Department of Geography and Environmental Studies (GES)

College of Letters, Arts and Sciences
University of Colorado
Colorado Springs

Criteria and Processes for Annual Merit Review for Tenure-Track Faculty

Approved by GES faculty 4/1/2022

Geography and Environmental Studies (GES) Department
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Introduction

Consistent with University of Colorado Regent Law and Policy and UCCS campus and college policies, the performance of faculty members in the UCCS Department of GES will be evaluated and rated annually (based on performance during each calendar year). This annual merit review process is completed for all regular faculty members (≥0.5 FTE) in the department (Regent Law 5). Faculty shall be evaluated annually on the merit of their performance in teaching, research, and service.

As part of this review, the GES Department recognizes the importance of attending to and embodying principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in all three areas of evaluated performance. Although the annual review is based on the preceding performance period, consideration may be given to longer-term achievements and contributions to account for ongoing activities that extend across multiple years (Regent Policy 11B). The overall summary of merit ratings in teaching, research, and service serves as the annual performance evaluation which results in an overall rating of "outstanding," "exceeding expectations," "meeting expectations," "below expectations," or "fails to meet expectations." The performance evaluation is used to determine an individual performance rating which serves, at least in part, as the basis for merit pay adjustments. The process can also be helpful in fostering communication among faculty members, supporting faculty, identifying goals and expectations, and providing faculty with an opportunity to document accomplishments and activities. This document delineates the criteria and processes used by the GES Department to assess the merit of faculty performance in teaching, research, and service for the annual merit review.

As part of the annual review, per APS 5008, faculty members will document and report on their yearly activities by the deadline communicated by the LAS Dean's Office. As part of this yearly documentation, faculty members will also provide a current CV, a self-evaluation, and self-ratings of performance in the areas of teaching, research, and service. The GES Department Chair (henceforth, "the Chair") also rates each faculty member in teaching, research, and service, and then submits these ratings to the LAS Dean's Review Committee. The Chair will also meet with each faculty member to discuss the yearly evaluation as part of ongoing communication in support of faculty development.

We acknowledge that this evaluation process, generated by the faculty member and the Chair, should include some reasonable flexibility to account for significant disruptions and/or major life transitions that impact a faculty member's contributions. We further recognize that for all faculty on a 9-month contract, evaluations for Meeting Expectations are based on work completed during the 9-month academic year. Activities completed in Teaching, Research, or Service during non-contract summer months shall be counted toward higher ratings of "Exceeding Expectations" or "Outstanding" as these activities are, by definition, going beyond the expectations of a 9-month contract. Faculty under 12-month contract will be evaluated for work completed during the

designated contract period in order to "Meet Expectations."

There is a process for resolving disputes over annual review ratings: should a challenge or dispute arise about any aspect of the annual review process, the first step is for the faculty member to meet with and discuss their concerns with the Chair. If the dispute is not satisfactorily resolved after meeting with the Chair, the next step is for the faculty member to follow the standard grievance policy adopted by LAS and in accordance with UCCS and CU System procedures.

Any processes not directly addressed in this document will use the campus and university processes and guidelines as outlined in the appropriate UCCS policies, Regents Laws and policies, and CU Administrative Policy statements.

Criteria

Teaching. To be considered "Meeting Expectations" for teaching, faculty are expected to provide a clear and comprehensive syllabus, adequately prepare for and teach scheduled courses, communicate with students clearly and promptly, provide feedback in a manner that is constructive and respectful, advise undergraduate and graduate students as appropriate, maintain regular weekly office hours, write letters of recommendation for students as appropriate, and evaluate students in a timely manner. To meet a standard of "Exceeding Expectations" for Teaching, faculty must complete one of the items listed under Teaching, below. To meet a standard of "Outstanding" for Teaching, faculty will need to fulfill three of the activities listed under Teaching. We recognize, additionally, that some accomplishments are significant enough that they may be substituted for multiple items on the list.

Research. To be considered "Meeting Expectations" for research, faculty are expected to maintain an active program of research and to make steady progress in research, scholarship, or creative works. To be considered "Exceeding Expectations" in Research, faculty must complete one of the items listed under Research, below. To meet a standard of "Outstanding" for Research, faculty will need to fulfill three of the activities listed under Research. We recognize, additionally, that some accomplishments are significant enough that they may be substituted for multiple items on the list.

Service. To be considered "Meeting Expectations" for service, faculty are expected to participate in departmental meetings and faculty searches for new departmental hires. Service can be provided to the department, college, university, and/or community and profession as appropriate by position and years in rank. To be considered "Exceeding Expectations" in Service, faculty must complete one of the items listed under Service, below. To meet a standard of "Outstanding" for Service, faculty will need to fulfill three of the activities listed under Service. We recognize, additionally, that some accomplishments are significant enough that they may be substituted for multiple items on the list.

General Considerations

The department will consider the following guidelines when reviewing faculty members for the annual merit review process. Examples of evidence that may be submitted for evaluation are given in the lists below.

The department recognizes that scholarship can take many forms. GES emphasizes applied

scholarship, fundamental discovery, scholarly work that integrates existing knowledge, scholarship that employs the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusiveness (DEI), and the scholarship of teaching and learning. We recognize scholarly study of teaching and learning issues in our field as a form of research (i.e. scholarship of the practice). The department recognizes both classroom teaching and individualized teaching activities, for example supervising Independent Study courses or Senior/Honors Theses. Our department encourages collaborative research. For co-authored papers to be evaluated fairly, the assignation of order of authorship should be explained and some indication should be provided on the relative contribution of the faculty member's role. In the assessment of teaching effectiveness and accomplishment, the department requires the use of multiple means of documenting teaching activities in and outside of the classroom. The department recognizes service and/or leadership to the GES Department, college, university, community, and to our profession. Our department also recognizes and values research, teaching and service activities that include aspects of DEI.

Examples of Appropriate Evidence to Submit for Annual Merit Evaluation

The lists below are examples of the types of evidence that the department finds acceptable for a faculty member to submit as support for meeting departmental criteria in "Exceeding Expectations" and as "Outstanding." We have intentionally designed these lists to be expansive (though recognize they are still not comprehensive) in the interest of accommodating diverse forms of excellence in teaching, research, and service. We acknowledge that work that exceeds expectations or is outstanding can come in many different forms; there is no one recipe to meet these terms. The lists are intended to provide guidance, but other types of evidence may also be provided and should be considered. Faculty members are encouraged to seek the advice of mentors and/or the Chair when evaluating what evidence to submit in their annual reporting.

TEACHING

POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES AND DOCUMENTATION

- Teaching award at college or university level or other formal recognition for outstanding accomplishments in instruction
- Teaching contribution to other departments, programs, or institutions, in addition to UCCS GES Department (i.e., working with other academic units on or beyond the campus to develop new programs, curricula, or pedagogical approaches)
- Organizing, presenting, or participating in workshops, conferences, or training addressing best practices for inclusive or other teaching pedagogy
- Documentation of inclusion of topics or teaching methods that take into consideration issues related to DEI
- Teaching outside of the classroom through supervision of students' theses (honors, senior, or masters) as the primary mentor or committee member
- Individual mentoring of students for independent study or other individualized instruction
- Applying for and/or receiving teaching enhancement or teaching development grants
- Preparation of significant new course materials (e.g., substantially-revised syllabus, new/revised units, new instructional materials or modes of instruction, etc.)

- Teaching improvement activities (e.g., seeking mentorship; demonstrating use of student or peer feedback to modify courses in positive ways, soliciting an evaluation from a colleague)
- Student supervision in professional experience activities, internships, and/or individualized research supervision (e.g., Undergraduate Research Academy, RAship)
- New course development, including development of courses in different modes, such as Online, Hybrid, Digital, Virtual, and/or other future formats, or new courses based on disciplinary developments
- Evidence that demonstrates impact of teaching/mentoring on student learning or accomplishment, such as students succeeding in subsequent courses and/or in the pursuit of graduate education and/or in careers
- Teaching a writing intensive course, lab-based, or field course
- Evidence of taking risks in teaching activities. This may include, but is not limited to, integration of materials in courses that deal with controversial or sensitive topics, using alternative classroom pedagogies, utilizing inclusive grading schemes, using innovative teaching technologies, etc.
- Above-average FCQ scores for questions pertaining to teaching and learning effectiveness, when compared to the university, college, and/or department
- Evaluating classroom processes or student learning through ongoing assessment activities, and documenting appropriate adjustments in response to these (e.g., use of mid-term student feedback)
- Recognition for meeting established criteria for course excellence (e.g., Quality Matters, accessibility)
- Developing open educational resources (OER) and/or incorporating these into a course
- Engaging in public scholarship, including, but not limited to, hits and positive commentary on social media, blogs and instructional videos on YouTube; invitations to participate in documentaries, podcasts, newspaper and radio interviews and other media formats where we teach through scholarship (this should be distinguished from public commentaries described in Research, below)
- Providing effective role modeling and mentoring based on teaching experience at any educational level (e.g., new faculty, graduate students). For example, providing peer teaching support, working with teaching assistants, opening up one's classroom for observation of teaching techniques, providing pedagogical materials such as syllabi and activities to peers, providing evidence of effectiveness based on student assessments of mentoring/advising, etc.
- Facilitating student participation in conferences and presenting their work in professional settings
- Teaching additional sections or courses to provide expanded opportunities for student coursework and/or student progress toward completion
- Teaching activities in a community setting to lay audiences including schools
- Incorporation of high-impact teaching practices, including inquiry-based learning, community-based or service learning, out-of-classroom or hands-on learning experiences for students
- Improvements of courses for accessibility or EDI (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity), such as creation of or incorporation of OER resources, revision of course materials to meet Universal Design standards, etc.

- Participation in professional development for teaching, EDI, accessibility, or subject matter related to courses
- Participation in interdisciplinary teaching opportunities or teaching contribution to other departments, programs, or institutions, in addition to UCCS GES Department (i.e., working with other academic units on or beyond the campus to develop new programs, curricula, or pedagogical approaches)
- Dominantly positive comments on FCQs
- Other items demonstrating excellence in teaching, as justified in the personal statement
- Recognition by the Chair of outstanding teaching practices

RESEARCH

POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES AND DOCUMENTATION

- Peer-reviewed journal articles
- Authored or co-authored scholarly book or textbook (including revision of a textbook)
- Peer-reviewed book chapters in scholarly books
- Research award or other outstanding accomplishments in research
- Authored or co-authored scholarly book (including a revision of a book)
- Edited or co-edited scholarly book or volume (including a revision of a book)
- External grant proposals submitted as PI, co-PI, investigator, co-investigator, or senior personnel
- External grant proposals funded as PI, co-PI, investigator, co-investigator, or senior personnel
- Papers or posters presented at professional conferences or workshops
- Internal grant proposal funded (campus- or system-level proposal)
- Expert and technical consultation on research projects
- Non-refereed book chapters, technical reports, monographs
- Participation in research/scholarship development workshops or other activities (e.g., statistical workshop, pre-conference workshop, summer schools, etc.
- Providing role modeling and mentoring of research at any educational level
- Providing evidence of cultural and societal impact of research
- Extended encyclopedia entries
- Extended book reviews
- Participation in grant-funding training workshops
- Unsponsored research activities such as data collection activities, development of measures
- Public commentary or popular press articles: op-eds, newsletters, documentaries (this should be distinguished from public scholarship as a form of teaching, listed in Teaching, above)

SERVICE/LEADERSHIP

POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES

- Administrative leadership (e.g., Chair, program director, graduate director, minor or certificate director, etc.)
- Editorial activities for professional journals (e.g., editor, guest editor of special edition, associate editor)
- Participation in faculty governance (Faculty Assembly, Faculty Council, etc.)
- Participation in professional activities (e.g., officer, committee member, organizing conferences or workshops, site visits, in-service training)
- Service award or other outstanding accomplishments in service
- Structured mentoring of peers or colleagues
- Specific contribution to DEI efforts, such as involvement in departmental, college, or campus committees or Task Forces
- Chairing a tenure/promotion committee
- Review of tenure/promotion cases from the department, other departments on campus, and from other institutions
- Writing letters of recommendation or support for colleagues, internally or externally
- Nominating colleagues or students for awards, fellowships, etc.
- Reviewing manuscripts for journals, research proposals, books, or book chapters.
- Volunteering regularly for a community organization within our community
- Board member on local, state, regional, or national organization (governmental or NGO)
- Providing a published media interview (print, podcast, web, TV, film, etc.)
- Pro bono consultation in an ongoing capacity
- Active performance of additional duties within the department such as serving on subcommittees, hiring committees, department communications
- Active participation/faculty sponsor in student clubs or activities
- Participation in the Majors and Minors Fair and/or other similar university-wide events (i.e., Mountain Lion Experience Day)
- Contributions to marketing, recruitment, and retention initiatives for the department, college, or university
- Completion of DEI or OER training
- Participation in creation or implementation of a professional development event
- Maintenance of departmental data, for example: enrollment or market data related to the entire department, GIS certificate, Geology Minor, Sustainability Minor, etc.