



Tip Sheet: Role of the Faculty and Academic Staff Affairs (FASA) Office and When to Contact FASA

Introduction

As an extension of the Office of the Provost, the Office for Faculty and Academic Staff Affairs (FASA) exists to help faculty and academic staff achieve professional excellence. FASA seeks to attract and retain top talent while supporting all aspects of the faculty experience. From recruitment through retirement, FASA speaks directly to the second pillar of the 2030 Strategic Plan by providing strategic expertise to support the continued excellence of our faculty, academic staff, academic leaders and executive managers as strategic partners in effectively navigating a large, complex university.

Additionally, FASA's role is to understand the deeply embedded norms and cultures associated with faculty life, such as academic freedom, faculty rights and responsibilities, shared governance at the department/college/university levels, teaching and research responsibilities and academic culture more broadly. FASA ensures that MSU's academic personnel policies and processes are informed by and honor such hallmarks of faculty life and professional standards within the higher education community.

FASA is a standalone unit that reports directly to the provost. Although FASA works closely with MSU Human Resources (HR), the two offices are not the same office and have different, yet related and often directly connected, work responsibilities.

This tip sheet is intended to help unit HR staff understand the role and body of work of FASA and to give a clearer picture of when to contact FASA vs MSU HR for questions, concerns and processes.

Key Takeaways

FASA works closely with MSU HR, and many processes/policies cross both offices; however, each office handles different types of work. Please see Table 1 for a general comparison of each office's body of work and which office to contact depending on the matter.

Table 1. Comparison Between FASA and MSU HR Work

Office for Faculty and Academic Staff Affairs	MSU Human Resources
Implement the provost's initiatives as directed by the provost	Faculty and Academic Staff (FAS), Support Staff, Temp and On-Call, Graduate Assistants and Student Operations
Provide guidance to administrators for FAS Office of Civil Rights Title IX, Anti-Discrimination Policy (ADP) and discipline cases	Support Staff Organization and Professional Development
Own and administer employment-related policies for FAS and Executive Management	Benefits/Compensation/Classification
Engage with academic governance on FAS matters, policy creation and revision, etc.	Posting and Hiring Process Operations + Logistics
Review Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure Cases for all FAS employment categories	Administers central operations for Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure
Develop and support academic leaders (deans, associate/assistant deans, chairs)	Support Staff Union Contracts
Negotiate and administer Union of Non-Tenure Track Faculty (UNTF) and Graduate Employees Union (GEU) contracts (in collaboration with HR) and oversee any union organizing of and collective bargaining for academic employees	Support Staff Union Contracts
Contact FASA: fasaffairs.msu.edu	Contact MSU HR: msolutionscenter@hr.msu.edu
FASA Resources: Office for Faculty and Academic Staff Affairs website	MSU HR Resources: MSU Human Resources website

FASA Office Scope of Responsibilities

Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure Process for FAS

FASA provides guidance and oversight to deans, chairs/school directors and faculty on the university policies, criteria, and standards for reappointment, promotion, and tenure (if applicable) of FAS. This includes recommending, developing and facilitating changes to policy and procedures through appropriate academic governance committees and conducting the review of the following:

- **Tenure-system faculty:** reviewing each tenure and promotion case and making individual promotion and tenure recommendations to the provost
- **Fixed-term faculty:** reviewing and making a final determination for each Designation B and fixed-term promotion case
- **Academic specialists:** reviewing and making a final determination for each continuing and promotion case

Policy Development and Oversight

FASA is the responsible executive office and business owner of all faculty and academic staff employment-related policies. The office works jointly with a wide variety of stakeholders including deans, separately reporting directors, associate deans of faculty affairs, the University Committee on Faculty Affairs (UCFA), the University Committee on Faculty Tenure (UCFT), the Council of Diversity Deans and the Office of the General Counsel to recommend and make changes to faculty and academic staff policy based on best practices and benchmarking with peer institutions.

Academic Governance

FASA is responsible for ensuring a shared governance model pertaining to faculty, as articulated in the [Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities](#) drafted by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and in MSU's [Bylaws for Academic Governance](#). Specifically, members of the office are delegated to act on behalf of the provost to engage with the faculty (through governance committees such as the UCFA and UCFT) on matters involving formal and procedural rules for the award and revocation of tenure and on policies relating to tenure, faculty grievance procedures, the rights and responsibilities of faculty and personnel policies relating to faculty, including appointment, reappointment, promotion, leaves, retirement and assignment to teaching, research and administration.

Provost Initiatives

FASA collaborates with the provost to formulate and implement initiatives affecting faculty and academic staff.

Academic Labor

- FASA is the university lead for contract administration for academic labor contracts.
- FASA is the university lead on issues regarding the faculty and academic staff union organizing.
- FASA leads negotiations with delegated authority for faculty and academic staff employees.
- FASA leads the facilitation and process for the university, addressing new union organizing of academic employees.

Work Environment for Faculty and Academic Staff and to Support Academic Mission

FASA's work centers around enabling and promoting a productive, respectful and safe work environment at MSU that advances student learning and that attracts and retains the best faculty, academic staff and administrators. In addition to policy work, FASA provides expert and strategic counsel to administrators as relates to issues regarding faculty and academic staff (e.g., building a positive and respectful climate, adherence and understanding of academic policies and procedures, and leading efforts to create and promote an academic climate of respect, caring, equity and inclusion).

Misconduct

FASA guides administrators during the investigation of potential misconduct and/or employee relations issues, provides consultation on policy noncompliance (e.g., violations of the Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct, ADP, Conflict of Interest, Outside Work for Pay, Faculty Rights and Responsibilities, etc.) and guides administrators, jointly with the Office of the General Counsel, on complex discipline and dismissal policies for faculty, academic staff, and executive managers.

Recruitment and Retention

FASA partners with the Office for Institutional Diversity and Inclusion (IDI) and the Office of Faculty and Academic Staff Development (OFASD) to support and promote policies and initiatives that advance inclusive faculty recruitment and retention best practices and strategies.

Leadership Development

FASA consults with colleges on meaningful evaluations of faculty and academic staff and administrators, collaborates with committees on Dean searches and reviews, offers consultation regarding team and individual behavioral and performance issues, and partners with the OFASD to create and implement opportunities for professional development.

FASA represents the provost on multiple university-level workgroups, task forces and projects that affect faculty and academic staff.

Examples of Specific Responsibilities

- Advise and interpret policy within the Faculty Handbook, Academic Specialist Handbook, UNTF/GEU Collective Bargaining Agreements, etc.
- Approve and/or recommend action by the provost, president and Board of Trustees on specific individual academic actions recommended by deans and separately reporting directors (e.g., appointment of faculty with tenure, reappointment of tenure system faculty, promotions with or without tenure, and continuing appointment status, sabbatical leaves, emeriti requests).
- Lead, in collaboration with the Office of Employee and Labor Relations in MSU HR, unionization matters, including negotiation and administration of collective bargaining agreements with the UNTF and GEU; manage relationships with academic unions.
- Partner with MSU HR on matters that impact faculty and academic staff (e.g., records, benefits, system support, data and information).
- Provide data to deans on salary equity (in conjunction with Institutional Research and IDI).
- Provide advice to the president on the creation of new executive management positions per the [Executive Manager policy](#). Review all executive management offer letters.
- Provide advice/support related to faculty, academic staff and administrators' evaluations.
- Provide advice and partner with OFASD on faculty, academic staff and leadership development.