

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Annual evaluation is essential to document faculty achievements, to balance workloads between faculty members, and to set goals for the future year. Policies and guidelines that accomplish this should address each level of faculty progress through the ranks and should be communicated clearly and openly. Additionally, UNL assessment practices should: (i) accommodate diversity as an integral component in the pursuit of excellence, and (ii) embrace and recommend a work-life balance that is welcoming to the best and most creative faculty. The following best practices are directed to chairs, unit heads, and departmental evaluation, promotion and tenure committees.

ENSURE TRANSPARENCY

Publish policies and guidelines for each level of faculty progress through ranks:

Department Chairs and Heads, in collaboration with a committee comprised of faculty at each rank, should develop standardized procedures, forms and sample letters for the unit's annual evaluations, as well as promotion, tenure, and reappointment evaluation.

- Consider developing a handbook that explains expectations for tenure track and non-tenure track faculty at each rank. Include relevant college and university guidelines, sample templates and headings to guide faculty members in documenting their efforts in the most easily interpreted fashion.
- Establish a mechanism for regularly revisiting and amending expectation criteria for reappointment, promotion, tenure and annual evaluations. Ensure that criteria are consistent with college and university-level expectations.
- Use a rubric that reflects the unit's expectations for annual progress, promotion, and tenure (see below)
- Include a summative evaluation that encompasses the major points of achievement in the past year and plans for the future

Formulate a rubric for progress at each level:

To make the best and most objective assessments, evaluators are strongly encouraged to make use of a standard rubric for assessments. Discussions at the full faculty level are ideal for designing the rubric and establishing consensus about meeting, exceeding, or not meeting expectations of excellence. The rubric should make explicit how the quality of work outcomes is being assessed. As appropriate to the percentage appointment of the individual faculty, may address the following criteria.

- Research: published manuscripts, book chapters, and other scholarly works; internal and external grants applied for and/or received; students and/or postdoctoral fellows mentored; patents; etc.
- Teaching: contribution to formal course instruction; student evaluations and/or testimonials; peer evaluated teaching; mentoring of students; etc. Note that it is recommended that student evaluation scores should not be given undue weight in faculty evaluations, since these scores are easily manipulated and reflect many attitudes that extend beyond the successful accomplishment of the faculty member's teaching duties (Arbuckle and Williams, 2003).
- Service: contribution to formal departmental, college, and university committees; professional service on grant review panels, manuscript reviews, and society organizational service; internal and external outreach activities; etc.
- Goals: It is essential that a plan for revision and enhancement of professional activities in the coming academic year be clearly articulated in the annual review documents. These should be detailed by the faculty member and discussed with the chair/unit head.

Avoid implicit bias:

Many studies have shown that all men and women have unintentional and unexamined biases and assumptions and these affect their evaluation of others. Steps that help make evaluation a carefully considered and deliberative process, not one that is rushed or unexamined, have been shown to reduce the effects of such implicit bias and assumptions.

- To make the best and most objective assessments, evaluators need to have enough time allotted for assessment and should take their time in assessment.
- Personal issues relating to health, family, or personal situations of any kind should not be discussed or considered in evaluation.
- Race and gender should not be discussed or considered in evaluation.
- Student evaluations should not be a major consideration in the quality of a faculty member's teaching. Student assessment has been extensively documented to reflect implicit bias that negatively impacts specific ethnic, age and gender demographics. Furthermore, such data vary directly with course assignment.

EVALUATE TEAM-BUILDING AND TEAM-BASED SKILLS IN TEACHING AND RESEARCH WHEN APPROPRIATE

As the nature of faculty teaching and research becomes increasingly more collaborative and team-based, assessment procedures must be clear with respect to the importance and value of leadership of, and participation in, teams that seek funding or that conduct collaborative research or education. Leadership and team building include the mentoring of not fully promoted faculty.

- Assess collaborative funding, resources, and expenditures. Each member of the team should have a clearly defined role based on his/her skills and experience. Assessment of achievements of individuals within a team should be based on his/her productivity and contribution to outcomes in terms of grants acquired, publications, patents, etc.
- Provide incentives for engaging in and documenting collaborative activities, and clearly document assessment procedures for the outcomes.

ESTABLISH AN EVALUATION TEAM OR COMMITTEE

All faculty members should be evaluated fairly and equitably. In addition to the chair's or unit head's evaluation, assessment of the annual report of faculty accomplishments should be conducted by a team of evaluators who represent relevant viewpoints. The team evaluation must be within the context of the unit's and university's expectations and may either be separate or may be incorporated into the department chair/head's evaluation.

- Establish a standing committee for annual evaluation that is representative of all faculty ranks from lecturer to full professor.
- Discuss and establish guidelines for the choice of the committee and regular rotation of its members, whether by appointment or election.
- Whenever possible, the committee composition should reflect the diverse composition of the faculty.

MAINTAIN EQUITY AND CONSISTENCY IN REVIEW

Each faculty member, regardless of circumstances, must be evaluated with the same procedures and expectations to preserve objectivity and ensure equal consideration.

- Use of a rubric is encouraged to facilitate consistent evaluation.
- Confidentiality in written and verbal deliberations is critical. Information regarding an individual's personal circumstances, if not documented in the individual's annual accomplishments report or

promotion/tenure file, must not be discussed. Email exchanges should be avoided.

- The evaluation committee or team should discuss each faculty member in the absence of the department chair/head and should document its evaluation of each faculty member independently.
- The chair of the evaluation committee or team, in collaboration with the team, should ensure that individual faculty evaluations are distributed in writing to the faculty member and that the written document accurately reflects the discussion about the file.
- Department heads/chairs should meet with the chair of the evaluation committee or team to discuss each recommendation provided by the team prior to conducting her/his annual evaluation.
- The department head/chair's evaluation must include input from the evaluation committee or team.

INSTITUTIONALIZE THE ANNUAL REVIEW PROCESS FOR ALL FACULTY

All faculty members will be better able to optimize their activities and make progress toward increased productivity if they have regular performance evaluations.

- Conduct annual promotion and/or tenure evaluations for those faculty who are not yet tenured and those not yet fully promoted.
- Faculty not fully promoted may include some of their annual evaluations materials in the promotion (and tenure for associate professors) package.
- Conduct annual reviews for all fully promoted faculty.
- Provide useful and timely feedback on performance and progress to all faculty, including those post-tenure and those fully promoted.
- Consider post-tenure reviews of fully promoted faculty every three years.

COORDINATION OF ANNUAL EVALUATION AND PROMOTION & TENURE DOCUMENTATION

The preparation of promotion & tenure documentation can take considerable time and effort as can that for annual evaluations. For non-fully promoted faculty, every effort should be made to use the promotion & tenure documentation for the annual evaluation. Once a faculty member is fully promoted, a shorter format for annual evaluation may be used.

REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Julianne Arbuckle and Benne D. Williams, (2003) *Students' Perceptions of Expressiveness: Age and Gender Effects on Teacher Evaluations Sex Roles*. Vol. 49. Nos. 9/10

Judith M. Gappa, Ann E. Austin, and Andrea G. Trice, (2007) *Rethinking Faculty Work: Higher Education's Strategic Imperative*, Jossey-Bass – A Wiley Imprint.