

MEMORANDUM

DATE: 21 December 2020

TO: Dean Burgess, CALS Unit Heads, Assistant Dean Jean McLain, All CALS Faculty

FROM: CALS 2020-2021 Faculty Council

SUBJECT: Simplifying & Supporting Equity for Annual Performance Review

Academic unit leaders are required by ABOR policy ABOR-PM-6-20 to complete annual faculty performance reviews by March 31 ([UHAP 3.2.01](#)), and the Faculty Council supports efforts to streamline this process *while ensuring it is equitable for all faculty*. The recommendations below are designed to address these issues while supporting recommendations from (1) the September 9, 2020 memo issued by Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost Liesl Folks and (2) the University committee reviewing APR processes.

With these goals in mind the Faculty Council has provided a statement of equity that should be reviewed by Unit Heads and APR committees and considered during the peer review process.

Statement of Equity:

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, inequities in academia existed. Black, Indigenous, People of Color, and individuals of other marginalized groups (e.g., women, LGBTQ people) face systematic bias related to teaching evaluations, service assignments, representation at professional meetings, and promotion and tenure. The events of 2020—the COVID-19 pandemic and the George Floyd murder (as well as many other events)—brought added challenges that further exacerbated these inequities. Communities of color faced disproportionate risk of COVID-19 exposure, infection, and mortality. With the closing of schools and child care facilities, women, more broadly, faced significant increases in care-giving burdens. Among caregivers of color specifically, the events brought substantial fear and psychological burden, as they considered the safety and survival of their family members, both young and old. We acknowledge that this myriad of factors has significantly impacted work performance via increased demands and psychological distress. The differential impact of these factors by race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, and sexuality amplifies existing inequities/disparities in the academy.

APR Recommendations:

The Faculty Council makes the following recommendations for the APR peer evaluation process:

1. Appointment information and effort: All peer-evaluation committees should have access to appointment expectations (teaching, research, extension, administration, service) and FTE splits that have already been discussed and adjusted to account for any special circumstances that impacted work accomplishments during the year.
2. Circumstances leading to loss of productivity: Faculty have access to a "Special Circumstances" form within UAvitae to address any impacts (not limited to COVID-19) on their work performance. Faculty should limit comments in this section to no more than one page and personal details should not be divulged. Suggested language or examples will be provided by the FC to help guide impacted individuals with completing this section.

3. Evaluation categories: We recommend that self-assessment and peer-assessment be completed using the categories *meets expectations* or *does not meet expectations*. To streamline the process, if the peer evaluation committee agrees with the Faculty self-assessment, they can simply check “agree” and do not need to provide any further justification. In instances where they disagree with the self-assessment a short explanation of not more than 100 words should be provided.
4. Access to UAVitae sections: Problems have occurred both within and between units with the APR committees having access only to certain sections within UAVitae (causing requests for Faculty to write separate documents when the sections exist within UAVitae). As much as possible, **all evaluation materials should be entered into UAVitae and the Unit Head and Chair of the APR Committee should clearly communicate with all Faculty what UAVitae sections will be reviewed.**
5. Formative peer-assessment: Peer-assessments should be formative (that is, guiding future work) rather than evaluative. Accomplishment for 2020 in particular should be viewed compassionately and holistically with the goal of supporting future advancement, and ‘typical’ activities that have become untenable as well as unplanned shifts in focus and emphasis during 2020 should be accommodated during peer-assessment.
6. Teaching evaluations: APR committees should not use Student Course Surveys (SCS) – the new version of the TCEs – in faculty annual performance reviews for 2020. It is well-established that student evaluations of instruction are biased and each unit should make a concerted effort to establish other way of assessing instruction using OIA guidelines and resources.
7. Peer-assessment effort: Feedback should be minimized to streamline/reduce time spent by peer assessment committees on evaluation. In consultation with Unit heads and all Faculty, APR committees should agree to an upper limit on peer feedback (e.g., not more than one page, or even 250 words). Peer-assessment need not reiterate self-assessment when the committee is in agreement with this assessment and should focus on quality and constructive feedback rather than length of the feedback. It is desirable that feedback be provided as bullet points to achieve this aim.
8. Evaluation criteria: College-level guidelines for evaluating teaching, research, and Extension already exist and should be reviewed by faculty and unit heads at a unit level to create a clear expectation of evaluation criteria for each unit. These criteria should be reviewed by the unit APR committee every five years and changes approved by faculty vote. In addition, new faculty hires should also be provided with these evaluation criteria. However, consideration of evaluation criteria is not meant to over-rule considerations of special circumstances that impact performance; instead the evaluation process should focus on sustained performance over several years.

Approved by Faculty Council vote on 17 December 2020 (11 agree, 1 disagree, 3 abstain).

