



## **Unmanned Aerial Systems (Drone) Operations Policy**

### **Purpose**

This policy outlines the operational guidelines for using Unmanned Aerial Systems (Drones) on the College of the Muscogee Nation (CMN) campus. It ensures that all drone activities support CMN's administrative, research, instructional, and service functions while respecting the cultural values and sovereignty of the tribal community. This policy applies to all CMN employees, students, volunteers, visitors, and contractors.

### **Statement**

CMN supports using drones to enhance its academic, administrative, research, and service missions. However, drone operations must align with privacy, safety, cultural values, and sovereignty concerns. Drone operations are subject to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations and tribal, federal, state, and local laws governing airspace and safety.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to:

College Users: College employees, students, and volunteers.

Visitors: Any external individual or entity, including contractors, vendors, and external agencies conducting drone operations on behalf of CMN or for demonstration purposes.

### **Drone Regulations and Tribal Sovereignty**

Drone regulations are governed by multiple layers of oversight, including FAA regulations, tribal law, and CMN policy. CMN will continue reviewing and revising this policy as drone regulations evolve at federal and tribal levels. Drone operations on tribal lands must respect cultural heritage, sacred spaces, and the sovereignty of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation (MCN).



## **Drone Operational Requirements**

### **A. Compliance with Applicable Rules**

All drone operations must comply with the FAA's Part 107 Rule, tribal laws, and relevant federal, state, and local regulations. Operations on tribal lands may require additional approvals from tribal authorities to ensure respect for cultural protocols.

### **B. Pre-Approval for Drone Operations**

1. All drone operations by CMN Users (on-campus and off-campus) and Visitors (on-campus) require prior approval from the Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) Risk Management Committee (URMC).
2. Special permission is required for operations near or over sacred sites, culturally sensitive areas, or during ceremonial events.

### **C. Registration and Insurance**

1. All drones owned by CMN must be registered with the FAA and, if required, with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation.
2. Drones must be insured under MCN's Aviation Insurance Policy – Unmanned Aircraft Systems before operations commence.

### **D. Equipment Procurement**

The URMC must approve all drone purchases before any purchase order is submitted. This ensures the acquisition aligns with CMN's mission and respects cultural guidelines.



## **Drone Operation Guidelines**

### **A. On-Campus Operations**

1. Drones may not be flown over or near culturally sensitive areas, including sacred sites and ceremonial grounds, without explicit permission from the MCN's Cultural Office.
2. Drone operators must prioritize the privacy and safety of the CMN community and tribal members during all operations.

### **B. Off-Campus Operations**

1. Drone operations off-campus must comply with all local, state, federal, and tribal regulations, respecting the laws and sovereignty of the areas in which the drone is operated.
2. Operators must ensure compliance with neighboring tribal jurisdictional rules if conducting flights over tribal lands.

## **Research and Educational Use**

### **A. Research Approval**

If the drone operation involves funded or unfunded research, prior approval is required from CMN's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the MCN's Research and Cultural Preservation Office.

### **B. Educational Use**

Drones used for educational purposes must be integrated into the curriculum with attention to cultural sensitivity and CMN's academic goals. All drone usage for instructional purposes must follow established FAA and tribal guidelines.



## Oversight and Governance

### A. Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) Risk Management Committee (URMC)

The URMC, which consists of a three-person committee, will oversee all drone-related activities and ensure that operations adhere to federal, tribal, and College regulations. A CMN STEM Instructor will chair the URMC and include members such as the Lead Security Officer and another authorized CMN representative, ensuring that drone use respects tribal laws and customs.

### B. Responsibilities of the URMC

1. Review and approve all drone operation requests.
2. Ensure compliance with FAA, tribal, and CMN regulations.
3. Collaborate with tribal authorities to ensure operations do not conflict with cultural practices or tribal laws.

## Violations and Disciplinary Actions

Non-compliance with this policy may result in disciplinary action, including suspension of drone privileges, termination of employment, or legal action in coordination with CMN's administration and tribal authorities.

## Policy Review and Updates

This policy will be reviewed and updated regularly to align with changes in FAA regulations, tribal laws, and CMN's operational needs.

Effective Date: January 20, 2025

Approved By: CMN Board of Regents

Signature: Mike Flud

Mike Flud, CMN Board of Regents Chair