

Promotion and Tenure in the Department of Agronomy & Soils – Procedures and Guidelines

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This document details Department procedures for reviewing the performance of tenure-track faculty members (Assistant and Associate Professors). This document conforms to current University rules, and the latter take precedence in the event of any changes. The objectives of this document are to provide tenure-track faculty members with guidance, information and instructions as they proceed through review, tenure application, and promotion application. This document replaces and supersedes all previous department statements on review, tenure and promotion.

Departmental Description

The Department of Agronomy & Soils is a widely varying department of faculty who work in the general area of food, fiber and forage production. The impact of this crop production on the surrounding environment is also an area of study. Faculty expertise is some of the most diverse in the College of Agriculture, and covers specializations from plant breeding to soil physics to turfgrass management. Other areas of study include biofuel research, watershed management, crop genetics, and weed science. Because of our professional diversity the standards by which faculty are judged and rewarded are numerous, and those standards also reflect the fact that AGRN faculty practice their widely different expertise across teaching, extension, and research assignments. Appointments in the Department are typically split and are usually assigned as follows: teaching/research, extension/research and, less commonly, teaching/extension. The exact percentage of time for each activity (research, teaching or extension) is agreed upon by the faculty member and Department Head, and the initial assignment is given in the hiring letter. Budgeted and actual percent distributions of time are noted in each yearly evaluation, and by signing the annual evaluation the Department Head and faculty member are agreeing that the percentage appointments are correct, and in line with the actual activities of the faculty member. Because these percentage time allotments are used as a part of the tenure and promotion process it is important that they actually match the work effort of the faculty member.

Faculty Reviews

The College of Agriculture Faculty Activity Report (FAR) is the annual document by which faculty productivity is assessed. A yearly report, the FAR must be completed by candidates by the last day of February, using the on-line system developed by the College. A copy of the FAR is also filed with the Department Head, who then reviews the document. The Department Head provides a written evaluation of the FAR to the faculty member. If the faculty member is satisfied with the review, and if they have no questions they may sign the review and return it to the Department Head, where it will be placed in their file. If the faculty member has questions or concerns about the assessment they may request a meeting with the Department Head, and this meeting must be completed by April 30th. The Department Head will require a meeting for the following cases: 1) any faculty member who has not yet received tenure, and 2) any faculty member who the

Department Head has judged to be lacking in productivity in one or more assigned areas. These meetings will also be completed by April 30th. At each of these meetings a written report of what was discussed will be prepared by the Department Head (by May 10th), and both the faculty member and Department Head will sign this letter, indicating their agreement on the discussion. Disagreement on the review process will be resolved as provided by University policy.

Tenure

To earn tenure the candidate must demonstrate willingness and aptitude to participate in the three missions of the university (research, teaching and extension). Unlike many other Colleges, some faculty in AGRN have a budgeted ‘extension’ appointment – an appointment with detailed responsibilities. Thus, for the purposes of evaluation of a promotion dossier in AGRN those faculty with extension appointments will be assessed differently than those that participate in ‘Outreach’, an important University function, but one that does not come with a funding (salary) line. For AGRN, extension will be evaluated differently than Outreach, as they are not the same type of activity. Extension will have defined and accountable activities (discussed later in this document), such as publications, meetings, and other developed materials which communicate information to clientele. While Outreach may also produce such materials, Outreach can also include broader definitions such as service to a professional society or program development for allied groups such as community organizations. For many faculty in the College of Agriculture, we may view ‘Outreach’ as the same as ‘Service’. Neither of these functions (Outreach or Service) are budgeted lines of work.

For tenure, the candidate must show that his/her continuing service at the university, college and department will improve the long range goal(s) of the institution through teaching, research and extension. The individual will also continue to develop distinguished academic achievement in those same three areas (varying with their appointment) that will serve as a basis of regional, national and international reputation.

The individual must show collegiality. ‘Collegiality’ is not to be interpreted as ‘always friendly’, but it does mean that the faculty member conducts the business of the University in a cordial manner, and that a level of professionalism and decorum is maintained. Because interdisciplinary work will continue to be the norm, the individual should be able to work with others in interdisciplinary research, teaching, extension or outreach activities. Interdisciplinary work, public engagement, international activities and initiatives, attention to questions of diversity, technology transfer, and other special kinds of professional activity by the candidate should be considered when applicable.

Departmental Review Committee

Given the recent formation of a College-level Tenure and Promotion Committee, AGRN has chosen to not have a Departmental-level committee. Reasons for this are two-fold: 1) the entire tenured faculty will participate in the third-year review (see below), and, 2) well established procedures are set for annual evaluations of untenured faculty (see above).

Mentoring Junior Faculty (below the rank of Full Professor)

During the first year of the probationary period, each junior (for a mentor program, a junior faculty member is an untenured Assistant Professor) faculty member will be assigned a faculty mentor (multiple faculty mentors can be assigned, if preferred) who has a well established, nationally recognized program in research, teaching or extension. The exact role of the mentor will be flexible, and will likely change with time, assignment, and the personality of the mentor(s)/junior faculty member. Overall, the role of the mentor is to provide advice about best methods for professional advancement, conflict resolution or other issues that may pose pitfalls for new members of the faculty. Mentors may also identify areas that would help a probationary faculty member succeed, such as grant or professional award opportunities.

Third-Year Review¹

The department will conduct a third year review of all its probationary faculty members, according to University policy. Prior to the review, the Department Chair shall request a current vita. The vita does not have to be prepared to P/T dossier standards (as per Auburn guidelines). The vitae should be made available to all tenured faculty (via e-mail, with a hard copy on file in the main office) for at least two weeks prior to the scheduled review meeting. The particular focus of this review is the faculty member's progress toward achieving tenure. The review, therefore, must address the criteria for tenure set forth in this document. The review should involve all tenured faculty members. If faculty members know that they will miss the scheduled meeting they may enter a vote with the Department Head, and they may include any other review comments. These votes will be included in the final total. The third-year review meeting will conclude with a vote on whether or not, in the judgment of the tenured faculty, the candidate is making appropriate progress toward tenure and promotion. The result of the vote shall be announced at the meeting and later communicated to the person under review. Faculty should understand that this vote is not a commitment to grant or deny tenure in the future.

The Department Chair shall prepare a written report covering the discussions of the review meeting, and characterizing the vote. A meeting will be scheduled (by the Department Head) with the faculty member, and the results of the vote and report will be discussed between the faculty member and the Department Head. If both are in agreement the report will be signed by both, and the report filed in the faculty members file. If there is disagreement in the content of the report a meeting will be scheduled with the Dean, and the faculty member, Department Head and Dean will meet. This report may be consulted by the tenured faculty when the faculty member is a candidate for tenure and promotion.

If on the basis of the third year review the consensus among faculty, Department Head, College P&T committee and Dean that inadequate progress is being made towards promotion and tenure, such that there is little likelihood of a successful tenure and promotion vote, the candidate may be given a letter of non-continuation.

¹ Auburn University Faculty Handbook <http://www.auburn.edu/academic/provost/handbook/>. Downloaded March 3, 2010.

Expectations for Appointment in Research, Teaching and Extension.

Research

Research evaluation should be based on productivity, measured in terms of outputs. The general expectation is that a candidate for Associate Professor with a research appointment would demonstrate quality of research by publishing in leading journals in his/her field (such as Crop Science, Agronomy Journal, Weed Science, Soil Science Society of America Journal, Water Resources Research or equivalent based on the nature of expertise). Candidates for Full Professor would have a continued record of publication in these same journals, plus additional publications that would reflect a program of national scope, such as books, book chapters or invited published papers in symposia or proceedings.

Research and publication in areas aligned with ones' time allocation are also considered as worthy and could include research in and refereed publications in the area of teaching methodology and extension (such as the Journal of Extension). The exact number of publications will vary widely with the appointment, and thus cannot be distilled to a concrete number.

The general expectation is that the candidates will develop an innovative program to address important state, regional, national or international problems within the general areas of agronomy, crop science, soil science and environmental science. Work related to international projects such as field studies, collaborative research and grant proposals with faculty located overseas, presentations at major international professional conferences, joint publications are also valuable parts of a faculty's research portfolio. However, extensive international work, especially for junior faculty members, should be considered carefully, particularly if such work is not part of ones' stated faculty responsibilities. Other contributions to science as described by the AU Faculty Handbook will also be considered in the evaluation.

While varying by appointment, there is an expectation that faculty will secure external funding to conduct their research. The level and competitiveness of this funding depends on the research in which each faculty member is engaged. While untenured faculty should make use of competitive funding opportunities within Auburn University (Grant-in-Aid, AAES programs, Equipment Grants, etc.) they should recognize that securing outside funding is a necessity for tenure and promotion. This funding can take many forms, and may include industry funds, monies from commodity groups, competitive grant dollars, or other similar programs. As with publications, grant funding may also support teaching and extension activities.

Promotion to Associate Professor-Research

To be promoted to Associate Professor the candidate must demonstrate that he/she has an emerging stature as regional authority in his/her field, unless the assignments are specifically at the local level. It is acknowledged that many faculty in AGRN have specialized areas of work (ex: peanuts) and thus their programs may be of significant regional scope rather than national or international. The quality of the individuals' work must indicate creativity and innovation, and results should be published in appropriate outlets. Examples of materials that will be considered in the tenure and promotion of an Assistant Professor could include (this is a listing of examples – not every activity must be included in a dossier):

- Graduate student advising, including service as a major advisor on a limited number of committees and service as a committee member (note: this is also listed under Teaching).
- An emerging history of publication. ‘Publication’ refers to published materials that fit within the faculty members’ job description, and can include publications in appropriate refereed journals, extension publications, book chapters, symposia or proceedings, industry trade publications, or newsletters. It must be noted that refereed publications will carry more weight in a tenure and/or promotion decision, and there is an expectation that every faculty member will publish in appropriate refereed journals. The exact number and nature of the refereed journal articles will vary with faculty appointment and expertise.
- Evidence of the faculty members emerging research stature at a regional or national level. This could include invited presentations, elected positions, and invited memberships in organizations associated with the faculty members’ area of expertise.
- Evidence of a growing ability to garner outside funding for the faculty members’ research, teaching or extension program.
- Evidence of research output via patents, copyrights, or other intellectual property.

Promotion to Full Professor-Research

The dossier of the candidate for Full Professor should be comparable to previously successful departmental candidates and candidates at peer institutions, and must demonstrate a national/international reputation. The individual work should show creativity, innovation and impact as measured by citations, levels of adoption of results or methods, and other measures of scholarly contribution. Scholarly contributions also include competitive extramural or non-extramural funding, invited national and international conferences, books and book chapters published. In summary, for promotion from Associate Professor to Full Professor, the following are needed measures in the research area for promotion to Full Professor:

- At least four years of service at the rank of Associate Professor.
- Consistent graduate student advising, including service as a major advisor, committee member and outside reader (note: this is also listed under Teaching).
- A consistent, regular history of publication. ‘Publication’ refers to published materials that fit within the faculty members’ job description, and can include publications in appropriate refereed journals, extension publications, books, symposia or proceedings, industry trade publications, or newsletters. It must be noted that refereed publications will carry more weight in a tenure and/or promotion decision, and there is an expectation that every faculty member will publish in appropriate refereed journals. The exact number and nature of the refereed journal articles will vary with faculty appointment and expertise.
- Evidence of the faculty members growing research stature at a regional, national or international level. This could include invited presentations, elected positions, and invited memberships in organizations associated with the faculty members’ area of expertise.
- Evidence of continued ability to garner outside funding for the faculty members’ research, teaching or extension program.

Teaching

Teaching is a vital part of many faculty members' appointments, and it should be viewed as a faculty function that is as important as extension or research. At a basic level, classroom instruction by a faculty member must include: 1) class meetings that are organized, informative, and communicate timely course material, 2) a correctly developed course syllabus and content, 3) student course evaluation and regular peer review, and, 4) regular editing and updating of course content. Specific indicators of a quality teaching program could include:

- College, university or national awards for teaching excellence.
- Published laboratory manuals, textbooks or on-line teaching tools.
- Development of distance education courses.
- Field trips and study tours with graduate or international graduate students, international or national trips.
- Publications in refereed journals and/or research presentations on teaching related research.
- Consistent undergraduate advising.
- Consistent graduate student advising, including service as a major advisor, committee member and outside reader.
- Service on teaching-related committees at the department, college and university level.
- Service as an advisor for student clubs or organizations.

Promotion to Associate Professor-Teaching

The candidate must demonstrate (1) an effective teaching program, (2) a commitment to student learning; and (3) effective advising to students and/or student organizations and to students' career development. Based on the individual's appointment, individuals wishing to be promoted to the rank of associate professor should be actively involved in serving on graduate committees, including where appropriate serving as Chair or co-Chair at the MS and Ph.D. levels. Advising advanced undergraduate research projects (e.g., those of Undergraduate Research Fellowship winners) also would represent meritorious contributions to the department's teaching mission.

A promotion packet should include both student evaluations and peer reviews of teaching. Student evaluations should be included for the previous five years of teaching (for every course), and at least one peer review should be performed for every class that the Assistant Professor teaches in the five year period prior to the tenure document submittal. Peer reviews should be performed by a senior faculty member who also teaches courses in the subject area, and their peer reviews should consist of the following: 1) a written review of course material (to include sample exams and the syllabus), with the course materials provided by the instructor, and, 2) a written review of the course, developed after the evaluator has attended at least one course lecture. Attendance at and a review of a faculty member's lecture is a new measure for AGRN, but it signals a departmental commitment to the review of a faculty member's course and teaching. The final written peer review report shall be provided to both the faculty member and the Department Head. If student

evaluations and the peer review indicate that a faculty member is having difficulties in the classroom a peer review may be performed more frequently.

Promotion to Full Professor-Teaching

The candidate to be promoted to the rank of Full Professor must also demonstrate teaching competence through activities such as advising, course and material developed for teaching, and teaching publications such as laboratory manuals or textbooks. For Associate Professor a peer review shall be completed every-other year. In some cases, the development of new or novel courses in emerging areas of their science is a mark of professional development. Leadership in teaching must also be demonstrated, either through awards of excellence at the university or national level, or via service on teaching-related committees. Teaching effectiveness and competence may be measured by the direction and guidance of graduate and undergraduate students, and service on other graduate student committees. In general, a faculty member who teaches and who is pursuing promotion to Full Professor must demonstrate a long-term, consistent and high quality program in the instruction of undergraduate and graduate students.

Extension

Extension faculty members are responsible for providing expertise and statewide leadership in their respective discipline for educational outreach programs conducted by the Alabama Cooperative Extension System (ACES). The primary role is developing and implementing creative, innovative educational programs and educational products for a broad audience, and communicating these programs through interactions with state Extension personnel and other stakeholders. Faculty are responsible for producing educational curricula, publications and teaching materials; and working collaboratively with colleagues in other states, community agencies, and government agencies to address problems or needs of the region and nation. Faculty with extension appointments are expected to engage in outreach work through a planned Extension program in a manner consistent with the percentage of their appointment supported by Extension funds. Applied and adaptive research is expected to obtain specific information that can be used by clientele in technology and knowledge transfer. Faculty members are expected to reach appropriate, diverse audiences and leverage the research and knowledge bases to address issues, needs and opportunities across the state and beyond. Promotion is based on program planning and implementation accomplishments, disciplinary competence, professional development, and leadership achievements. Specific guidelines and measures of success for faculty with Extension appointments could include (not all of these must be included – they are examples):

- Evidence of multidisciplinary collaboration with Extension peers. For example, this could be the development of a multidisciplinary Extension program in a commodity crop, with participation from agricultural economists, entomologists, agronomists and plant pathologists.
- A high level of interaction with stakeholders. For example: service on commodity research boards, frequent presentations at trade group or commodity meetings, and hosting tours and field days.
- Examples of multiple program delivery methods, including distance education, web sites, fact sheets, radio programs and other recorded deliveries, and newspaper articles/interviews.
- Multiple speaking (both invited and attended) events in each year.
- Demonstrated (via speaking invitations and other contacts, such as e-mail) success as the resource person with state-wide (or greater) expertise in their resource area.
- Evidence that the extension program reaches across a wide demographic range. Extension efforts in the faculty members' program that reach youth, people of color or those with economic disadvantages are beneficial.
- Collaboration with research faculty is beneficial for all. Faculty with Extension appointments should collaborate with research faculty, serving on graduate committees and co-writing manuscripts for publication in refereed research journals.
- Funded research projects with an emphasis on Extension-style projects (large-scale, on-farm, demonstration) are expected. For Assistant Professors, however, care must be taken that demonstration projects will produce some type of measureable published document that will enhance the quality of the faculty members program.
- As with teaching and research, university, regional or national awards that recognize the quality of the candidates program are always beneficial.

Promotion to Associate Professor-Extension

The candidate for promotion to Associate Professor must demonstrate: (1) a productive research program as measured primarily by departmental and Extension publications, electronic media, and presentations in professional meetings (applied research publications in peer-reviewed journals are also encouraged as a means of establishing a regionally, nationally, or internationally recognized program); (2) an effective Extension program that includes program development, delivery, and relevance, as measured by peer and client evaluation of programs (survey instruments, course evaluations, evidence of program adoption etc.), publications, and presentations; (3) documented expertise in candidate's specialty areas that meets the needs of constituents; (4) pursuit and acquisition of extramural and intramural funds necessary to support the candidate's research and extension efforts. The individual should acquire a regional extension reputation.

Promotion to Professor-Extension

The candidate must demonstrate: (1) sustained productivity in research of high quality and significance to support an effective Extension program, which includes program development, delivery, and impact, as measured by peer and client evaluation of programs, publications, and presentations; (2) a regional, national, or international reputation in candidate's specialty area; (3) leadership in Extension or service on a regional or national level; (4) documented expertise in candidate's specialty areas that complements research of the department and meet the needs of constituents.

Service

All faculty members should engage in some form of service to the department, college, university, profession and community, but expectations of how much service will vary depending on the course of an individual faculty member's career. As a faculty member works towards tenure and promotion to Associate Professor, the expectations of service are limited by the recognition that the primary focus of effort needs to be on establishing a solid teaching, research, and Extension programs, as appropriate to individual appointments. As a faculty member moves through the ranks, however, the expectation of service increases in the context of a setting where the university operates on the principles of shared governance and where a faculty member's national and international reputations are to some extent simultaneously shaped and reflected by professional service as defined in the Faculty Handbook.

Appendix

Auburn University
College of Agriculture
Guidelines for Peer Review of Teaching
Spring 2006 (revised)

The purpose of peer review of teaching is long-term support and continuous professional development of teaching faculty. Although this document will outline guidelines for the process of peer review of teaching, each department should establish their own protocol for peer review that is based on these guidelines. Peer review is strongly recommended, but not required, for all courses an instructor teaches. Peer review should be considered only one of many different ways that teaching effectiveness can be evaluated. *The emphasis on peer review should be on its value to the instructor, the process should be instructor-driven, and the results should be the property of the instructor.*

The main use of peer review should be for *formative* evaluation. Within the context of faculty evaluation, the term *formative evaluation* describes activities that are to provide faculty with information that they can use to improve their teaching. The information is intended for their personal use, rather than for public inspection, and thus is private and confidential. The information should be rich enough in detail so that instructors can obtain clear insights on the nature of their teaching strengths and weaknesses. Formative evaluation is informal, ongoing, and wide-ranging. It should be the basis for continuous development of effective teaching throughout the career².

Peer review of teaching should also be designed for use in a *summative evaluation* so that faculty can use the results of the process to enhance their chances of success in personnel decisions: hiring, promotion, tenure, merit pay, awards. Summative evaluation of tenured faculty is performed at the discretion of the faculty member. Department heads or chairs should ensure that probationary faculty members have summative peer evaluation of teaching performed in a timely manner for tenure and promotion decisions. However, use of peer review results in making a personnel decision should occur via the instructor to the maximum extent possible (e.g. through incorporation into a teaching portfolio).

The opportunity for improvement, through subsequent reviews initiated by the instructor, must be made available following negative reviews made for a personnel decision. Peer review should involve using standardized, faculty-approved worksheets: one for review of course materials (see Chism Chapter 5) and, if included, one for review of classroom instruction (Chism Chapter 6). Prompts may be included in the worksheets to ensure that the instructor and the reviewers consider important aspects of a teaching program (Chism p. 51-52). Peer reviews for course improvement and personnel decisions should not be conducted simultaneously, but the same reviewer worksheets should be used for both types of review.

An individual conducting a review for a personnel decision should have experience in reviewing other courses, should have taught a course at the same level as the course being reviewed, and

² Chism, N. 1999. *Peer Review of Teaching: A Sourcebook*. Anker Publishing, Boston MA.

should be open to alternative teaching strategies and conceptions of student learning. Training and support for faculty reviewers can be obtained through the Biggio Center upon request.

The basic steps in a peer review of teaching include:

Identification of peer reviewers

For formative evaluation: The faculty member should identify two or more colleagues within and/or outside their department to act as reviewers. *For summative evaluation:* In addition to one colleague selected by the faculty member, the faculty member's department head or chair should also select one faculty member to serve as a reviewer.

Information exchange between reviewer and faculty member

At a minimum this should consist of an item or items that represent each of the 4 categories listed below (examples are provided of possible course materials that can be included from each category; departments may decide on additional items). Items considered optional are listed in category 5.

1. Materials that communicate course policy and practices:
 - a. Syllabus for the course being reviewed
 - b. Course guides
 - c. Teaching evaluation instruments
2. Materials that communicate course content:
 - a. Instructor notes from a lecture or lectures in the course
 - b. A laboratory instruction and/or activity (if applicable)
 - c. Course packets
 - d. Texts
 - e. WebCT sites
 - f. Handouts
 - g. Multimedia supplements
3. Materials that set assignments and assess student performance:
 - a. Exams and quizzes
 - b. Project assignment directions and handouts
 - c. Classroom exercises (e.g. case studies, learning group tasks)
4. Instructor comments on student work:
 - a. Graded papers or tests
 - b. Journals and email exchanges
5. Optional items:
 - a. In-class and/or laboratory observation (detailed guidelines in appendix)
 - b. Video tape of classroom and/or laboratory instruction and activities
 - c. Instructor reflection on techniques, classroom research
 - d. Summary of data from prior student evaluations

Meetings

As part of a peer review, meetings should be held before and after the review to discuss teaching issues of mutual interest. The meetings also allow the instructor to elaborate on teaching goals and strategies and to rebut negative comments. If the review is to be used in making a personnel decision, the comments on the reviewers' worksheets should be finalized only after these meetings.

Evaluation of course materials by peer review team

The instructor provides copies of all selected course materials for review. The review is accomplished using the standardized, faculty-approved worksheets. Separate worksheets should be developed for review of course materials (see Chism Chapter 5) and, if included, observation of classroom instruction (see Chism Chapter 6).

In-class Peer Teaching Evaluation

COURSE:

YEAR:

Name: _____ Date: _____

Peer Evaluator: _____

Score= Excellent = Satisfactory = Weak

Categories:

Comments/Suggestions:

Course content _____

(Such as materials used, relevance of information, grammar, speed, enunciation)

Course Organization and structure _____

(presentation, syllabus and adherence to syllabus, delivery)

Timeliness (Innovation) _____

(Such as listening, questioning, response to questions, rapport)

Presentation _____

(Such as organization, use of examples or analogies, clarity, diction, accuracy of information)

Preparation _____

Quality of handouts and/or AV aids _ _ _

Importance of course to students _____

Challenge to students _____

Students Reaction _____

Overall Effectiveness of Instructor: _____

Comments: _____
