Section 1. Purpose and Objectives

The objective of the Research Advisory Committee (RAC) is to advise the Senior Associate Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies (SAVPRGSO) on the Texas A&M University at Galveston (TAMUG) on topics such as long-range planning to enhance TAMUG’s research, technologies and expertise required to conduct a nationally and internationally-recognized research, procedures for allocation of resources related to research and development, among others. The RAC will allocate funds to support the effort of faculty, including but not limited to research expenditures and attendance at conferences, where they will increase the visibility of research at TAMUG. RAC also assists the Research and Graduate Studies Office with the selection of awardees of scholarships, assistantships and student travel grants as well as other groups on campus (e.g. Graduate Student Association).

Section 2. Structure and Functioning

2.1 Composition

The Research Advisory Committee (RAC) is composed by seven voting members, including the Chair (SAVPRGSO) plus one ex-officio member (Director of Research Operations). Terms are two years with a one-time renewal for a total of up to four years. Representatives from the Departments of Marine Biology (MARB), Marine Sciences (MARS) and Marine Engineering Technology (MARE) are elected by their respective departments; other representatives are appointed.

To be eligible, faculty must have a funded extramural (non-TAMUG) research proposal submitted within 3 years prior to election, and a peer-reviewed publication within the previous three years, and be willing to be an active member.

2.2 Member’s Duties and Responsibilities

Elected RAC members are responsible for attending regularly scheduled meetings, reviewing materials ahead of meetings, voting at the meetings and on electronic requests, and other activities to advise SAVPRGSO at TAMUG. In case of absence from the meetings, RAC members are required to either send their votes/rubrics/notes ahead of the meeting or nominate an eligible colleague in their place in advance of the meeting, which will have the same duties and responsibilities than regular members during the appointed meetings.

2.3 Meeting Frequency

Regular meetings will be held three times per year, one at the beginning of the fall semester, a second meeting at the beginning of the spring semester and a third meeting towards the end of the summer. Under certain circumstances, the SAVPRGSO may call for a special meeting.

2.4 Decision making process

All discussions up to and until a vote is cast, are confidential. The outcome of votes will be made publically available. The minutes (available upon request) will reflect the direction of the narrative but not the details. Discussions around the selection of awards will remain confidential. During regular
meetings, voting members will vote in person. When needed, voting will be done through e-mail to the Director of Research Operations. Decisions will be taken by simple majority.

Section 3. Finances

3.1 Origin and Destination of Funds
The RAC budget is primarily derived from indirect cost (IDC) returned to the university. Additional funds may include allocations from the State of Texas and other sources. RAC funds should be used for the advancement of the areas of research stipulated in TAMUG’s Strategic Plan and the promotion of the research performed by the University Faculty at national and international level. Rules for disbursement of other sources are subject to their rules and regulations.

3.2. RAC-sponsored Travel Grants
RAC Travel Awards are available to faculty presenting their work in conferences in the US or internationally. In general, RAC awards up to $500.00 for national travel and $750.00 for international travel. Due to the high cost of travel to states such as Alaska and Hawaii, RAC will be able to award up to $750.00 for travel to these states. Awards are limited to one every two years. Match, while not required, is always helpful to the committee when making decisions. Proof of acceptance of a presentation will be requested.

Similarly, RAC assist in the allocation of Graduate Student Travel Grants that is possible with a generous donation from The Erma Lee and Luke Mooney, which will follow the rules stipulated by the donors. The call for these awards occurs three times a year. In some cases, RAC may award funds using other funding lines for graduate students. These will follow the general rules stated above.

3.3 Equipment Maintenance
Annually, the Research and Graduate Studies Office will request Research Faculty to submit requests for assistance, if needed, with the cost of service agreements for critical equipment for the University, with a present-day value of $20,000 or more. Department Heads must approve the request for submission and provide RAC members with the information required for their decision. RAC will determine the suitability of supporting service contracts on equipment based on factors such as their use by multiple users (single use equipment may not be considered), age and cost of the equipment, replacement cost, price of the contract, among other factors. RAC will typically provide funding to pay up to 1/3 of the total cost of the service contracts. Remaining funds are expected to be covered by researchers and/or departments. In some cases, the RAC may support emergency repair requests or vessel costs, if the item is critical for the mission of the University. RAC will typically provide funding to pay up to 1/3 of the total cost of the item. Remaining funds are expected to be covered by faculty and/or Departments.

3.4 Publication Expenses
RAC will provide assistance for the publications cost of manuscripts produced by faculty and students. Awards are limited to one every two years. RAC will typically provide funding to pay up to $500, although up to $1,000 maybe considered for top-tier journals (e.g., Nature, Science). Remaining funds are expected to be covered by researchers and/or Departments.
Section 4. Bylaws Review and Amendments

These Bylaws will be reviewed every two years and can be amended as required by RAC at any time.