

School of Teaching and Learning Merit Review Policy

PURPOSE

The Merit committee was established as a form of shared governance to provide feedback to the School Director during the annual merit evaluation processes. Final merit pay decisions and fund allocations are to be made by the Director who typically has the most information about individual faculty load assignment and activities. The merit peer review system provides a written report of committee recommendations to augment the task of the Director.

PROCEDURES

Merit reviews will be conducted annually in order to provide longitudinal data to consider when money is available. The task of the committee is to place faculty into one of four categories of meritorious accomplishment: significantly exceeds expectations, exceeds expectations, meet expectations, and does not meet expectations based on the assignment of each individual faculty member. The committee will not rank faculty or recommend specific monetary amounts. Final ranking and monetary allocation are the decision of the Director. The committee will *rate* but not *rank* peers.

Merit Committee Membership

The Merit Committee is a standing committee of 8 members. Membership will be determined by the Director in consultation with the Academic Personnel Committee to include a variety of tenure and non-tenure ranks, program areas, and longevity in the department. Members will serve for two years with a stagger start to ensure institutional memory over time. It is expected that all STL faculty will serve on the committee eventually. Faculty selected to serve may request a one-year exemption due to special circumstances (e.g., first-year faculty, sabbatical leave).

Timeline

Merit ratings will be made on the basis of the annual reports including the addendum. The standing committee shall meet within 2 weeks that annual reports are due. A reasonable deadline for submission of the final recommendations to the Director shall be set.

Eligibility

All full-time STL faculty members who have submitted their annual report by the given deadline are eligible for merit. The merit committee will rate all eligible faculty who wish to be considered for a merit raise. If a faculty member does not want to be considered, s/he should notify the chair at least one week before annual reports are due.

CRITERIA

Following the reading of each faculty member's annual report and addendum, the committee shall meet as a group to discuss the totality of each individual faculty member's yearly performance and assign each faculty member to one of four categories: significantly exceeds expectations, exceeds expectations, meet expectations and does not meet expectations.

In the assigning of each faculty member to one of the four categories above, members of the standing committee will consider the performance of a faculty member using the criteria present in the University of Florida College of Education Promotion and Tenure Guidelines as basis for decision-making in accordance with a faculty member's faculty assignment for a given year.

Significantly Exceeds Expectations—This category is reserved for faculty members whose annual reports are indicative of an extraordinary record of achievement for the year in accordance with their assignment in scholarship, teaching, and service. Faculty members who have demonstrated extraordinary productivity in one particular area and who exceed expectations in two categories could also be considered for this category.

Exceeds Expectations – This category describes faculty whose annual reports demonstrate that their productivity exceeds expectations, in accordance with their assignment in scholarship, teaching, and service.

Meets Expectations – This category describes faculty whose annual reports are indicative of meeting expectations, in accordance with their assignment in scholarship, teaching, and service.

Does Not Meet Expectations – The category describes faculty whose annual reports are indicative of not meeting expectations, in accordance with their assignment in scholarship, teaching, and service.

Overarching Process Guidelines

- The process should be calibrated at regular intervals to ensure that rating criteria are applied fairly across multiple cases and diverse faculty assignments.
- The process for tenure and non-tenure track faculty should be the same but with separate calibrations.
- The committee should create a timeline that allows folders to be reviewed by members off-site, in between meetings to respect the time and focus needed by individual group members.
- Committee members may not review the folders of colleagues with whom they collaborate closely (i.e. in research, program development, teaching, etc)
- Two committee members should review each merit folder and develop independent ratings. When the ratings differ, a third member should review the folder if agreement cannot be reached by the group.

- A committee member should not be present when his/her folder is discussed.
- The merit review process should be discussed annually at a fall faculty meeting to continually refine this sensitive process of peer review.
- Individual ratings should be shared by the Director with individual faculty at their annual evaluation meeting.

Suggested Process

1. Shortly after the deadline to have materials turned in to the Director, the committee should meet to collaboratively calibrate how the four rating categories might be used to assess folders of tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty members.
2. When the group reconvenes, they should discuss all folders reviewed off-site. The two-person teams compare ratings and bring discrepancies to the group. If the larger group wants clarification or evidence about the rating, the folder should be discussed. The committee chair compiles the ratings in a list. At the end of the meeting the group should debrief the process to make recommendations for future policy adjustments.
3. The committee chair should submit the ratings and process feedback to the School Director.

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