

Some thoughts about Faculty Evaluations

Purpose of Evaluations

- Identify people's strengths
- Identify areas where improvement is needed
- Document performance in writing
- Stay focused on professional goals/growth.
- (Meet code requirements)

Performance evaluations are part of on-going relationship building with faculty members. When possible, as part of this process, establish trust that you have their best interests at heart. Explore ways in which to set the tone of these reviews so they are not perceived as merely a process of authoritative oversight but rather an investment in faculty members' success.

Nonetheless, do not forget that the written component of these evaluations, especially pre-tenure, form an important part of an official record that will receive scrutiny in the future.

Annual Evaluations

Planning Ahead

Make sure faculty members understand the expectations of their job. Set expectations in supportive, mentoring way. The process should be transparent to everyone. Discussing the review process in a faculty meeting at the beginning of the year might be a good way to acclimate everyone to the process and get feedback on how best to proceed.

Check-ins

Keep in touch with newer faculty members to be sure they are on track. If possible, engage in quarterly check-ins that let junior faculty member know you care about their success. Coming to their office is a small way to show a faculty member that you have a personal interest in her/him. These conversations may help you both think strategically about balancing the individual's career needs with department needs.

Other suggestions

- Address pressing problems in real time, don't let problems fester.
- Use annual reviews as an opportunity to document excellent performance as well as areas for improvement. Have the faculty member make a list of upcoming goals, or in the case of junior faculty, make this list together. Are they in line with tenure/promotion/merit criteria? Document feedback and upcoming goals in writing and ask faculty member to approve before finalizing.
- Look at goals from last meeting, and whether they were accomplished before setting new goals.
- Extend praise and attention beyond research accomplishments or funding successes; recognize other positive contributions, including good mentoring, excellent student interaction and community outreach.
- Nothing in the annual review should be a surprise.