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PROCEDURE STATEMENT

This procedure sets minimum requirements, establishes the criteria for promotion for professorial faculty positions in Texas A&M AgriLife Research (AgriLife Research), and outlines the annual promotion cycle. Promotion documents are to be treated in a confidential manner within the requirements of current privacy laws/regulations and The Texas A&M University System (System) Regulation 61.01.02, *Public Information*.

PROCEDURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1.0 CRITERIA FOR FACULTY RANK

The following criteria should be considered in appointment to or promotion in faculty rank:

- 1.1 *Assistant Professor (including Research, Adjunct, and Visiting)*—Earned doctorate with the expectation of substantial research, publication, and mentoring within the context of one or more research programs (e.g., laboratory, bench science, social science, or other disciplinary setting) with postdoctoral fellows, junior research colleagues, or students at any level.
- 1.2 *Associate Professor (including Research, Adjunct, and Visiting)*—Earned doctorate and a record of substantial research, publication, and mentoring within the context of one or more research programs (e.g., laboratory, bench science, social science, or other disciplinary setting) with post doctoral fellows, junior research colleagues, or students at any level. Candidate should have an exemplary level of accomplishment as measured against contributions of others in the field; professional conduct conducive to a collegial work environment, and standards of professional integrity that will advance the interests of the agency; an area of specialization germane to the agency; and evidence indicating a commitment to maintaining the level of competence in research, publication and mentoring.
- 1.3 *Professor (including Research, Adjunct, and Visiting)*—Earned doctorate with a record of significant research publication and mentoring within the context of one or more research programs (e.g., laboratory, bench science, social science, or other disciplinary setting) with postdoctoral fellows, junior research colleagues, or students at any level. Continued accomplishment in research and scholarship; continuing accomplishment, and some measure of national recognition of research; and evidence of valuable professional service.
- 1.4 The term "substantial" regarding research and mentoring is measured in multiple ways:
 - Quantity (i.e., there should be evidence of a significant amount of research and/or mentoring); and
 - Quality (i.e., the research and/or mentoring done by the individual is effective and has significant impact on the students and colleagues being taught; research has a significant impact on society and benefit to science).

- 1.5 AgriLife Research faculty who are jointly employed with a university and who are eligible for tenure will follow that institution's guidelines regarding faculty promotion and tenure.
- 1.6 AgriLife Research faculty located on the Texas A&M University (Texas A&M) campus who do not hold a joint appointment with Texas A&M must hold the rank of Research Assistant Professor, Research Associate Professor, Research Professor, or may be considered adjunct or visiting.

2.0 EVALUATION PROCEDURES AND BASIS OF DETERMINATION

On decisions regarding promotion in rank, the major emphasis should be on research-related criteria, and the performance of those responsibilities as outlined in the position description and plan of work. Additional supporting materials provided in the curriculum vitae such as public and institutional service, teaching, and other non-research activities will be included in the overall assessment.

The achievements, productivity, and effectiveness of a faculty member will be assessed from the information contained in the candidate's curriculum vitae and plan of work. The following major criteria should be included in the evaluation of the curriculum vitae and plan of work.

- A. Accomplishment of research project objectives from plan(s) of work.
- B. Publication of research in scholarly and professional refereed journals.
- C. Publication of research in practitioner journals targeted for industry and user groups.
- D. Receipt of awards for research excellence.
- E. Invited participation at professional and scientific meetings.
- F. Offices held or committee assignments in professional societies.
- G. Significant external research funding.
- H. Effective relationship with research-user groups.
- I. Evidence of a well-planned and developed program of research that has contributed to the advancement of knowledge or has produced a tangible benefit to society (e.g., superior crop variety, better breed of livestock, software utilization, patent applications, new technology, etc.).
- J. Other activities that have contributed to accomplishing AgriLife Research goals, such as improving the visibility of units and programs, participating in interdisciplinary research, or improving the effectiveness of the AgriLife Research unit.

3.0 REVIEW PROCESS FOR PROMOTION OF FACULTY IN PROFESSORIAL RANK

Promotion is a matter of central concern to individual faculty members and to the agency; therefore, the process must uphold high standards of fairness and review.

3.1 Review Process for Promotion from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor:

Within five (5) years of appointment and prior to the sixth (6) year, an Assistant Professor/Research Assistant Professor must be considered for promotion to Associate Professor/Research Associate Professor. The results of this five-year review will be one of the following:

- A. Recommend promotion to Associate Professor/Research Associate Professor.
- B. Recommend that the faculty member be reevaluated the following year.
- C. Recommend non-reappointment with adequate time (up to one year) to relocate.

If the faculty member has not been promoted after the initial five-year review, he/she will undergo a final review after approximately six (6) years in rank, but before the seventh (7) year. The results of this final review will be one of the following:

- A. Recommend promotion to Associate Professor/Research Associate Professor.
- B. Recommend non-reappointment with adequate time (up to one year) to relocate.

3.2 Review Process for Promotion from Associate Processor to Professor:

After six (6) years in rank, but prior to the seventh (7) year, each eligible Associate Professor/Research Associate Professor must be considered for promotion to Professor/Research Professor. The results of this six-year review will be one of the following:

- A. Recommend promotion to Professor/Research Professor.
- B. Recommend that the faculty member be reevaluated in two years.

If the faculty member has not been promoted after the six-year review, he/she will undergo another comprehensive review after eight (8) years, but before the ninth (9) year. The results of this review will be one of the following:

- A. Recommend promotion to Professor/Research Professor.
- B. Recommend that the faculty member remain at the Associate Professor/Research Associate Professor rank unless evidence is forthcoming in the future to warrant additional consideration.
- C. Recommend non-reappointment with adequate time (up to one year) to relocate.

4.0 DEPARTMENTAL REVIEW OF PROMOTION CANDIDATES

In order to provide more consistency in counseling, Department Heads and Center Directors are required to use a departmental peer review committee in the promotion process consisting of on- and off-campus senior faculty from the teaching, research, and extension areas. The function of this committee is to review the candidate's promotion dossier and provide advice and counsel to the Head of the Department and/or Center Director, as appropriate.

4.1 Role and Composition of Departmental Peer Review Committees

Departments are responsible for reviewing all persons eligible for promotion. Department Heads will consult a departmental peer review committee on promotion recommendations for on-campus AgriLife Research faculty before transmitting the promotion recommendation to the Director. Similarly, Center Directors will consult with the appropriate disciplinary department head (who will serve as liaison with the respective departmental peer review committee) for review of promotion recommendations for off-campus AgriLife Research faculty.

This advisory mechanism should be rather well-structured. Department Heads will work with their departmental peer review committees to ensure that the following guidelines are followed:

- A. Only faculty at the rank of associate professor or professor will serve on peer review committees, and only faculty members with rank higher than the candidate being considered should serve on peer review committees for promotion. Departmental peer review committees should include on- and off-campus faculty.
- B. Committee recommendations should be based on a written and widely circulated promotion document which specifies criteria and procedural guidelines, promulgated by the department.
- C. Committee deliberations must be conducted in confidence.
- D. Committee recommendations are advisory in nature.

4.2 Review Process by Departmental Peer Review Committee

Department Heads are responsible for conveying the recommendation regarding the promotion of on-campus AgriLife Research faculty to the Director. Center Directors are responsible for conveying the recommendation regarding the promotion of off-campus AgriLife Research faculty to the Director.

During the review process, if the Department Head and respective Center Director and the peer review committee do not recommend promotion, then the candidate's promotion file will not be forwarded to the Director for further consideration unless the candidate so requests.

If a person is under final review for promotion from assistant to associate professor, then the candidate's promotion file must be forwarded to the Director for review and action regardless of whether the recommendation is positive or negative.

If the Department Head or the appropriate Center Director or the review committee does not agree on a recommendation, then the candidate's promotion file will be forwarded to the Director for evaluation and further consultation.

At any point in the process, a promotion candidate may elect to withdraw his/her name from further consideration by written request.

5.0 AGENCY REVIEW OF PROMOTION CANDIDATES

5.1 Role and Composition of the AgriLife Peer Review Committee

The Director will use the Texas A&M AgriLife (AgriLife) Peer Review Committee to review all requests for promotion in rank from departments and off-campus AgriLife Research units. The committee will review all promotion (and tenure requests, as appropriate) recommendations, and ensure equitable review and evaluation of all teaching, research, and extension faculty promotion candidates, relative to the position description for each candidate.

The AgriLife Peer Review Committee will be comprised of 16 senior faculty members appointed by the Vice Chancellor, in consultation with the Dean of the Texas A&M College of Agriculture and Life Sciences; Director, AgriLife Research; and Director, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service (AgriLife Extension). The makeup of the committee will reflect the composition of the faculty within the College, AgriLife Research, and AgriLife Extension, and will be reviewed every three years to ensure it continues to represent the demographics of the faculty. Committee members will serve two-year terms, with approximately one-half of the committee rotating each year. As with the departmental peer review committees, all members of the AgriLife Peer Review Committee may vote on promotion and tenure decisions; however, the vote of the tenured faculty must be kept separate. The results of the committee's anonymous vote and the overall perspective of the committee relative to each faculty member under consideration will be explained by the Chair of the Committee in a statement to the Vice Chancellor on each candidate.

5.2 Review Process by the AgriLife Peer Review Committee

The AgriLife Peer Review Committee will review all promotion and tenure recommendations in accordance with the following:

- A. Review completeness of promotion candidate's file submitted by the Department, requesting additional information, if necessary, particularly if the candidate's department is not represented on the committee.
- B. Review recommendations of the departmental peer review committee, Department Head, and respective Center Director, as appropriate. The AgriLife Peer Review Committee should focus on promotion files of a marginal nature. Specifically:

If the departmental peer review committee and the administration strongly recommend a decision, and the AgriLife Peer Review Committee does not concur, then the AgriLife Peer Review Committee may request further input prior to a final recommendation. Detailed comments should accompany all AgriLife Peer Review Committee recommendations which are in opposition to the recommendations of the departmental peer review committee or administration.

If the departmental peer review committee and the administration are in direct conflict, the AgriLife Peer Review Committee should carefully review the entire file, including external letters, to determine the merits of the file. If necessary, the AgriLife Peer Review Committee may invite the appropriate Department Head (and respective Center Director, as appropriate) and chair of the departmental peer review committee to the meeting to gain further information.

The Chair of the AgriLife Peer Review Committee will be responsible for transmitting written results of the committee's deliberations and make recommendations regarding desired changes to the process.

6.0 REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF PROMOTION DOSSIERS BY AGENCY ADMINISTRATION

When the Director does not concur with the recommendation of the Department Head/Center Director and/or department peer review recommendation, the Vice Chancellor will inform the Department Head and respective Center Director of the reasons for that decision. The departmental peer review committee will then have the opportunity to ensure that all appropriate materials have, in fact, been properly enclosed with the promotion dossier, and that all relevant arguments have been put forward. In the event that germane new evidence is introduced, or new, quite different arguments are applied, the departmental peer review committee may submit a newly organized document for reconsideration.

If the Director recommends against promotion and that recommendation is contrary to the recommendation of the Department Head and Center Director, then the Vice Chancellor will inform the Department Head and appropriate Center Director and the candidate of the reasons for the decision. The faculty member will then have the opportunity to offer any new evidence in support of the request for promotion, and that evidence will be reviewed by the Director and the AgriLife Peer Review Committee before a final recommendation concerning promotion is made.

In the event of a negative promotion decision, the faculty member is entitled to a written statement of the reasons that contributed to that decision. If requested by the faculty member, a statement of reasons will be provided by the Department Head and/or appropriate Center Director (or Director).

7.0 NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE FOR INFORMING FACULTY MEMBERS

Faculty members will be advised in a timely manner, in writing, of the recommendation for or against promotion at each level of the review. The following information delineates this notification process:

Departmental Peer Review Committee—Department Head will notify on-campus AgriLife Research candidates upon receipt of recommendation from peer review committee. For off-campus AgriLife Research faculty, the Department Head will notify the respective Center Director who will notify the candidate regarding the recommendation from the peer review committee.

Department and/or Center Director

Department Head and/or Center Director (as appropriate) notifies candidate upon submission of recommendation to the Director.

AgriLife Peer Review Committee

Upon receipt of AgriLife Peer Review Committee's recommendation, Director notifies department head (on-campus faculty) or appropriate Center Director (off-campus AgriLife Research faculty with copy to department head), who notifies candidate (jointly, as appropriate).

Vice Chancellor & Director Following a review, the Vice Chancellor & Director notifies Department Head (for on-campus faculty) or Center Director (for off-campus faculty) of promotion recommendations, who notifies candidate (jointly, as appropriate).

8.0 FINAL DECISION

As the Chief Executive Officer, the Director of AgriLife Research has authority to approve all faculty promotions, pending confirmation by the Chancellor. All final promotion decisions will be conveyed in writing to the faculty member in a timely fashion consistent with notification of promotion and tenure decisions of all teaching, research, and extension faculty.

9.0 APPEALS

Faculty within AgriLife Research have the right to present grievances concerning promotion in professorial rank. The basis for an appeal regarding promotion in rank exists when, in the opinion of the faculty member, one or more of the following has occurred:

- 9.1 There was a failure to follow the prescribed procedures.
- 9.2 There was a failure to adhere to the established criteria for determining promotion in rank.
- 9.3 There was a discovery of significant new evidence in support of the faculty member related to academic credentials, length of professional service, performance appraisal information, and overall achievement, productivity and/or effectiveness.

Faculty having concerns or grievances regarding promotion in professorial rank are encouraged to seek resolution of those concerns through established supervisory channels prior to filing a written appeal. If the matter cannot be resolved, the faculty member may seek a hearing by an appeals committee.

The written appeal will include the basis for the appeal committee and must contain any supporting evidence and/or documentation to be considered. Written appeals concerning denial of promotion in rank must be filed within 20 working days of notification of denial.

A seven-member Appeals Committee will be appointed by the Director to review and/or hear individual appeals regarding promotion in rank.

The appellant may request to meet with the Appeals Committee to present his/her case. Such request will be included in the written appeal. If the appellant elects to be represented by an attorney, the appellant will notify the Director's Office at least five working days before the date the appeal is to be heard. The appellant will be solely responsible for any legal expenses incurred in such representation.

The Appeals Committee will judge the merits of the case and forward its written recommendation with supporting documents to the Director for final action within 20 working days from the end of the appeal hearing.

The Director will notify the appellant in writing of acceptance or rejection of the Appeals Committee recommendation. Such notification will be made within 60 working days of receipt of the written appeal.

CONTACT OFFICE

Questions about this procedure should be referred to AgriLife Human Resources at 979-845-2423.

REVISION HISTORY

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