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This policy shall apply to all instructional faculty, research faculty, and other members of Valdosta State University's community including, without limit, graduate student research assistants, graduate student teaching assistants, graduate student staff, undergraduate student employees in research or other scholarly activities, post-doctoral fellows and post-doctoral research associates, visiting faculty or staff, faculty or staff on sabbatical leave, adjunct faculty performing University work, and faculty or staff on leave without pay. This policy applies to students only when acting in the course of their employment with the University.

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- 2.1 Misconduct or Scholarly Misconduct: The fabrication or falsification of data, plagiarism, or other practice that seriously deviates from those that are commonly accepted within the academic or research community for proposing, conducting, or reporting research or scholarly activity. It does not include honest error or honest differences in interpretation or judgments of data.
 - 2.2 Complainant: An individual filing a written complaint of scholarly misconduct.
 - 2.3 Respondent: An individual who is the subject of an inquiry or investigation.
 - 2.4 Inquiry: An information-gathering and initial fact-finding process to determine whether an allegation or apparent instance of misconduct warrants an investigation. An inquiry should be conducted with minimum publicity and maximum confidentiality.
 - 2.5 Investigation

external funding agencies should be notified. Any such notification shall include a complete description of the evidence gathered to date and shall be provided by the VPAA.

The VPAA or the Inquiry Committee, as determined by the VPAA, shall separately meet with the respondent and complainant and shall review all necessary and reasonable documentation to determine if an investigation should be recommended. Refusal on the part of the respondent to cooperate shall be grounds for recommendation of an Investigation.

The inquiry shall be completed and a final written report of the findings shall be prepared within 30 working days of its initiation. The final report shall summarize the process followed and state the conclusion of the inquiry. If the inquiry cannot be completed within 30 working days, a report shall be made to the respondent and complainant citing progress to date, and may continue more than 90 calendar days after the VPAA has so notified the respondent the reasons for the delay.

If the inquiry does not produce substantial evidence of misconduct, the VPAA shall so inform the informant, the respondent, and the President. The VPAA shall also inform any other individual(s) involved in the inquiry to whom the identity of the respondent was disclosed.

If the inquiry results in substantial evidence of misconduct, the VPAA shall conduct an investigation as outlined herein. The complainant and respondent shall be notified that an investigation will follow. The VPAA shall reach his/her determination on a case-by-case basis, considering all relevant factors, including, but not limited to: 1) the accuracy and reliability of the source of the allegation of misconduct, 2) the seriousness of the alleged misconduct, 3) the scope of the alleged incident and the context in which it became known, and 4) other information obtained during the inquiry.

If an investigation is initiated, any outside sponsoring agency, which may be involved or have an interest in the alleged misconduct, shall be notified. The VPAA, in consultation with appropriate advisors, shall determine what such notification will include and to whom it will be directed.

The purpose of the investigation is to determine whether misconduct has been committed. Upon determining that an investigation is warranted, the VPAA shall appoint an ad hoc Investigation Committee (herein the "Investigative Committee"). The Investigative Committee's membership will be composed of at least two-thirds members from the corps of full time faculty at Valdosta State University. The Investigative Committee shall include one member who possesses specialized expertise in the same field as that of the respondent and may include one member from outside the University as deemed appropriate by the VPAA. Once formed, the Investigative Committee shall, in consultation with the VPAA, confirm the procedure to be followed in conducting the investigation. The complainant and respondent shall be fully informed of the procedure.

In undertaking this investigation, the Investigative Committee shall act promptly, ensure fairness to all, secure the necessary and appropriate expertise to carry out a thorough and authoritative evaluation of the relevant evidence, and take precautions against conflicts of interest. The investigation may consist of a combination of activities including, but not limited to: 1) review of

documents, 2) review of report from the inquiry, 3) interviews of parties and witnesses who may have been involved in or have knowledge about the case, and 4) review of any document or evidence provided or properly obtainable from the parties, witnesses, or other sources.

The Investigative Committee shall take no more than 120 calendar days to complete the investigation, prepare a report of its findings, including recommended actions(s), and submit the report to the VPAA. The Investigative Committee shall be responsible for examining all pertinent information, reviewing all records and taking statements or testimony as necessary. The Investigative Committee shall provide the respondent an opportunity to comment on the allegations and shall include his or her comments in its report. The VPAA shall, after consultation with appropriate advisor(s), notify any affected outside sponsor of any developments during the

an appeal is not requested within 15 business days, the respondent shall be deemed to have waived his or her right to appeal or contest the sanctions.

The President will render an institutional decision on the matter after considering the report of the investigative committee, recommendations of the VPAA, the appropriate appeals committee, and