

Kennesaw State University
White Paper on Review and Evaluation of Faculty Performance

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I begin this white paper by praising the many faculty members who contributed to the revision of Section Five of Kennesaw State University's Faculty Handbook: "Review and Evaluation of Faculty Performance." We are concluding a year-long process which began in Spring 2005 with the Task Force on Review and Evaluation of Faculty Performance, led by Dr. Linda Noble, Associate Director of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. The deliberations of Dr. Noble and the seventeen faculty members on the task force resulted in a new framework for describing the overall responsibilities of a faculty member at KSU.

In Summer 2005, Dr. Doug Moodie, Associate Professor of Business and Past President of the University Senate, and Dr. Susan Rouse, Professor of Philosophy, assumed leadership of the task force. At a university-wide faculty meeting during the Opening of the University in August 2005, Drs. Moodie and Rouse led a discussion and question-and-answer session on a draft of the new guidelines.

The task force's work continued in Fall 2005 with collaborative leadership from the Faculty Council, chaired by Dr. Bob Hill, Professor of English, and the University Senate Executive Committee, chaired by Dr. Chris Ziegler, Professor of Psychology. Dr. John Pratte, Professor of Physics, and others played key roles in the discussions, drafts, and approval of the guidelines by the University Senate on December 5, 2005. The Council of Academic Deans, the Chairs Council, Dr. Ralph Rascati, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, and I reviewed drafts and often made suggestions for improvements. On January 27, 2006, Dr. Ziegler forwarded to me a final draft of the document to review and to present to President Siegel for approval. I made a few additional suggestions that the Senate approved.

This white paper is a means of expanding upon the major principles in the new document. The way in which the document was developed is an outstanding example of shared governance and collaboration between the faculty and the administration. I congratulate all who assisted.

I. Introduction and Overview of Faculty Responsibilities

The document's Introduction makes the important point that all faculty members work collectively to advance the mission of Kennesaw State University. However, the roles and responsibilities of individual faculty members can vary widely across the University. President Siegel has led us to develop a new strategic vision for KSU, and KSU's new strategic plan will be a primary focus of our incoming president, Dr. Dan Papp. Given the fact that we also have a new Chancellor of the University System of Georgia and that Chancellor Davis will most likely place considerable focus on the strategic vision and mission of USG institutions, it is critical that all faculty see their role in the overall strategic direction of the institution.

Faculty citizenship must also be encouraged and honored. Each KSU faculty member must be committed to this institution and see clearly his or her place in the university. We are all part of a scholarly community of learners. We will be strongest if that sense of community and each

individual's place in it are compelling and well-defined. Our main focus must be on what is best for the university and extend beyond narrower and more parochial interests.

The new Introduction of Section Five also recognizes the diversity of faculty talent. It indicates that our new approach to faculty responsibilities seeks to maximize the strengths and talents of individual faculty members and of their academic units. Expectations for faculty work will vary from one academic department to another. However, all expectations for faculty work will be aligned so that faculty members of departments and colleges will collectively advance the mission of the department, the college, and the university.

We must also recognize that faculty work can change at different points in a faculty member's career. Early in our careers we focus on being outstanding teachers, establishing significant scholarly achievements, and providing exemplary service to our profession, our communities, and our university. Once we succeed in these areas and achieve tenure and promotion to Associate Professor, work sometimes shifts depending on the needs of our departments and developing professional opportunities. In addition to our teaching, some years we may focus on a research project and perform minimum service while other years we may make significant contributions to professional service organizations but do less in scholarship.

These new faculty performance guidelines facilitate our ability to clarify expectations for faculty at different points in their careers and to maximize their contributions throughout their tenure at KSU. These guidelines also serve as an appropriate framework for college and departmental guidelines to more specifically define faculty responsibilities and opportunities.

The word "flexible" is used to describe faculty roles and expectations in this document. Flexibility is indeed a key aspect of the new approach. However, "flexibility" does not mean that one can do as one pleases. The needs of students and the strategic goals of departments and colleges are the over-riding factors in determining teaching assignments and expectations for scholarship and service. Chairs and deans must be aware of the desires and preferences of faculty members, but they must make decisions regarding faculty assignments based primarily on student needs and KSU priorities. Good understanding and effective use of the Faculty Performance Agreement are keys to successfully implementing these new guidelines.

Another key to success is having ongoing discussions regarding interpretation and implementation of the guidelines. No matter how clear we are in policies and procedures, disagreements will occur over the application of these documents. At each level, we ask faculty committees and administrators to use their best professional judgments according to information that is before them. Ongoing dialogue at all levels will decrease disagreements that occur when people have differing opinions about faculty achievements toward tenure and promotion.

II. Basic Categories of Performance

I applaud this document's recurring emphasis on the importance of supplying evidence of the quality and significance of faculty accomplishments. At times, confusion exists about the difference between effort and achievement. I have seen some promotion and tenure portfolios that show large amounts of effort but do not make clear the results of those efforts.

A. Teaching, Supervising, and Mentoring Students. This significant performance category is described well. It appropriately places emphasis on the importance of student learning and the need to assess this learning through multiple methods. Being present in the classroom and teaching classes at the assigned times is an important component of faculty expectations at KSU. However, we need to do more to understand the results of what occurs in the instructional setting. This year we have added a new position in the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. The CETL Associate Director for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning will assist faculty throughout campus with their assessments of teaching effectiveness.

We must explore new ways to find the correct balance between the formative assessment of teaching and the summative assessment of teaching. Annual reviews should focus on formative assessments that help faculty improve and be successful, particularly junior tenure-track faculty. Formative assessments should build to effective summative assessments for tenure and promotion. We must also assist faculty at associate professor and professor ranks to be successful in teaching. Formative assessments of teaching effectiveness at these faculty ranks provide another means for more experienced faculty members to focus on continuous improvement and new methods that increase their effectiveness with students.

Faculty achievements in academic advising are appropriately placed in this area. We must enhance our attention to advising effectiveness and the role advising achievements play in faculty evaluation.

B. Research and Creative Activity. I have two points to make in this section. First, I emphasize the importance of the sentence, “These professional activities become recognized accomplishments when the work is formally shared with others and is subject to review.” Research and creative activities are disparate accomplishments depending on individual disciplines, expertise, and the contributions one makes to the department and college. All research and creative activities must be disseminated and well-recognized by accomplished peers to have significance in this category of performance. In business, for example, this requires publication in noted peer-reviewed journals or other similarly recognized peer-reviewed publications. In the visual arts, peer review occurs by displaying art work in recognized galleries or noted publications. Each academic discipline has its own standard of scholarship dissemination and review.

Second, I emphasize that we value collaborative, interdisciplinary, cross-institutional, and international research and creativity programs. We have worked on a number of issues the past few years to encourage more collaborative research. In addition, we have great potential to enhance our collaborative research with students, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

C. Professional Service. The new guidelines make clear that all faculty members are expected to participate in service activities essential to the institution. This should not be confused with the requirements of Professional Service, one of our four basic performance areas. There may be overlap among activities which we do as citizens of the university without expecting “credit,” and those activities that are part of our Professional Service to the university. However, we must be clear in distinguishing these activities in promotion and tenure.

As I have indicated in the past, some faculty members wish to count everything they do on campus and in the community as Professional Service. However, many things we do for the

university and the community have little or no connection with our disciplines or professional expertise. Professional Service “involves the application of a faculty member’s academic and professional skills and knowledge to the completion of tasks that benefit the University, the community, or the profession.” These Professional Service accomplishments go beyond what we do because we are good citizens, and like other faculty performance areas, we must make clear the quality and significance of our Professional Service work.

D. Administration and Leadership. This new fourth category will help clarify the promotion and tenure evaluation of chairs, deans, and other administrators. It also provides a clear mechanism to assess administrative and leadership achievements of faculty members when they assume periodic administrative roles.

E. Scholarly Activity and Scholarship. This concept is one of the most intriguing aspects of our new guidelines. I like the emphasis it places on all faculty work needing to be scholarly. We are all part of a scholarly community of lifelong learners and scholars. We make clear that the entirety of our work in the four categories of faculty performance should be scholarly. Our work in the four basic categories of faculty performance is, “a cyclical process that is deliberate and intentional, systematic and planned, measured and evaluated, revised and rethought.”

At the same time, this section clarifies how scholarly work results in “scholarship” in each faculty performance category. Emphasis is on the quality and significance of work. The only clarification I make in this section is that the impact of Research, Creative Activity, and Professional Service is strongest when it includes dissemination of scholarship and service to the profession beyond our immediate area. In the scholarship of teaching and in research and creative activities, significant peer review of scholarship usually involves recognition beyond our immediate area. In the Professional Service category, service to our university and local communities is important. However, our achievements are not as great if they are limited to our university and surrounding area. Our goal is to extend Professional Service significantly beyond KSU and Kennesaw to professional service with regional, national and/or international impact.

III. Quality and Significance

Clearly, I strongly support the terms “quality” and “significance” that appear throughout the document. They provide an indication of scholarly excellence. Effort alone is not enough. Our goal is to achieve greater heights of accomplishment in all areas of work. As we tell our students, we should not settle for anything but our best. We must set high standards for achievement and work together in collaborative ways to meet these standards. One way to do this is to require our scholarly achievements to have “significant professional impact.”

Our work should always be based on Consistently Ethical Behavior. The key words of this section, “honesty, integrity, and objectivity,” should not be taken lightly or delivered as platitudes. We will not reach our full potential of excellence unless our achievements and interactions with each other are infused with these concepts.

In addition, the KSU scholarly community of learners must exhibit respectful relations among faculty members, students, community participants, and others. In our disagreements and debates, we should keep the focus of arguments on the ideas involved, not on personalities. Our personal likes and dislikes should not impinge on the full expression and debate of ideas. KSU is

committed to an inclusive scholarly community reflecting and respecting diversity and individual differences. We must exhibit this inclusiveness in all our professional interactions.

IV. General Expectation for Tenure and Promotion

This section is clear, but I must comment on the areas of tenure and promotion to professor.

The importance of tenure is well explained in the first paragraph of Section V.A. Tenure.

The awarding of tenure is a highly important decision through which the University incurs a major commitment to the individual faculty member well into the future. Years of service or successful annual reviews alone are not sufficient to qualify for tenure. It should only be granted to those faculty members whose achievements demonstrate the quality and significance expected of their current rank and who demonstrate potential for long-term effectiveness ... In awarding tenure, the University recognizes the long-range value of the faculty member to the institution and ensures them the academic freedom that is essential to an atmosphere conducive to the proper operation of the University.

Clearly, years of service or successful annual reviews alone are not enough to receive tenure. In granting tenure, our focus is on overall achievement as demonstrated by the significance and quality of a faculty member's work. As I mentioned in the section on teaching, supervising, and mentoring, we must clarify the difference between formative and summative evaluations. Annual reviews are primarily formative reviews, although they are summative in the impact they have on merit pay increases. Ideally, annual reviews should lead to a clear indication of readiness for tenure. However, disconnects may exist when faculty accomplishments are very good during the probationary period but do not rise to the level expected for tenure.

Faculty may apply for tenure in either the fifth or sixth year. The most difficult tenure decisions I have seen over the past four years involved faculty who had only a five-year probationary period. It is difficult to get to the level expected for tenure in five years, particularly for faculty members who join us right after completing graduate school. I encourage us to consider the probationary period as a six-year process and support fifth-year applications only in exceptional cases.

My other comments in this section of the document apply to the General Expectations for the Rank of Professor. Section VI.A.4 begins with:

Professors are experienced and *senior members* of the faculty who have become *highly accomplished* in their *scholarly activities*. They are faculty whose careers have advanced to *mature and high levels* of effectiveness and productivity. Professors have *strong records of contribution to and leadership* in their respective areas of emphasis. A professor is typically characterized as a *leader, mentor, scholar, expert, and/or distinguished colleague*. (Italics added for emphasis)

These words mean to me that promotion to full professor is not a guaranteed event for every KSU associate professor who is doing a good job five to ten years after being promoted to associate. In past years, I have struggled with some applications for promotion to professor. As I stated last year, I will be more stringent in my evaluation of such applications. While promotion applications to professor are stronger, many still apply too soon for promotion to

professor. We need additional dialogue about this to better clarify what we expect for someone to achieve to be promoted to our highest academic rank.

V. Timeline

We should begin following the new Tenure and Promotion Process described in Section VII of the new Section Five of the Faculty Handbook in the Fall 2006. This will require departments and colleges to alter their faculty tenure and promotion committee structure, but that seems doable by next fall. Any department or college which has difficulty with the new committee structure or the new process should contact the Office of Academic Affairs for assistance. The new structure will be reviewed during the Opening of the University week in August.

Other aspects of these revisions will go into effect for Fall 2007. This will give us a year to clarify details of the new guidelines and give departments and colleges time to adjust their tenure and promotion guidelines to reflect the new approach. All new guidelines must be approved by the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Departments need to determine the format for the Faculty Performance Agreement and the Annual Review Document during Fall 2006.

We will also work this year on Section Three of the Faculty Handbook. We must focus on inconsistencies between the new Section Five and current Section Three of the Faculty Handbook. Other parts of Section Three are out of date and need to be changed.

VI. Schedule

The schedule of reviews for 2006-2007 is:

<i>For Tenure and Promotion:</i>	
August 21	Submit Portfolios to Department Office
August 21 – September 15	Department T&P Committee Review
Sept. 15 – Sept. 29	Department Chair Review. Chair review can begin earlier, but the Chair's recommendation cannot be made until after the Chair received the Department T&P Committee Recommendation
October 2	Portfolio is Transferred to Dean's Office by Department Chair
October 2 – October 27	College Dean Review
October 30	Portfolio is Transferred to VPAA's Office
October 30 – November 22	VPAA Review and Referral to College Committees as Needed
November 27 – December 11	College Review as Needed
January	VPAA and President Recommendations
February	Deadline for Submission to Board of Regents

For Third-Year (Pre-Tenure), or Pre-Promotion Reviews

September 11	Submit Portfolio to Department Office
September 11 – October 6	Department T&P Committee Review
October 6 – October 20	Department Chair Review. Chair review can begin earlier, but the Chair's recommendation cannot be made until after the Chair received the Department T&P Committee Recommendation
October 23	Portfolio is Transferred to Dean's Office by Department Chair
October 23 – November 17	College Dean Review

For Post-Tenure Review

October 9	Teaching Faculty, Department Chairs, Deans, and Other College Administrators Submit Portfolio to Dean's Office
October 9 – November 10	College PTR Committee Reviews Teaching Faculty, Department Chairs, Deans, and Other College Administrators
November 13 – December 11	College Dean Reviews Teaching Faculty, Department Chairs, and other College Administrators
November 13	Dean's Portfolio is Transferred to the VPAA for the Second Level of Review; University-Wide Administrators Submit Portfolio to VPAA
November 13 – December 11	University-Wide Administrators are reviewed by a special university-wide committee as described in Section VII.B.6

Note. For all reviews, the candidate under review may respond to decisions at each level in a letter within 10 calendar days from the date on the review letter. Response letters are directed to the reviewing committee or administrator and copied to the next level of review.

VII. Ongoing Process

This White Paper provides the view of the Vice President for Academic Affairs on the issues of review and evaluation of faculty performance as written by the Task Force on Review and Evaluation of Faculty Performance at KSU and as approved by the University Senate. I view this White Paper as the Summer 2006 Edition. I suspect we may need additional editions as we progress to the full implementation of these guidelines. Our new governance structure should facilitate discussion of the guidelines for review and evaluation of faculty performance. I encourage all faculty members to stay informed about the issues of faculty performance and provide meaningful contributions to this important collaborative process.