Department of Forestry and Natural Resources University of Kentucky
College of Agriculture, Food and Environment

Statement on Evidences of Activity in Instruction, Research and Extension That are Appropriate for Use in Evaluation of Faculty

Approved February 11, 2010[1]

General Information

University regulations establish criteria for promotion and tenure. These criteria are framed in terms of the expectation for excellence across all areas of assigned activity. The Department of Forestry and Natural Resources ("Department") expects these criteria to be applied rigorously to all faculty title series. Department faculty vary greatly with regard to discipline area, as well as extension, research and instruction Distribution of Effort (DOE); therefore, specific evidences of activity to be considered in applying these criteria may vary, particularly among mission areas. It is the expectation that faculty will be evaluated with regard to the job description under which they were hired, and their DOE as agreed upon in consultation with the department chair. This Statement on Evidences ("Statement") should not be considered inconsistent with, or contradictory to, college or university level regulations, nor with the criteria expressed therein. This Statement has been approved by a majority vote of the Department faculty.

This Department-level statement is intended to apply to evaluations for tenure and promotion. It also applies to evaluations at all ranks, although evidences of activity demonstrating potential, professional advancement and trajectory of program development are weighted heavily for Assistant Professors being evaluated for progress toward tenure. In contrast, evidences of career achievement, sustained scholarly record, and documented impact will be more heavily factored for evaluation of Associate and Full Professors.

Scholarly Productivity

Scholarly productivity is most often documented through written works. Original research articles, translational or extension publications, works of synthesis (e.g., reviews, monographs, book chapters, textbooks), and publications about instruction and pedagogy may all be examples of scholarly productivity as appropriate to the field and assignment. Non-traditional scholarly formats such as web- based or electronic formats may also be considered as evidence of scholarly work. In all cases, those works that have been rigorously peer-reviewed and are creative or original will be given more weight. This applies to work derived from research, instruction or extension assignments.

In extension, most forms of information delivery, including face-to-face educational activities such as meetings, workshops, field days, individual responses and contacts, as well as information delivery through video conferencing, webinar, and other similar mechanisms are considered evidence of activity and should be summarized, reported and considered in evaluations. This is especially the case for extension faculty in the Department, as the forest industry is less formalized than other industries in the Commonwealth and much of Kentucky's forests are privately owned requiring frequent contacts with private landowners. Applied research and demonstration activities are also considered important outreach tools for both research and extension faculty.

For instruction, evidence of productivity includes delivery of formal courses and student contact hours, as well as support of student engagement, experiential education, organized student activities, professional development and advising. Research activities that involve undergraduate students, including professional presentations and journal publications, are also considered evidences of instructional activity.

Quality, Innovation and Impact

Both the submitted narrative and the record should demonstrate that the overall program has direction, focus and originality, and where possible documented impact in the research, extension or instruction areas relevant to the faculty member's DOE.

Publication in highly selective, rigorously refereed outlets can be an important metric of the quality of scholarly works. Assessing the quality of a particular scholarly outlet is subjective, but research and extension publications will be evaluated by order of significance from highest to lowest as follows: peer- reviewed works in national and international publications; peer-reviewed regional publications; peer- reviewed or edited technical reports (e.g., monographs, proceedings, book chapters, transactions); and non-reviewed reports and popular press articles (e.g., magazines, newspapers, trade journals). Although citation indices and journal impact factors can be used as a proxy for the relative importance of a journal within a particular field of study, identifying an outlet for publishing is complex and often targeted toward a specific readership. Moreover, the multidisciplinary makeup of faculty in the Department results in a diverse array of publication outlets. As such, faculty should note the significance of selected outlets for scholarly publications in their narrative, particularly as they pertain to specialized/targeted audiences. In a situation where a scholarly publication has multiple authors, faculty may also provide a description of their specific contribution to the work in the narrative.

Research faculty are generally expected to establish a coherent body of work, focused on one or a small number of significant topics, as opposed to an unrelated collection of activities. In some cases, particularly for applied research, a broad, diverse portfolio of successful studies is justified on the basis of responsiveness to critical needs. A proven ability to obtain grant funds is both essential for maintaining research productivity and demonstrating research activity. The ability to attract and mentor graduate students and post-doctoral scholars is also considered evidence of impact and quality.

Quality extension programs are characterized by: responsiveness to clientele need, direction and relevance; are science and research based; and they employ creative, effective methods of education and communication. Extension programs should be associated with high quality materials or works in relevant, appropriate, accessible outlets. Quantitative or at least systematic assessment is particularly useful in documenting the quality or impact of an extension program.

Student teaching evaluations are considered to be a valid, if approximate, index of teaching quality particularly when considered in conjunction with other measures, such as peer evaluations. If requested by the faculty under review, the Department will use peer evaluation of classroom teaching as a formative, rather than a summative tool and is therefore considered a teaching improvement activity. Professional development and teaching improvement activities are indicators of a commitment to quality instruction. Success and achievement of students and advisees may be considered when evaluating performance in teaching assignments.

A demonstrated record of sustaining scholarly productivity through funding or support for the program as appropriate to the field are important evidences of impact, quality and innovation. Peer recognition also is considered as evidence of quality. When they are available, documented benefits to stakeholders, e.g., changed practice, profit, or quality of life are important measures for all faculty activities.

Collaborative Efforts, Recognition, Professional Service and Leadership

As representatives of a public land grant institution, faculty members in the Department are required to be highly accessible, responsive and interactive with peers, students and constituents. Faculty in the Department should be expected to engage in collaborative work as appropriate to the advancement of their and the Department's programs. Descriptions of collaborative efforts, role of the faculty member and documented impacts from these activities should be included in the narrative. In instruction, contributions to student development beyond formal classroom success (e.g., advising, activities, and positive interaction) can be important evaluation factors.

Documentation of peer recognition may include significant awards, invitations to make presentations externally, service on national panels or committees, editorial appointments, leadership positions in professional societies, and other indicators. Nationally competitive grants are significant evidence of peer recognition in many fields.

University, college or department level service may be offered as documentation of leadership in a major DOE area (research, teaching, extension) or it may be evaluated as a special assignment, as agreed upon by the chair and the faculty member.

Exceptional individual performance is typically associated with notable positive impact on the success of students, colleagues, the department, and impacts on the forest resources, their owners, and the economy through leadership and professional service.

[1] Revised 9/13/2017 to reflect change in department name from Department of Forestry to Department of Forestry and Natural Resources.