

## Working Draft of Strategy for Faculty Exit Interviews

### **Overview:**

Auburn University currently has no standard strategy with regard to exit interviews. Based on an informal survey of Deans done by Kerry Ransel, such exit interviews are not conducted at all by some Colleges/Schools and in many cases where they are conducted, they are done by the direct supervisor (the Head/Chair or Dean in places where there are not departments). This strategy, if adapted, will standardize the process and create a mechanism for faculty to provide feedback to individuals who do/did not directly supervise their work. ***The purpose of the strategy would be to support recruitment and retention of faculty through informed continuous improvement efforts.***

### **Proposed Strategy:**

Auburn University will offer tenure-track faculty who leave the University the opportunity to engage in an Exit Interview. Although the departing faculty member can elect not to participate in an Exit Interview, the opportunity to participate will be made available to all departing faculty members.

The Office of the Provost in conjunction with the Office of Inclusion and Diversity and Faculty Leadership will conduct the Exit Interview. The Special Assistant to the Provost, HR, from the Office of the Provost will identify faculty who are candidates for an Exit Interview. After identifying the candidates, the Special Assistant to the Provost, HR will reach out to the candidate to determine if they wish to complete an Exit Interview. The individuals who conduct Exit Interviews represent the following three groups and comprise the Exit Interview Committee.

- The Provost may designate an Associate Provost or the Special Assistant to the Provost, HR to represent the Office of the Provost on the Exit Interview team. The faculty member may request that the Provost appoint another individual if the designated representative is unacceptable.
- The Assistant Provost for Women's Initiatives will represent the Office of Inclusion and Diversity. If the faculty member finds the Assistant Provost for Women's Initiatives to be unacceptable, the Vice President and Associate Provost for Inclusion and Diversity will appoint another member of the Office of Inclusion and Diversity Leadership Committee.
- Each Chair-Elect of the Faculty Senate will identify one faculty member who will serve as a potential representative of the faculty for faculty Exit Interviews. Each representative of the faculty will serve a 3-year term, such that there will be three representatives at all times. The faculty member may request any of those three representatives to be present during the interview and can request that no faculty member be present during the Exit Interview.

Membership on the Exit Interview Committee will require annual training with the Title IX and EEO Compliance Officer.

The Exit Interview Committee will approve questions to be asked during Exit Interviews at the start of each academic year. In addition to those questions, gender identity, race, ethnicity, rank, and time at the institution will be solicited (and recorded if provided) at each interview to allow for data analysis related to specific identities of faculty.

All Exit Interviews will occur prior to the faculty member's departure from Auburn University. All representatives who engage in Exit Interviews will hold as confidential information provided during the Exit Interview until after the faculty member has officially departed from the Institution unless the content of the Exit Interview reveals a violation of policy that requires immediate action according to policies of Auburn University.

At least annually, the Exit Interview Committee will provide the Provost with a Summary of the Results of the Exit Interviews and may make recommendations to the Provost, Vice President and Associate Provost of Inclusion and Diversity, and Faculty Senate based on those results.

DRAFT--Not for Distribution

## Suggested Exit Interview Questions

**The Exit Interview will consist of the following questions (adapted from Michigan State University [[http://www.canr.msu.edu/od/human\\_resources/Exit%20Interview%20Questionnaire\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.canr.msu.edu/od/human_resources/Exit%20Interview%20Questionnaire_FINAL.pdf)] and University of Michigan [<http://advance.umich.edu/resources/ExitInterviewStudy2016FINAL.pdf>]):**

1. What are the circumstances under which you will leave Auburn University?
  - a. If leaving for another position, were you actively searching for a position elsewhere at the time you pursued the opportunity that will be your new position?
  - b. If leaving for another position, is it a faculty tenure-track position?
2. What factors did you consider in your decision to leave? How long have you been considering leaving Auburn University? And Why have you decided to leave Auburn University?
3. If it is due to concerns, have you previously shared those concerns with someone prior to deciding to leave? With whom and what was the response you received?
4. Was a single event responsible for your decision to leave? Or was there a specific point at which you knew you wanted to leave?
5. If relevant, what does your new employer offer that encouraged you to accept their offer and leave Auburn University?
6. From whom did you seek advice while you were deciding to leave?
7. Were you seeking a counter-offer? If so, did you receive one? If so, what was it (and, if applicable, how did it compare to what you will have at your new institution)?
8. If applicable, what would you have needed in a counter-offer to stay at Auburn University?
9. Were you encouraged to stay at Auburn University? And what would have been effective in encouraging you to stay?
10. What challenges or barriers did you experience in job at Auburn University? And what can we do to correct these challenges/barriers in the future?
11. Did you experience any challenges related to your identity based on gender or gender identity, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, age, ability statuses, or preferred language? If so, what were they?
12. Were your responsibilities accurately represented to you during the application and interview process for your position at Auburn University?
13. What did your department or college at Auburn University do well during your time as a member of the faculty?
14. What do you recommend to make Auburn University a better place for faculty to work?
15. How can we better reach our goals related to Inclusive Excellence?
16. What other feedback, comments, or suggestions would you like to provide?

## **Benchmarking that Informed Proposed Strategy (not part of the strategy)**

Policies and practices at 2 peer institutions (i.e., North Carolina State University, University of Michigan) were reviewed. As NC State University's website describing their Exit Interview Program explains, the program "is designed to identify work environment issues that contribute to retention and turnover; to provide existing employees an opportunity to voice concerns and make suggestions; and to ensure the retrieval of university assets when an employee separates from employment" (<https://er.hr.ncsu.edu/exit-interview-program/>). Such would be the goal of a program at Auburn University.

- At NC State, all types of employees have the option of completing face-to-face exit interviews.
  - Faculty employees contact the Assistant Vice Provost for Faculty Diversity to schedule their exit interview (note, Auburn University does not have an Assistant Vice Provost for Faculty Diversity and the Assistant Provost for Women's Initiatives may be the closest position at Auburn University).
  - All other employees can schedule the face-to-face exit interview with a department personnel representative for Employee Relations.
  - All departments must collect an Exit Survey (<https://hr.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/exitfrm.pdf>) and a Separation Clearance Checklist (<https://onboarding.ncsu.edu/department-offboarding-checklist/>) and departments are responsible for collecting data at the departmental level as well as ensuring the collection of university assets.
  - Should information from the exit survey or a face-to-face exit interview reveal a violation of policy, the equivalent of Auburn University's Office of Human Resources or the Office of Equal Opportunity immediately follows up with the appropriate department.
  - The exit survey is shared with the appropriate administrator who may forward the survey to direct supervisors (or heads/chairs in the case of faculty).
  - The equivalent of our Office of Human Resources and the Office for Equal Opportunity produce an annual report with the information and share it with university administrators.
- At the University of Michigan, exit interviews are part of the ADVANCE grant.
  - As a part of the ADVANCE program, the exit interviews are conducted at the request of the Office of the Provost.
  - The data collection is done with tenure-track faculty from across the institution after separation from the institution. As such, participation was voluntary and some questions explored how the current (job at new institution) position compared to the position at the University of Michigan.
  - The data were compiled into a university report for the Office of the Provost.