, formatting, clerical, or non-substantive revisions that do not alter the intent, scope, or application of a handbook, policy, or procedure may be made administratively without formal review under this policy.

4.3 Proposal of Amendments

Substantive amendments to handbooks, policies, or procedures, along with a written rationale, may be proposed by faculty, staff, administrators, or governing board members and submitted to the designated administrative authority.

4.4 Review and Consultation

The designated administrative authority shall coordinate a review of proposed amendments with appropriate stakeholders. This process may include consultation, discussion, and revision to ensure institutional alignment and compliance.

4.5 Approval Process

1. Handbooks and Policies:

Following review, proposed amendments to handbooks and institutional policies shall be submitted to the governing body or its designee for consideration.

2. Procedures:

Procedures, which implement approved policies, may be reviewed and approved by the designated administrative authority unless otherwise required by governing body action.

4.6 Incorporation and Documentation

Upon approval, amendments shall be formally incorporated into the applicable handbook, policy, or procedure, with appropriate documentation of the approval date and authority.

4.7 Publication and Implementation

Approved amendments shall be communicated to affected stakeholders and published through official institutional channels. Amendments shall take effect on the date specified in the approval unless otherwise stated.

5 Policy on Policy Development and Implementation (PL.PD.1)

This policy applies to all of the RGS' divisions for the development of subsequent policies.

5.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all of the policies of the RGS are formally approved and consistent with the mission, goals, commitments, and initiatives. Furthermore, all policies and procedures are to be written clearly, in compliance with legal requirements and published so as to be available and accessible in print and electronic formats to the RGS constituents and general public.

5.1.1 Definitions

Policies are guiding or governing principles, formally approved to provide assistance in the conduct of the affairs of the RGS constituent groups. Such policies are published in appropriate handbooks.

Procedures are statements that provide for the orderly implementation of established policies through specific, prescribed actions to be taken.

Administrative policies describe the terms or conditions of affiliation of administrators, faculty members, staff members, students, the use of the facilities (i.e., buildings, grounds, and equipment), and other matters of a general nature.

Academic policies are policies that relate to the educational process and the academic portfolio of the RGS.

Student life policies concern the terms or conditions affecting student life within the RGS community.

Board of Trustees policies are those by which the Board of Trustees operates and governs itself, and policies involving the relationship of the Board to the President of the RGS as Chief Executive Officer.

5.1.2 Presidential Responsibilities

While the Board of Trustees of the RGS is ultimately responsible for the control and function of the RGS, the President is empowered with the authority to manage the operation of the RGS. The President manages the RGS, in part, through his or her oversight of the creation and implementation of the policies. The RGS policies are developed in the context of a transparent system of shared governance, which involves the RGS's aforementioned constituents. In this manner the campus community is able to work together to resolve issues that face the RGS.

5.1.3 The Respect Graduate School Policy Development Committee

The RGS Policy Development Committee (the "PDC" or the "Committee") proposes policies and procedures related to the development, review, revision, and elimination of the RGS policies. In addition, the Committee coordinates the regular policy review process in consultation with the President, ensuring that all policies are reviewed and communicated on a regular cycle. The Committee also serves as a source of advice about the appropriate scope (departmental, divisional, Institutional) of existing and proposed policies, and about the appropriate review and consultation processes for proposed policies.

5.1.4 Committee Membership

The committee consists of the Vice President of Operations, the Dean of Academic Affairs, the Dean of Students, and the representative of the Student Government Association.

5.2 Procedures (PR.PD.1)

5.2.1 Initiation

A request for a new policy, or revision of an existing policy, may come from any member of the Institution's constituent groups or community. A request does not guarantee that a policy will be developed by the PDC.

5.2.2 Development

The PDC reviews the proposal and determines whether, appropriately, it should move forward to the next step in the development process.

The policy development process includes both an initial and a final review period, during which the RGS' constituent groups have the opportunity to comment on each policy. Following its final review, the PDC recommends the proposal as it stands to the President of the RGS or recommends it to the President with comments for possible revision. Upon receiving a proposed policy from the PDC, the President may conduct his or her own independent review and study of the issue. The President may also consult with the advising constituencies of the RGS, which provides a mechanism for the President to discuss possible outcomes and to consider the overall effects of the proposed policy on the RGS as a whole.

5.2.3 Approval

The President submits the final draft of any policy changes for approval to the Board of Trustees.

5.2.4 Dissemination

If the policy or revision is approved by the Board of Trustees, the President of the RGS initials the final draft and sends it to the Secretary of the RGS, who sees that it is published in the appropriate handbooks of the RGS and notifies the constituent groups of the approval and the effective date.

If the policy or revision is not approved, the President of the RGS returns it with comments to the Secretary of the RGS, who notifies appropriate persons of the status of the proposal.

References/Sources

This document was created using templates and information from the following sources:

1. Northeastern University (<https://faculty.northeastern.edu/handbook/governance/full-time-faculty-grievance-procedure/>)
2. Williams College faculty handbook: <https://faculty.williams.edu/files/2023/06/Faculty-Handbook-2023-2024.pdf>
3. University of Valley Forge Credit Hour Policy and Semester definition:
https://valleyforge.edu/wp-content/uploads/Documents/Student_Consumer_Information/UVFCreditSemesterHourCompliancePolicy_20-21.pdf
4. DeSales University Credit Hour Policy <https://www.desales.edu/policies>
5. Illinois State University (<https://policy.illinoisstate.edu/academic/4-1-10/>)
6. Zaytuna College Catalog:
(https://zaytuna.edu/files/galleries/Zaytuna_College_Catalog_2023-2024.pdf)