

**PROFESSORIAL CAREER LADDER SYSTEM**  
**FOR**  
**EXTENSION SPECIALIST FACULTY**  
**TEXAS AGRILIFE EXTENSION SERVICE**  
**THE TEXAS A&M SYSTEM**

**May, 2008 \***

(\*Changes made to reflect establishment of Department of Ecosystem Science and Management)

## **I. Introduction**

Faculty in the Texas AgriLife Extension Service perform a vital role in the triad of functions--teaching, research, and extension/outreach--which form the basis of the land-grant university system. Extension faculty are responsible for extending the university system to the people of Texas through a variety of research based educational programs.

Faculty are encouraged to work collaboratively in developing linkages with all parts of the Texas A&M System. Extension faculty develop opportunities for increased collaboration with faculty and scientists in the Texas A&M College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Texas AgriLife Research, and the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine. Increased opportunities for collaboration exist with faculty in the various colleges of Texas A&M University and other institutions both within and outside of The Texas A&M University System. Extension faculty also are encouraged to pursue linkages with other key educational and health institutions in the state and nation, as well as develop associations at the international level and with the research and development private sector.

In furthering the mission of Texas AgriLife Extension, Extension faculty perform in the total arena of teaching, research, and extension education and are expected to be innovative and progressive in their programmatic efforts. Applied and adaptive research must often be conducted to obtain specific information that can be used by clientele in technology and knowledge transfer. The unique role of program development through local needs assessment and program implementation through a network of county Extension agents often distinguishes the Extension faculty from the resident instructor and the research scientist. In educating adults and providing youth with leadership development programs, Extension faculty have a direct and often immediate impact on individuals and their quality of life.

## **II. Titles and Evaluation Criteria**

### **A. Titles**

Incremental non-tenured ranks of assistant professor, associate professor, and professor will be assigned to each qualified Extension faculty member. The professorial title will include the rank (e.g., Professor, Associate Professor, or Assistant Professor) and "Extension Specialist" and may be followed by a subject matter subtitle. Examples include the following:

Professor and Extension Poultry Specialist  
Associate Professor and Extension Nutrition Specialist  
Assistant Professor and Extension Forage Specialist

### **B. Evaluation Criteria**

Extension faculty will be evaluated for promotion based on evaluation criteria as established in this policy. Evaluation of an individual's effectiveness will be based on various diverse activities that represent overall contributions in educational programming and translating technology for effective delivery to targeted audiences. A combination of critical professional endeavors forms the basis for an accurate evaluation of Extension faculty members:

#### **1. Program Development Activities and Planning**

A variety of peer and clientele inputs should be used to determine the content, quality, priority, and emphasis of the Extension faculty member's programmatic leadership. This should reflect the assimilation and synthesis of information from county and regional program development committees, clientele organizations, and key industry leaders relative to the strategic plans of the department, college, and agency.

## **2. Teaching Effectiveness and Quality**

Teaching quality involves command of the subject discipline, progressive assimilation and delivery of new knowledge, and an ability to present information through logic and effective communication. Quality and effectiveness should be represented through clientele and peer evaluation. Faculty should utilize state-of-the-art communications technology when appropriate.

## **3. Quality of Program and Organizational Support**

Faculty are expected to participate in disciplinary, multidisciplinary, and interdisciplinary programming efforts as appropriate to adequately address the priority issues of the clientele. Financial and material support should be sought through grants and contracts or innovative linkages with other agencies, industry, or organizational groups. The evaluation should assess both grant and contract proposals or solicitations submitted and awarded.

## **4. Cooperative and Coordinative Efforts**

Each Extension faculty member is expected to establish and enhance mutual support among colleagues within and across disciplines at the agency, college and university level. Timely and effective coordination, cooperation, and scheduling of activities with District Extension Administrators, Regional Program Directors, county staff, and other agencies/organizations are required for programs and responsibilities with mutual audiences.

## **5. Scholarly Contributions and Professionalism**

The faculty member should demonstrate evidence of contributions to professional and total Extension programs. The development of creative educational programs and/or materials which are widely accepted and used are examples of professional contributions. Applied or translational research and comprehensive and intensive program evaluations are important components for Extension faculty. Publication of creative and scholarly work is expected.

For purposes of promotion, all of these indicators of performance should be reviewed by departmental or Extension program unit evaluation committees. Specific materials to be included are program objective statements, program evaluations, plans of work, and the faculty

achievement reports. Additional supporting materials provided in the faculty achievement report such as public and institutional service, research, teaching, and other non-extension activities shall be included in the overall assessment. A qualitative assessment performed by a peer committee evaluation at the department or program unit level will be conducted.

Educational materials which have been developed for Extension bulletins, fact sheets, production videos, instructional manuals, handbooks, and computer software programs will also be included in the evaluation. Similarly, written and visual support materials (including PowerPoint presentations, video tapes, and film) used in educational settings such as field days, seminars, workshops, and interactive video productions also should be evaluated. The overall evaluation should not be limited to traditional materials, but should consider the quality and originality of thought and the integration of educational concepts that will lead to increased awareness and appropriate change and/or adoption. Additional attention should be given to the development of techniques or new modes of educational delivery (e.g., interactive video, e-learning systems) and the revision and/or development of new educational approaches in the base program areas of the discipline.

The development and publication of comprehensive handbooks, training manuals, and textbooks may also be considered in evaluating the faculty members' contributions to the entire educational program. In such cases, the committee should assess the quality of the work in addition to determining the value and acceptance of the work in other states and by other universities. Educational grants for the development of new and creative Extension programs may also be considered as instances in which prepared materials extend beyond the limits of the university or state.

Appendix 1 provides categories of criteria which may be considered in promoting Extension faculty in the Professorial rank system. Other evidence of recognition by colleagues, Extension clientele, and other professionals includes the following examples:

1. Receipt of awards for outstanding programs or service.
2. Peer recognition by other faculty within the discipline, particularly those who have direct evaluative experience, and have attended Extension programs or presentations before professional groups or societies.
3. Comprehensive program evaluations that attest to program effectiveness (awareness, adoption, etc.) through pre- and post-survey evaluations and/or other evidence of productive change or mastery by clientele.
4. Evidence that the faculty member has been a catalyst for the initiation of new programming approaches within and/or across disciplines to include developing interactions with new faculty, scientists, and clientele.
5. Contributions to professional societies.

6. Leadership in networking with other faculties, research scientists, societies, and professional groups leading to integrated interdisciplinary programming.
7. Solicited evaluations by outside faculty within the discipline of national reputation as to assessment of creative professional accomplishments.

C. Standards of Achievement of Professorial Ranks

As follows on pages 4 - 10.

**1. Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist**

- a. Degree Requirements
  - Terminal degree in appropriate subject matter discipline  
(Exceptions may be granted for outstanding service and distinguished achievements)
- b. Duties and Responsibilities

(1) Program Development Activities and Planning

Perceived ability and evidence of competence necessary to:

- Determine and understand the type of programmatic approaches needed to meet the variable educational capabilities of different audiences for effective program planning and execution.
- Assist County Extension Agents and Program Area Committee members to effectively use the Extension's program development process.

(2) Teaching Effectiveness and Quality

Satisfactory indication of personal and professional traits necessary to:

- Train Extension personnel to use appropriate educational methods and techniques for communicating with specific audiences.
- Determine and understand the variable needs and interests of audiences for effective program delivery.

- Develop effective learning environments for adult and/or youth audiences.
- Select suitable methods and techniques for solving problems and achieving objectives within subject matter discipline.
- Identify, train, and support volunteer leaders to enhance effective adult and/or youth education programs.

(3) Quality of Program and Organizational Support

Evidence of a high standard of scholarship and promise of growth and development sufficient to:

- Function effectively on program planning committees and in various service capacities at the university, agency, and clientele level.
- Utilize appropriate media to effectively disseminate subject matter information.
- Prepare effective newsletters, news articles, technical fact sheets, and educational materials.
- Maintain effective working relationships with sponsors and donors in securing and maintaining support and resources for Extension educational programs.
- Develop proposals for grants or contracts.

(4) Cooperative and Coordinative Efforts

Professional and personal attributes necessary to:

- Interact positively with diverse populations including teaching, research, and extension faculty and the general public, especially those participating in the faculty member's discipline.
- Function effectively with clientele, academic faculty, research scientists, and associates.

(5) Scholarly Contributions and Professionalism

Evidence indicating a commitment to:

- Maintain continued competency in discipline.
- Desire to improve knowledge and subject matter competence.
- Gain recognition in professional organization as a contributor in the field.

## **2. Associate Professor and Extension Specialist**

### a. Degree Requirements

- Terminal degree in appropriate subject matter discipline and at least six years of professional experience  
(Exceptions may be granted for outstanding service and distinguished achievements)

### b. Duties and Responsibilities (in addition to those of the lower rank)

#### (1) Program Development Activities and Planning

- Effective planning and implementation of quality educational programs needed to meet the informational expectations of the clientele.
- Work through Extension's program development process in planning, carrying out, and evaluating Extension educational programs in assigned program area.
- Recognized by peers and county personnel for expertise and ability to develop and plan highly effective programs.

#### (2) Teaching Effectiveness and Quality

- Lead Extension faculty in determining and understanding the clientele's needs and interests including the development of effective educational programs to address relevant issues.
- Develop and conduct appropriate learning experiences for adult and/or youth audiences.
- Present effective educational information through formal and informal programs including in-depth education for adult and/or youth audiences.

(3) Quality of Program and Organizational Support

- Effectively utilize appropriate communication tools to disseminate subject matter information.
- Provide evidence of effective ability to write newsletters, news articles, technical fact sheets, and educational materials.
- Demonstrate effective working relationships with sponsors and donors in securing and maintaining support and resources for Extension educational programs.
- Demonstrate success in obtaining grants and contracts to support the faculty member's educational program.

(4) Cooperative and Coordinative Efforts

- Assist in directing and coordinating efforts of teaching, research, and Extension faculty to create an effective and synergistic working relationship.
- Cooperate effectively with external organizations important to the Agency and educational programs.

(5) Scholarly Contributions and Professionalism

- Maintain expanded competency in discipline.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the current advances and developments within the profession and provide evidence of the ability to apply such knowledge.
- Recognized for service and leadership in professional organizations.
- Recognized by peers for scholarly contributions and professionalism.

**3. Professor and Extension Specialist**

a. Degree Requirements



- Terminal degree in appropriate subject matter discipline and at least ten years of professional experience. (Exceptions may be granted for outstanding service and distinguished achievements).

b. Duties and Responsibilities (in addition to those of lower ranks)

(1) Program Development Activities and Planning

- Plan comprehensive and effective educational programs and develop procedures and methods that meet program outcome objectives.
- Plan, implement, and evaluate programs developed through Extension's program development process; adjust program based evaluation input.
- Develop broad objectives, programs, and plans for strengthening Extension efforts in an assigned program or subject matter area related to the Agency Strategic Plan.
- Demonstrate ability to be creative in seeking solutions to complex educational problems and issues.

(2) Teaching Effectiveness and Quality

- Provide comprehensive technical assistance and expert guidance to administrators, Extension faculty members, and county Extension agents.
- Develop and implement relevant, in-depth programs in subject matter responsibility.
- Develop educational programs and techniques which are innovative, comprehensive, and appropriate for the audience.

(3) Quality of Program and Organizational Support

- Exemplary competence in developing and writing newsletters, news articles, technical fact sheets, and educational materials.
- Demonstrate leadership roles on faculty, agency, and college committees.
- Identify, secure, and maintain support and resources for

educational programs. Successful in attracting grants and contracts.

- Utilize electronic technology to effectively reach clientele.

(4) Cooperative and Coordinative Efforts

- Motivate and contribute significantly to program unit, task forces, faculty committees, etc. and create effective working relationships across departments, agencies, and colleges.
- Demonstrate cooperation with leadership of key organizations that are relevant to program delivery strategies.

(5) Scholarly Contributions and Professionalism

- Maintain and possess a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the discipline.
- Established regional or national reputation as having contributed significantly to one's field of expertise.
- Serve in leadership positions in professional organizations.
- Recognized by colleagues within the discipline for scholarship and professional understanding of subject area.

### **III. Extension Professorial Career Ladder**

#### **A. Professorial Progression**

Annual reviews of each Extension faculty member by the unit head are required to provide an opportunity for effective communication between each faculty member and his/her Department Head and Associate Department Head or Program Unit Leader. (Appendix 2)

Following appointment to the initial professorial rank, an Extension faculty member will annually be eligible for consideration at the next higher rank based on recommendations of the designated unit head. Comments will be solicited from a Peer Review Committee based on the criteria as stated in this policy. The Extension faculty member will be informed of the decisions of the Peer Review Committee and the unit head pertaining to promotion recommendations.

## B. Peer Review Committee

Departments/units are responsible for reviewing all extension specialists who hold a disciplinary appointment through an academic department/unit. Department Heads will consult a promotion committee (peer review committee) on promotion recommendations for on- and off-campus extension specialist faculty before transmitting the promotion recommendation to the Director of the agency. This advisory mechanism should be well-structured and effectively communicated within the unit. This committee should be composed of appropriate senior teaching, research and extension faculty members who can evaluate the quality and breadth of the overall performance of the junior faculty relative to the role of Extension faculty in a land-grant university system. Department/Unit Heads will work with their departmental/unit peer review committees to ensure that the following guidelines are followed:

- Only faculty at the rank of associate professor or professor will be named to serve on a peer review committee, and only faculty members with rank higher than the candidate being considered should serve on peer review committees for promotion. Departmental/Unit peer review committees should include on- and off-campus faculty where possible. (Note: The promotion candidate's dossier cover sheet must include the total number of faculty eligible to vote).
- Committee recommendations should be based on a written and widely circulated promotion document which specifies criteria and procedural guidelines, promulgated by the department and agency.
- Committee deliberations must be conducted in confidence.
- Committee recommendations are advisory in nature.
- A preponderance of outside letters should be from peer institutions. Departments and units will be responsible for determining their respective peers. All letters requested and received are to be included in the candidate's promotion dossier.

In consideration of requests for promotion from nondepartmentalized faculty who do not have a clear disciplinary department, the Director of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service, in consultation with the Vice Chancellor and Dean of Agriculture, will be responsible for defining the committee membership for nondepartmentalized faculty. These committees should be comprised of faculty who possess the appropriate disciplinary expertise necessary to evaluate the quality and breadth of the performance of the nondepartmentalized Extension faculty member(s). Where possible and appropriate, members from various departmental review committees will be included in the nondepartmental review committees to assure consistency of the review process.

During the review process, if both the Department Head 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, 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 review committee does not agree on a recommendation, then the matter will be forwarded to the Director for evaluation and further consultation with the Vice Chancellor.

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

#### C. Agency Review by the Texas AgriLife Peer Review Committee

The Director will use the AgriLife Peer Review Committee to review all requests for promotion in rank of all Extension specialists. The committee will review all promotion recommendations and ensure equitable review and evaluation of teaching, research and extension 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, Texas AgriLife Research; and Director, Texas AgriLife Extension. The makeup of the committee will reflect the composition of the faculty within the College, Texas AgriLife Research and Texas AgriLife Extension, and will be reviewed every three years to ensure it continues to represent the demographics of the faculty. Committee members shall 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 shall be explained by the Chair of the Committee in a statement to the Vice Chancellor on each candidate.

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

1. Review completeness of promotion candidate's file submitted by the Department/Unit, requesting additional information, if necessary, particularly if the candidate's department is not represented on the committee.

2. Review recommendations of the departmental/unit peer review committee, Department/Unit Head, and AgriLife Extension nondepartmental program leader, as appropriate. The AgriLife Peer Review Committee should focus on nominations of a marginal nature. Specifically:
  - a. If the departmental peer review committee and the unit 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/unit peer review committee or unit administration.
  - b. If the departmental peer review committee and the unit 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/Unit Head and chair of the departmental peer review committee to the meeting to gain further information.
3. 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.

When the Director does not concur with the recommendation of the Department/Unit Head and/or department peer review recommendation, the Director will inform the appropriate unit leader of the reasons for that decision. The departmental peer review committee shall 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/Program Leader, then the Director shall inform the appropriate unit leader and the candidate of the reasons for the decision. The faculty member shall then have the opportunity to offer any new evidence in support of the request for promotion, and that evidence shall 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 or AgriLife Extension nondepartmental program leader, as appropriate.

#### **IV. Appeals Procedure for Professorial Progression**

- A. Extension specialist faculty have the right to present grievances concerning progression through the Professorial Career Ladder. Basis for an appeal regarding progression in rank exists when, in the opinion of the Extension faculty member, one or more of the following has occurred:
1. There was a failure to follow the prescribed procedures.
  2. There was a failure to adhere to the established criteria for determining progression in rank.
  3. There was a discovery of significant new evidence in support of the Extension faculty member related to academic credentials, length of professional service, performance appraisal information and overall achievement, productivity, and/or effectiveness.

Extension faculty having concerns or grievances regarding other aspects of the Professorial Career Ladder 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 shall include the basis for the appeal committee and must contain any supporting evidence and/or documentation to be considered. Written appeals concerning denial of progression in rank must be filed within 20 working days of notification of denial.

- B. A seven-member Appeals Committee shall be appointed by the Director to review and/or hear individual appeals regarding progression in rank.
- C. The appellant may request to meet with the Appeals Committee to present his/her case. Such a request shall 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.

- D. The Appeals Committee shall judge the merits of the case and forward its written recommendation with supporting documentation to the Director for final action within 20 working days from the end of the appeal hearing.
- E. The Director shall notify the appellant in writing of acceptance or rejection of the Appeals Committee recommendation. Such notification shall be made within 60 working days of receipt of the written appeal.

## Appendix 1

### **CRITERIA FOR CONSIDERATION OF PROMOTION IN THE EXTENSION PROFESSORIAL RANK SYSTEM**

#### Categories

- A. Contributions to assigned Extension duties\*
  - 1. Presentations
  - 2. Program initiation, development, evaluation, and interpretation
  - 3. Workshops, seminars, field days, etc.
  - 4. Extension publications
  - 5. Demonstrations (result/method, field trials/applied research)
  - 6. Agent training sessions
  - 7. Mass media work
  - 8. Grants and contracts
  - 9. Interagency activities
  - 10. Clientele commodity support groups
  - 11. Extension planning activities
  - 12. Leadership and volunteer training
  - 13. Consultation/technical assistance
  - 14. Other Extension contributions
- B. State/regional/national/international contributions
  - 1. Publications (including peer reviewed journal publications)
  - 2. Presentations (professional organizations and peer audiences included)
  - 3. Committee assignments
  - 4. Membership in professional organizations (including offices held)
  - 5. Other Extension contributions

- C. Contributions to major Agency missions
  - 1. Teaching
  - 2. Research (basic and applied)
  - 3. Service
- D. Service to university/Extension/community (committee assignments, leadership positions, etc.)
- E. Awards and honors, including membership in honorary societies

\*Because of the wide variation in position descriptions, not every Extension faculty member is expected to contribute in all categories listed. Specific position descriptions and plan of work dictate which categories are most appropriate.

## Appendix 2

### **GROUPS ELIGIBLE FOR PROFESSORIAL CAREER LADDER**

- A. Departmentalized Groups
  - 1. Agricultural Economics
  - 2. Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communication
  - 3. Biological and Agricultural Engineering
  - 4. Animal Science
  - 5. Biochemistry and Biophysics  
Ecosystem Science and Management
  - 6. Entomology
  - 7. Horticultural Science
  - 9. Nutrition and Food Science
  - 10. Plant Pathology and Microbiology
  - 11. Poultry Science
  - 12. Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences
  - 14. Soil and Crop Sciences
  - 15. Veterinary Medicine
  - 16. Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences



B. Nondepartmentalized Groups

1. Agricultural Communications
2. Agricultural Chemicals
3. Computer Technology
4. 4-H and Youth Development
5. Family and Consumer Sciences
6. V.G. Young Institute of County Government