

**BYLAWS  
OF THE  
MISSISSIPPI EMERGING RESEARCH INSTITUTION COUNCIL**

**ARTICLE 1  
NAME AND PURPOSE**

**Section 1. Name**

The organization shall be known as the Mississippi Emerging Research Institution Council (MERIC) (hereinafter referred to as the “Council”).

**Section 2. Purpose**

The Mississippi Emerging Research Institution Council (MERIC) is committed to advancing knowledge and innovation by fostering collaborative, cutting-edge research across diverse disciplines and institutions. As a unified voice, we aim to empower researchers, scholars, and innovators from public and private institutions of higher learning, whose primary missions are not research-focused, by disseminating information, providing resources, creating collaboration opportunities, and advocating for faculty engaged in research, teaching, and service. MERIC is dedicated to helping emerging research institutions overcome barriers to securing research grants, fostering academic excellence, and catalyzing transformative research that addresses global challenges, promotes sustainable development, and drives societal progress. Through inclusive, interdisciplinary, and ethical practices, MERIC seeks to unite participants from diverse academic backgrounds, nurture the next generation of thought leaders, and translate research into impactful solutions for the betterment of humanity.

**ARTICLE 2  
MEMBERS**

**Section 1: Eligibility**

Membership in the Council is open to representatives from institutions of higher education located within the state of Mississippi that meet the following criteria:

- a. The institution is classified as an Emerging Research Institution as defined by the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022.
- b. The institution is not a member of the Mississippi Research Consortium (MRC).

**Section 2: Representation**

Each eligible institution shall appoint up to two representatives to serve as a member of the Council. Representatives must be faculty or administrative staff members actively involved in the research or academic development of their respective institution. Representatives must be authorized by an

upper-level administrator (e.g., provost, vice president, or dean) by email or letter submitted to the Council.

### **Section 3: Rights and Responsibilities**

Members of the Council shall have the right to participate in all meetings, discussions, and decisions of the Council. Members are responsible for representing the interests of their respective institutions and for contributing to the goals and objectives of the Council. Each eligible institution shall be entitled to one vote on matters requiring a formal decision, regardless of the number of representatives appointed.

### **Section 4: Term of Membership**

The term of membership for each representative shall be three (3) years. Representatives may be reappointed for successive terms at the discretion of their respective institutions.

### **Section 5: Code of Conduct**

Members of the Council are expected to adhere to the following Code of Conduct:

- a. Conflict of Interest: Members shall disclose any potential conflicts of interest and recuse themselves from discussions or decisions where such conflicts may arise.
- b. Professionalism: Members shall conduct themselves with the highest standards of professionalism and integrity in all Council-related activities.
- c. Collaboration: Members shall engage in open, respectful, and constructive dialogue, fostering a collaborative environment that supports the shared goals of the Council.
- d. Confidentiality: Members shall maintain the confidentiality of sensitive information shared within the Council, unless otherwise authorized or required by law.
- e. Commitment: Members shall actively participate in Council meetings and initiatives, contributing their expertise and effort to advance the objectives of the Council.
- f. Respect: Members shall treat all other members, their institutions, and the broader community with respect and dignity, avoiding any form of discrimination, harassment, or inappropriate behavior.

## **ARTICLE 3 OFFICERS**

### **Section 1: Officer Roles**

The Council shall have three officer positions: Chair-Elect, Chair, and Immediate Past Chair. Each officer serves a one-year term in their respective role and automatically rotates to the next role at the conclusion of their term, serving a total of three consecutive years as an officer.

## **Section 2: Election and Rotation**

The Chair-Elect shall be elected by a majority vote of the Council from among current institutional representatives. Upon completion of the one-year term, the Chair-Elect shall assume the role of Chair, and the Chair shall assume the role of Immediate Past Chair. No two consecutive officers may be from the same institution. Officer terms begin annually on August 1st.

Nominations for the position of Chair-Elect may be made by any representative from an eligible institution, including self-nominations. Nominations shall be submitted to the current Chair-Elect prior to the officer election. The Chair-Elect will compile and distribute a list of nominees to the Council in advance of the vote. Additional nominations may also be accepted from the floor at the time of the election meeting.

In the first year MERIC is established in the year 2025, only a Chair and Chair-Elect will be elected by a majority vote of the Council in separate elections.

## **Section 3: Duties of Officers**

### **Chair-Elect**

- Record and distribute minutes for Council meetings
- Support the Chair in planning and operations
- Serve in the Chair's absence
- Oversee the annual election of the incoming Chair-Elect

### **Chair**

- Organize and call regular and special meetings of the Council
- Preside over all meetings and act as the primary spokesperson for the Council
- Serve as the point of contact for external communications
- Manage the Council's email account and maintain digital records and files

### **Immediate Past Chair**

- Provide continuity and institutional knowledge
- Support the Chair and Chair-Elect as needed

## **Section 4: Vacancy or Ineligibility**

If an officer is unable to fulfill their duties or no longer meets eligibility requirements, the Council may hold a special election to fill the unexpired term. The Council shall make efforts to preserve the rotation and institutional diversity of officer roles in such cases.

## ARTICLE 4 MEETINGS

### **Section 1: Regular Meetings**

The Council shall hold regular meetings at least twice per academic year, typically once in the fall and once in the spring. Additional meetings may be scheduled as needed at the discretion of the Chair or by request of at least three member institutions.

### **Section 2: Notice of Meetings**

Notice of all meetings shall be provided by the Chair to all Council members no fewer than ten (10) business days in advance, unless urgent circumstances require a shorter notice period. Notices shall include the date, time, format (e.g., virtual or in-person), and agenda outline.

### **Section 3: Quorum**

A quorum for conducting official Council business shall consist of five (5) represented eligible institutions. Each institution is entitled to one vote regardless of the number of representatives present.

### **Section 4: Decision-Making**

Decisions of the Council shall be made by a simple majority vote of the institutions present at a meeting where the quorum is met. In the event of a tie, the Chair's vote decides the outcome.

### **Section 5: Meeting Format**

Meetings may be held virtually, in-person, or in hybrid formats, as determined by the Chair in consultation with the officers. Whenever possible, meetings should be scheduled to accommodate participation from all regions of the state. One in-person meeting is encouraged per year.

### **Section 6: Meeting Minutes**

The Chair-Elect shall be responsible for recording and distributing meeting minutes to all Council members within ten (10) business days following the meeting.

### **Section 7: Asynchronous Voting**

When necessary, the Council may conduct official votes asynchronously outside of scheduled meetings, typically via email or a secure online platform. The Chair or Chair-Elect shall distribute the proposal, voting instructions, and a specified voting deadline (minimum five business days unless urgency requires otherwise). A quorum of institutional responses must still be met for the vote to be valid. Results shall be communicated to all members within three business days following the close of voting.

## ARTICLE 5 AMENDMENTS

### **Section 1: Proposal of Amendments**

Amendments to these bylaws may be proposed by any officer or by written request from at least three member institutions. Proposed amendments must be submitted in writing to the Chair, who will ensure they are distributed to all Council members at least ten (10) business days prior to a vote.

### **Section 2: Adoption of Amendments**

An amendment shall be adopted upon approval by two-thirds (2/3) of the eligible institutions participating in the vote, provided quorum is met. Amendments may be voted on during a regular meeting or through asynchronous voting as outlined in Article 4, Section 7.

## ARTICLE 6 RATIFICATION

### **Section 1: Ratification Process**

The initial ratification of these bylaws shall require the affirmative vote of at least seven (7) eligible institutions.

### **Section 2: Effective Date**

Upon ratification, these bylaws shall take effect immediately.