

## **School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences Promotion & Tenure Guidelines**

In the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences (SFWS), procedures used to evaluate teaching, research and extension faculty for tenure and/or promotion will be consistent with those outlined in the Faculty Handbook and consistent with procedures used in the School's annual Faculty Performance Evaluation. We strive to link the annual evaluation criteria and process closely to the University's requirements for promotion and tenure so that, as new faculty undergo annual and three year reviews, they will move along an evaluation continuum toward the goals of promotion and tenure.

The following procedures will be followed in preparation for, and during submissions of faculty dossiers for Promotion and Tenure (P&T) consideration. The objectives of this process are to ensure that:

- Candidates for P&T are aware of those factors which will be taken into account during consideration of their candidacy and how key information regarding those factors will be assessed.
- Specific strengths and weaknesses will be identified and communicated to each faculty member in order that weaknesses can be addressed.
- Clear guidance is provided for faculty who plan to seek P&T in order that they may plan their activities accordingly.

Each faculty member will prepare a dossier that contains the information discussed in the following pages. A critical factor in the assessment of each dossier is the appointment (i.e. % of time formally allocated to research, teaching, and / or extension) of the candidate. The distribution of performance (i.e. productivity) among research, teaching, and extension or outreach should reflect the proportion of time formally allocated to each function. In other words, the performance expectations from a 75% teacher would differ substantially from those of a 75% researcher.

The overarching element that one looks for in assessment of a P&T dossier is scholarly achievement. This can be demonstrated regardless of appointment although the indices of scholarly achievement will vary somewhat among research, teaching, and extension or outreach. In the following pages, the nature of those differences will be explained. In addition, the scale of scholarly achievement is also important. As examples, candidates for promotion to associate professor will be expected to demonstrate evidence of a regional and national reputation while candidates for full professor will be expected to show evidence of an international reputation.

Candidates for tenure must also be deemed collegial by their colleagues. Collegiality should not be confused with popularity. Collegiality encompasses the basics of the professional ethics of the academic world: respect for persons, integrity of intellectual inquiry, concern for the needs and rights of students and clientele, and awareness of workplace safety.

Beginning in their second year and continuing annually thereafter until promotion and tenure verdicts have been rendered, candidates' dossiers will be reviewed by the SFWS Promotion and Tenure Committee which is composed of all full professors in the School. This committee will provide a report to the candidate and the Dean regarding the committee's perception of the candidate's progress toward promotion and tenure goals. At the time of the submission of a dossier for actual consideration by the University Promotion and Tenure Committee, the School Committee will review the dossier, vote, and offer their input to the Dean and other tenured faculty.

The SFWS will institute a formal mentoring process with mentors selected and assigned by the Dean to various candidates. The goal of the mentoring process is to provide one-on-one guidance to non-tenured faculty regarding their progress toward P&T objectives.

## **RESEARCH**

Recognition of the importance and potential impact of a faculty member's research program is a key factor used in the evaluation process. This recognition can come through publications and presentations to both scientific and general audiences. Publishing refereed journal articles is the primary gauge of research productivity. Candidates for tenure and promotion to associate professor will be expected to exhibit indications of a national reputation such as participation in national conferences and production of a minimum of 5-15 refereed journal articles since the beginning of their appointment at AU (the number depending on the magnitude of their research appointment) with at least 1/3 of these falling into journals rated above average to excellent by the SFWS faculty (see Attachment 1).

A comprehensive list (Attachment 1) that categorizes several hundred journal titles into average, above-average, and excellent classes has been developed by the SFWS faculty. Journals which are limited to a regional scope are normally rated average. An additional class (EE) is included, although the occurrence of faculty publications within the latter is quite rare. The list is intended to evolve over time as new journals emerge. First authorships and percent contribution are important and are taken into account during the evaluation process. When considering publications produced by a graduate student, the major professor as a second author behind that of the graduate student is essentially equivalent to a first authorship. This is reflective of the level of guidance, mentorship and scholarly acceptance of the research conducted by the student/major professor team. However, this should not preclude faculty production of their own manuscripts.

Additionally, presentation of research results by other means is necessary. Publication of books, book chapters, and proceedings of national and international meetings (particularly invited presentations) are other important outlets that can reflect a faculty member's scholarly reputation. The faculty member is encouraged to provide information that supports the use of and review of books that they have authored.

Grantsmanship also is a very critical factor in the faculty evaluation process. The level of extramural grants secured to conduct research can reflect the importance and innovation of an individual's research to the funding organization and, consequently, is a key measure of scholarly

achievement in research. The expectation for P&T candidates is that they will acquire a level of sustained extramural funding that is commensurate with an active research program (including provision of graduate stipends) with clear progress toward achievement of national and international recognition. Key considerations in the evaluation of grantsmanship include the amount and source of funding. The sources from which extramural funding are derived can indicate the level of scholarly activity required to procure the funding. Consequently, highly competitive sources which use ad hoc reviewers and panels (e.g. USDA-AFRI and NSF) will be linked with higher levels of credit. Funding from less competitive, extramural sources is also highly valued and funding from intramural sources is desirable as well.

Invited service on regional and national research panels, as editors or associate editors, etc is also a measure of a researcher's reputation and prestige. Such activities are key indicators of the scope of a researcher's reputation.

Faculty whose research program may result in products or services that could be commercialized will receive research credit for those endeavors. This includes the development of intellectual property through patents, license agreements, copyrights or other related programs that are offered through the Office of Technology Transfer.

Candidates for promotion to full professor are expected to provide evidence of an international reputation such as presentations at international conferences, participation in international research projects, international sabbaticals, and / or other activities beyond the bounds of a national audience. Research activities should include participation on national panels, acquisition of highly competitive funding, and a sustained output (i.e. at least at the rate previously described for P&T candidates) of refereed articles in very good and higher rated journals (Attachment 1). Similarly, acquisition of extramural funding will be evaluated by source and amount as previously described and should be adequate to sustain an active research program of high quality. If research productivity is on track, candidates for promotion to full professor should be able to achieve that rank in 5-6 years beyond the P&T decision.

## TEACHING

**General Rationale:** Teaching is generally evaluated through a combination of student input and peer review. Some have suggested that student input (i.e. ratings, comments) is primarily useful for assessment of classroom atmosphere. This includes clarity of presentation, existence of mutual respect, instructor availability, etc. Peer evaluation, on the other hand, may be most useful for measurement of quality of the information being transferred and the degree to which the course presents a reasonable challenge. Thus, "quality" may entail the degree to which a current, comprehensive coverage of the topic is being presented and whether a reasonable degree of rigor is maintained. Consequently, although the two types of input are not mutually exclusive, they serve as indicators of different aspects of teaching performance. As a result, their joint usage should be complimentary.

The following information will be included in the dossier.

- (1) Peer review of teaching packets. Each instructor will provide a teaching packet for each course taught which contains the following information:
  - a. Detailed syllabus
  - b. Examples of tests
  - c. Examples of laboratory handouts
  - d. Examples of other handouts (informational and exercises)
  - e. List of reading assignments
  - f. Web page info (if appropriate)

These packets will be peer-reviewed by two faculty selected by the Dean. Instructors may suggest names of four faculty with expertise in the subject area to the Dean's office for consideration. Written input from the two faculty reviewers will be provided to the instructor and to the Dean's office for inclusion in evaluation packets. Each course taught will be reviewed at least once every three years, or when a substantive change is made in the course.

Faculty may request that someone from inside or outside the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences (SFWS) visit and evaluate their classroom performance. If this occurs, the person should provide written comments for inclusion in the dossier.

Faculty may make use of tests that compare knowledge on a particular topic at the onset of a course vs. after course completion. This information should be included in the dossier for evaluation.

- (2) Summaries of grade distributions. Due to the sensitive relationship between student comments and grades received and/or anticipated, grade distributions from courses for which student ratings are provided will be obtained by the Dean's office. These will be included in dossiers and used during the dossier evaluation to provide insight into a possible relationship between student ratings and grading rigor for a particular

course. In a case where a relationship may exist, either increased or decreased weight (depending on the type of relationship) may be given to student evaluations.

- (3) Candidates will be made aware of any information provided by students or other parties that are presented to the Deans' office that may be used in the evaluation procedure. Although sources need not be identified, inclusion of such supporting materials is to insure that instructors' efforts to improve teaching performance are based on the most comprehensive information available.
- (4) Presentations on teaching methodologies at national or regional meetings, refereed articles on teaching approaches, etc. are encouraged by the Dean's office as a method of demonstration of scholarly achievement in teaching. Additionally, all teaching faculty are encouraged to participate in teaching improvement opportunities such as workshops, seminars, and self-study as available on-campus.
- (5) Faculty will be expected to recruit and train graduate students as a major professor as well as committee member. In the SFWS, candidates for full professor will ordinarily be expected to have served as the major professor for at least one doctoral student.

## **EXTENSION**

Extension faculty must develop a strong in-state or multi-state program that reflects a current and effective approach to a well-developed education program directed towards the variety of non-campus students. Support should be provided both directly to the user audience and through indirect educational channels to resource professionals, extension staff, and non-government organizations at the county, state, and regional levels. Extension programming and accomplishments should be oriented to the job description and Work Plan of individual specialists.

An essential component of a strong Extension program meriting promotion and tenure is documentation the faculty member is using their academic and professional expertise to meet a societal need, positively impacting the quality of life for a specific clientele. This requires both suitable Extension programming quality (scholarship) and productivity.

Successful Extension program productivity must have documented clientele interaction to insure impact. Possible methods of program delivery include:

- Clientele specific writing for newsletters, Extension publications, brochures
- Applied technical writing an analysis for handbooks and manuals.
- Public speaking (i.e. county, state, regional, national and international meetings)
- Computer and internet applications such as software, web sites, and CDs
- Organization of multi-state and/or multi-speaker programs
- Mass media, including newspapers, magazines, radio, and television

Although a minimum number of such products cannot be specified, there must be adequate activity using these or other delivery methods to have the necessary impact addressing a societal problem to be worthy of promotion and tenure.

Documentation of suitable Extension program quality and scholarship is also critical. Indicators of suitable scholarship might be:

- Peer recognition in the form of awards and honors, particularly regional or national awards
- Successful grantsmanship
- Publication in peer reviewed journals related to the Extension mission
- Invitations to speak at state, regional, and national events
- Emulation of the faculty member's program by Extension personnel in other states
- Strong partnerships and programming support from other professionals in both the private and public sectors
- Letters of appreciation from colleagues and peers familiar with the faculty's work
- Consistently positive program evaluations by clientele.