

P&T Evaluator Training

Fall 2023

P&T Evaluator Training - Office of the Provost

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Section 1: Situational Context & Institutional Values

USHE: Southern Utah University (SUU) is a member of the Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) and operates under its policies and the laws of the State of Utah. According to USHE policy R312, SUU is classified as a Regional University with teaching as our main focus. Research, scholarship, and creative activities are intended to support and enhance this teaching focus. Likewise, USHE policy R485 establishes faculty workload expectations at each type of institution. Finally, USHE policy R481 outlines different aspects of academic freedom, professional responsibilities, and periodic review of faculty.

Section 1 (continued)

SUU: Because SUU's faculty are central to fulfilling our institutional mission, it is essential that we recruit, hire, retain, and promote high-quality faculty, all of which requires a robust and meaningful faculty evaluation process. At SUU, we believe that faculty evaluation requires the active participation of experienced faculty to serve as evaluator.

Employee-Employer Relationship: While faculty have considerable autonomy (in terms of teaching, research, and creative activity), when serving as a P&T evaluator it is important to recognize that faculty are expected to conduct their evaluations in compliance with SUU's policies and the expectations outlined therein. This includes conducting fair, thoughtful, and timely evaluations in accordance with university policy.

Section 1 (continued)

Role / Importance of Faculty Evaluation: In order to be successful, SUU faculty require both mentoring and evaluation. However, it is important to distinguish between the role of a **mentor** and the role of an **evaluator** (both functions are explained in SUU's faculty evaluation policy). What follows are key aspects of evaluator responsibilities and expectations.

Section 2: Seven (7) Expectations for Evaluators

From SUU Policy 6.1:

Evaluator Responsibilities and Expectations: Evaluators play a crucial role in a substantive, supportive, and meaningful review process. To ensure that the evaluative process maintains its integrity and value, Evaluators have several key responsibilities and professional expectations

a. Write evaluations that are thorough and as fair and unbiased as possible.

To increase the value and meaningfulness of the Evaluative Rating, Evaluators must include detailed feedback and (when needed) suggested improvements for the evaluated Faculty for each area of the following:

Teaching Effectiveness,

Service/Leadership, and

Scholarly/Creative Activities (as applicable).

Unbiased Review & Evaluation

1. Intentional Discrimination (Disparate Treatment) vs. Unintentional Discrimination (Disparate Impact)

Examples: “Collegiality” and “Publication Bias” - ostensibly neutral criteria produce disparate outcomes that disproportionately harm some protected identities

1. Techniques for limiting the influence/impact of our biases

- a. Model Jury Instructions (MUJI - CV 107 A - Avoiding Bias)
- b. “To deny that you have prejudices is illusory; to recognize them is an act of relentless searching. Only when the prejudice is recognized can it be removed from the decisional process.” **Kane, J.L. (2007). Judging Credibility. *Litigation* 33(3), 31-37.**

b. Provide evaluations that are based on the current DEC from the Faculty member's Department.

Should a DEC *not exist or fail to provide clear guidance* for a particular area to be evaluated for an evaluated Faculty member, Evaluators should base their Evaluative Rating on the alignment of the evaluated Faculty member's efforts and accomplishments, as documented in their FEC Report or Promotion and/or Tenure application, with Student-Centric Faculty Engagement, the University Mission, and the criteria outlined in this Policy.

c. Maintain independence in fact and appearance.

In cases where Evaluators have a **Conflict of Interest**, they will recuse themselves from the Evaluation process.

Examples include, but are not limited to, Evaluators serving as a Mentor to the Evaluated Faculty or Evaluators who, themselves, are the Evaluated Faculty.

Independence in Practice

1. **Prior involvement or entanglement in P&T process of the faculty being evaluated (e.g., advice giving, editing, etc.)**
2. **Conflicts of Interest (e.g., mentor/mentee, self-evaluator, co-investigators)**
 - a. Disclosure and waiver
 - b. Recusal
3. **Non-work interactions or entanglements (Cedar City is a small community)**
4. **Circumspect vs. Impetuous Opinion-sharing**
5. **Respect for roles, power dynamics, and boundaries in the P&T process**

d. Submit an Evaluative Letter, containing an Evaluative Rating with detailed explanation and feedback, to the appropriate succeeding Evaluative Entity according to deadlines as listed in Appendix B.

Evaluators assign an Evaluative Rating based primarily on the extent to which the evaluated Faculty's efforts and accomplishments – *as documented in their FEC Report or application for Mid-Point Review, Promotion, Tenure, or Five-Year Review* – align with DEC, Faculty Engagement, and the University Mission.

d. (continued)

Evaluators shall base Evaluative Ratings related to Teaching Effectiveness on more than just student feedback results, if available in a Faculty submission, recognizing the inconsistent and sometimes inaccurate nature of student feedback results.

In the Evaluative Letter, Evaluators must include detailed, objective justification, based on requirements in the DEC, for the Evaluative Rating they assign:

For annual or Post-Promotion FEC Reports or applications for Mid-Point Review:
"Acceptable Progress" or "Development Needed" or "Recommendation for Non-Reappointment"

For Applications for Promotion and/or Tenure: **"Yes" or "No"**

For Five-Year Review: **"Acceptable Progress" or "Development Needed"**

d. (continued)

Evaluators may consider other **Pertinent Information** in assigning an Evaluative Rating, such as peer evaluations, summaries of relevant activity, Faculty Professional Responsibility defined in Policy 6.28, Evaluative Letters and Evaluative Ratings from preceding Evaluative Entities, and AIM documentation contained in the Faculty Dashboard; however, AIM documentation must not be a primary factor in determining an Evaluative Rating.

As needed to support assigning an Evaluative Rating or to address any uncertainties that may affect assigning an Evaluative Rating, Evaluators may at any point in the evaluative process **solicit additional documentation or information from the evaluated Faculty** regarding a FEC Report or other application. Requests for additional documentation or information are, however, limited to clarifying relevant facts and circumstances only. Evaluators are **prohibited** from requesting information that substantively changes the content of a FEC Report or application or the evaluation criteria.

d. (continued)

Department Chairs are strongly encouraged to review, in particular, Mid-Point and Promotion and/or Tenure application materials prior to the first submission deadline noted in Appendix B.

If Evaluators require and use additional documentation or information to assign an Evaluative Rating, they must document the request and describe the additional documentation or information's impact on the assigned Evaluative Rating in the Evaluative Letter. They must also upload the additional documentation or information to the Faculty Dashboard, which becomes part of the FEC Report or application that subsequent Evaluators will review.

d. (continued)

Evaluators shall give consideration to Faculty members who have **partial reassignment of duties**, such as Chairs, fellows, those with administrative appointments, and part-time Faculty (not adjuncts).

Although the caliber of work required of these Faculty should be held to the same standards as full-time Faculty, **Promotion and Tenure expectations should be adjusted commensurate with their Faculty workload as determined by the DEC.**

e. Maintain strict confidentiality regarding all aspects of the evaluation process...

... including, but not limited to, the following: committee deliberations, Evaluative Letters, discussions with evaluated Faculty, and discussions with Mentors.

To maintain confidentiality, Evaluators are required to not disclose in any format or to any person any information learned or shared through the evaluation process, unless required by University Policy, applicable law, or court or other lawful order; provided however, Department Chairs, Deans, and the Provost may use information from their own evaluation of the applicable Faculty member and from committees in discussions with the Faculty member being reviewed and to write Evaluative Letters, which will be shared with the Faculty member being reviewed.

e. (continued)

In writing such Evaluative Letters, the **anonymity of the committee members** will be maintained by the Department Chair, Deans, and the Provost to the greatest extent possible by summarizing feedback for the Faculty member being reviewed.

Evaluators shall not engage in conduct that violates professional expectations, including, but not limited to, engaging in communications that could be construed as influencing the deliberations and decisions of other Evaluative Entities, unless responding to questions by the next level Evaluative Entity for clarification or other legitimate purposes.

Confidentiality in Practice

1. Confidentiality requires restrictions on the use and sharing of information
2. Policies to contemplate: 5.19 and 5.39
 - a. The records you create are most likely to be considered “private records” as they pertain to employment;
 - b. There are limits about who has access to records and how they can access them;
3. Note the adjective “strict” in the policy which would lead me to believe there is a firmness in the resolve of evaluators to honor the restrictions
4. Note the invocation of “anonymity of committee members” which leads me to assert that justifications from Committees do not identify/associate particular language with an identifiable person on the Committee [“prevailing perspective/view” vs. “dissenting perspective/view”]

f. Follow the flow of review in Appendix C.

Note that for all review processes for NTT and TT Faculty, the Departmental P&T Committee is always the first Evaluative Entity to review followed by the Department Chair.

g. Complete required annual Evaluator training provided by the Provost's Office.

The Provost's Office coordinates and ensures the timely delivery of required, high-quality training for Evaluators at all levels of the Evaluation Process.

Section 3: Evaluations in Context

Type: Evaluators should be aware of the **specific type of evaluation** that they are completing. For example, evaluators may be evaluating a Tenure-Track faculty member completing a Mid-Point Review, submitting a Tenure & Rank Advancement, or an NTT Rank Advancement. Additional expectations may be associated with different types of evaluation.

Sequence / Level: Evaluators should also be aware of their specific role that they are fulfilling and recognize that there are different **types of evaluators**. For example, an Evaluator may be serving on a Department, College, or University P&T Committee. Each **level of evaluation** involves different expectations in terms of review, feedback, and the appropriate evaluative rating / recommendation.

Deadlines: Finally, it is vitally important to the entire faculty evaluation process that each stage of evaluation be completed according to the **deadlines established in Appendix B**.

Section 4 - Resources

- **Faculty Evaluation, Promotion & Tenure, and Leave:**
 - <https://www.suu.edu/academics/p-and-t/>
- **SUU Policy #6.1 Faculty Evaluation:**
 - <https://www.suu.edu/policies/06/01.html>
- **Deadlines:**
 - <https://www.suu.edu/academics/p-and-t/deadlines.html>
- **P&T Forms and Templates:**
 - <https://www.suu.edu/academics/p-and-t/forms.html>
- **P&T Resources:**
 - <https://www.suu.edu/academics/p-and-t/resources.html>
- **Department Evaluation Criteria (DEC):**
 - <https://www.suu.edu/academics/p-and-t/resources.html#criteria>

Questions & Discussion

