

SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY

A Member of the Texas State University System

SRSU Policy: Performance Evaluation of Tenured Faculty

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The evaluation of all tenured faculty shall be part of the university's annual Academic Evaluation System. For tenured faculty, an unsatisfactory annual evaluation demonstrates that the faculty member under review has not performed the responsibilities expected of a faculty member at Sul Ross State University conscientiously and with professional competence.

When a tenured faculty member has fallen below performance expectations, then an intensive, professional peer review shall be made intended to restore that faculty member to an acceptable level of professional productivity. This peer review shall recognize that Sul Ross State University has invested considerable time and effort to recruit and retain capable, tenured faculty members. Therefore, the primary objective of peer review in the performance evaluation of tenured faculty shall be to conserve this investment and guarantee that all tenured faculty remain active, productive scholars and teachers.

A. Procedure for the Performance Evaluation of Tenured Faculty

1. Satisfactory Annual Evaluation.

All tenured faculty shall be evaluated annually as part of the Academic Evaluation System. When this annual evaluation indicates that the tenured faculty member's performance is satisfactory, then no further action is necessary.

2. Unsatisfactory Annual Evaluation, Year One.

When a tenured faculty member receives an annual evaluation of "no merit" from both the department chairperson and the appropriate college dean, this will be understood as a warning that the tenured faculty member may not be performing the responsibilities of a faculty member conscientiously or competently. The department chairperson and the dean may exempt a faculty member from review when substantive mitigating circumstances exist.

a) Department Meeting.

The department chairperson shall meet with the faculty member to discuss the recent annual evaluation and attempt to identify the problem areas revealed by the evaluation. All tenured faculty members from the department may attend this meeting, to assist and advice as the department's Peer Review Committee.

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b) Peer Review Committee.

The Peer Review Committee shall include all tenured members in the department. If the department does not have enough tenured faculty members to form a Peer Review Committee of at least three members, then the department chairperson and the college dean shall form a Peer Review Committee of tenured faculty members from other, related departments within the college. At the initial meeting, the Peer Review Committee shall elect a chairperson and secretary to serve for one year from the date of election. Minutes shall be recorded and deposited in the department's files, along with all other appropriate materials.

c) Department Chairperson.

If the faculty member is the department chairperson and receives a "no merit" evaluation from the college dean, then the dean shall refer that evaluation and the appropriate materials to the University Tenure and Promotion Council for further evaluation. The Tenure and Promotion Committee shall forward its evaluation to the executive vice president and provost. If the Tenure and Promotion Committee concurs with the dean's original evaluation, then the executive vice president and provost shall instruct the dean to convene the department Peer Review Committee to initiate the review process for the chairperson.

3. Unsatisfactory Annual Evaluation, Year Two

Notification.

When a tenured faculty member has a second, consecutive "no merit" evaluation from both the department chairperson and the college dean, then the process of professional peer review shall be intensified. The department chairperson shall give written notice of the unsatisfactory evaluation to the faculty member and to the chairperson of the Peer Review Committee. The notice shall provide specific details of the faculty member's professional deficiencies and a charge to complete the professional peer review in a timely manner.

4. Professional Peer Review

a) Results.

The professional peer review will reach one of three possible conclusions:

- (i) No deficiencies are identified. The Peer Review Committee shall inform the faculty member, department chairperson, and college dean in writing. This decision by the Peer Review Committee

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supersedes the original annual evaluation.

- (ii) Some minor deficiencies are identified. The Peer Review Committee shall indicate to the faculty member, the department chair, and the dean, in writing, the deficiencies found and the appropriate action required.
- (iii) Substantial and chronic deficiencies are identified. The Peer Review Committee shall give written notice of deficiencies to the faculty member, the department chairperson, and the dean. In this instance, the faculty member, the Peer Review Committee, and the department chairperson shall work together to construct a professional development plan acceptable to the dean.

b) Professional Development Plan.

The professional development plan is an agreement setting objectives to remedy specific deficiencies indicated in the faculty member's evaluation. Based on the collaboration among the faculty member, the Peer Review Committee, the department chairperson, and the college dean, the plan should reflect the professional goals of the faculty member, the concerns of the review committee, and the faculty member's contribution to the department and the university. The faculty member shall sign the professional development plan and make a good-faith effort to work towards its successful completion.

Specifically, the professional development plan shall (1) identify deficiencies, (2) establish remedies for these deficiencies, (3) set a time line to achieve these objectives, and (4) stipulate the institutional resources which can be used to assist the plan.

c) Progress and Assessment.

The faculty member, chairperson of the Peer Review Committee, and the department chairperson shall meet at least twice each semester after the professional development plan has been implemented to assess progress. A progress summary shall be sent to the other members of the Peer Review Committee and the college dean.

d) Plan Completion.

When the results of the next annual performance evaluation are available, the department chairperson shall compare the objectives of the professional development plan and the results of the recent evaluation. If

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the plan's objectives have been met, then the chairperson shall notify the faculty member, the Peer Review Committee, and the college dean.

5. Unsatisfactory Annual Evaluation, Year Three

"No Merit" Evaluation.

Should the faculty member receive a third, consecutive "no merit" annual performance rating, the professional development plan shall continue, with the modifications suggested by the Peer Review Committee. The adjusted professional development plan shall continue to be monitored until the next annual evaluation.

6. Unsatisfactory Annual Evaluation, Year Four.

a) "No Merit" Evaluation.

If there is a fourth, consecutive "no merit" evaluation, the department chairperson, the college dean, and the Peer Review Committee shall meet to assess the situation. If the Peer Review Committee, the department chairperson, and the dean agree that the faculty member has failed to meet the objectives of the professional development plan, then dismissal may result. Failure to meet the goals of the professional development plan is evident when the Peer Review Committee, the department chairperson, and the dean agree that the existing deficiencies in the completion of the plan demonstrate that the faculty member under review has not performed conscientiously and with professional competence the responsibilities expected of a faculty member at Sul Ross State University.

b) Termination Proceedings.

If the Peer Review Committee, the department chairperson, and the college dean agree that the faculty member has failed to meet the objectives of the professional development plan, the Peer Review Committee shall recommend that a mutually agreeable separation is desirable. If such an agreement cannot be reached, the Peer Review Committee shall recommend that the faculty member be terminated by the university under appropriate board of regent's policies governing tenure, academic freedom, and academic responsibility.

c) Burden of Proof.

The burden of proof is on the university to show that the tenured faculty member has not performed conscientiously and with professional competence.

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d) Counsel.

The faculty member may have legal counsel or other appropriate counsel present at any stage during this professional review process.

e) Nonbinding Alternative Dispute Resolution.

A faculty member subject to termination on the basis of this evaluation process must be given the opportunity for referral of the matter to a nonbinding, alternative-dispute-resolution process as described in Chapter 154, Civil Practice and Remedies Code. If the faculty member, the Peer Review Committee, the department chairperson, and the college dean agree, another type of alternative-dispute-resolution method may be selected.

f) Specific Reasons.

The Board of Regents of the Texas State University System must give specific reasons in writing for any decision to terminate a faculty member on the basis of this Policy for the Performance Evaluation of Tenured Faculty.

g) Effective Date.

This Policy for the Performance Evaluation of Tenured Faculty went into effect August 25, 1998.