Stephen F. Austin State University

Performance Evaluation of Tenured Faculty

To ensure continued excellence in faculty performance and pursuant to Section 51.942 of the Texas Education Code, Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) regularly evaluates the performance of tenured faculty. The evaluation process will:

a. avoid any infringement on academic freedom.

b. focus on improving faculty performance.

c. include sufficient appeals processes and due process to ensure fairness.

d. preserve the essential institution of academic tenure.

The process of evaluating tenured faculty at SFA includes several basic components:

a. an annual administrative evaluation of faculty performance (full-time tenured and non-tenured);

b. a comprehensive performance evaluation of all tenured faculty will take place at least once every six years;

c. a plan for assisted faculty development prompted by deficiencies identified in the annual administrative evaluation or comprehensive performance evaluation.

STANDARDS FOR PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF TENURED FACULTY

Standards to determine what constitutes appropriate minimum performance for a tenured full-time faculty member must be developed by the academic unit tenured and approved by the tenured faculty in each tenure unit. These standards will be in keeping with the mission of the University, the mission and goals of the college, and the mission and goals of the unit. They are to be based on, but need not be limited to, the professional responsibilities of the faculty member in teaching, scholarly scholarship, research and creative activity, and service. The standards should recognize the need to allow for legitimate variation in the development of faculty careers. A copy of these standards will be forwarded to the college dean and the provost and vice president for academic affairs for review and approval.

The standards shall be subject to periodic review by the tenured academic unit faculty in the tenure unit at least every five years, unless requested earlier by the unit head or dean. Any modifications are subject to review and approval by the appropriate academic dean and the provost and vice president for academic affairs.

A copy of the standards shall be made available provided to every tenured and tenure-track full-time faculty member by the unit head.

THE ANNUAL INDIVIDUAL PROFESSIONAL EVALUATION
Each tenured full-time faculty member will prepare and submit to the unit head an annual report of the professional activities and performance during the previous calendar year. As part of this report, academic units may require a self-evaluation that includes statements identifying an individual’s strengths and weaknesses and specifying plans for the upcoming academic year aimed at strengthening the faculty member’s performance. Unit heads may meet with the college dean to review faculty evaluation prior to sharing the documents. During a face-to-face evaluation meeting with the faculty member, the unit head will provide the written administrative evaluation of faculty performance. After the administrative reviews are completed, the unit head may meet with the college dean to review faculty evaluations. The dean will forward administrative evaluations and any supporting documentation to the provost and vice president for academic affairs. Faculty who receive two unsatisfactory annual evaluations in any three-year period will be subject to the procedures outlined in the Plan for Assisted Development (PAD).

THE PERIODIC COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Every tenured faculty member with less than a 0.5 FTE administrative appointment will undergo a comprehensive performance evaluation every sixth year after receiving tenure, returning to a faculty position following an administrative assignment, or after a previous comprehensive performance evaluation (including promotion or successful completion of a plan for assisted faculty development).

a. Exceptions to this schedule can be made by the unit head with approval of the dean when there is a sufficient reason (e.g., illness, promotion) to do so, but the period must not extend beyond six years.

b. With approval from the dean and provost, the post-tenure clock will be suspended for all faculty holding administrative positions within the tenure unit (e.g., departmental chairs) or holding at least a 0.5 FTE administrative position.

The comprehensive performance evaluation will be conducted on the same schedule as tenure and promotion evaluations and in accordance with the following process:

a. Each tenure faculty member will be reviewed by the tenured faculty in his/her tenure unit. This initial review will make use of annual reviews of the faculty activities and performance for the five most recent years. If a simple majority of the tenured voting faculty determines that the faculty member meets or exceeds the adopted standards of the unit, then that faculty member will be determined as performing satisfactorily and no further action will be required.

b. Should the reviewed faculty member fail to receive at least a simple majority of the votes of approval, then he/she will be subject to the procedures outlined in the Plan for Assisted Faculty Development (PAFD).
PLAN FOR ASSISTED FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

The Plan for Assisted Faculty Development (PAFD) will incorporate a significant peer component and will have as its main intention professional growth, personal reflection, and performance improvement.

a. A committee will be appointed by the unit head in consultation with the faculty member and subject to approval by the dean. It is the task of this committee, in consultation with the unit head and the faculty member, to formulate a PAFD to remediate any performance deficiencies identified in the Comprehensive Performance Evaluation. A timeline for remediation not to exceed 24 calendar months with tangible benchmarks of progress will be established at this time.

b. The PAFDC will be signed by the faculty member, the unit head, and the dean to indicate their agreement with the terms of the plan. If the unit head, faculty member, and peer evaluation committee members are unable to come to agreement on a suitable PAFD then the faculty member will be required to adhere to the PAFD as formulated by the unit head and committee. A copy of the plan will be sent for information to the provost and vice president for academic affairs.

c. After the PAFD has been created, the peer committee will remain in place and will meet at appropriate intervals with the unit head to review progress in meeting benchmark goals. The unit head will then hold meetings with the faculty member to assess progress.

d. At this point, upon completion of the PAFD, there are three possible outcomes:

   (1) When, in the determination of the unit head, the faculty member has succeeded in restoring his/her performance to an acceptable level by meeting the goals of the PAFD in a timely manner, then the unit head will notify both in writing the faculty member, the peer consultants committee, and the dean in writing, by the date specified in Section 7. The faculty member then becomes subject to the ordinary periodic comprehensive performance evaluation after the standard set interval.

   (2) The unit head may recommend extending the time for completion of the PAFD, but for the maximum extension permitted of is one year. The dean of the college will choose to allow or deny the extension and will communicate this decision in writing to the unit head and faculty member within seven (7) calendar days of receiving the recommendation.

   (3) If, after seeking the opinions of the faculty peer consultation team committee, it is the judgment of the unit head that the faculty member has failed to satisfy the PAFD, then the unit head will so inform the dean, the peer consultants committee, and the affected faculty member in writing, by the date specified in Section 7.

When informed by the chair that a faculty member has failed to satisfy the requirements of
the PAFD, the dean shall personally confer with the faculty member regarding his/her performance under the PAFD, with the appropriate unit head, and, if necessary, with the peer evaluation committee members. Following the review, the dean shall forward a recommendation to the provost and vice president for academic affairs. The dean may recommend to the provost and vice president for academic affairs any of several actions, including, but not limited to:

a. restoring the faculty member to a regular status;

b. requiring another PAFD be formulated, with a different peer consultation committee team;

c. instituting dismissal proceedings or other appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with SFA policy, and applicable law.

If the disciplinary action being contemplated is dismissal for cause, a faculty member subject to termination on the basis of an evaluation conducted pursuant to this policy must be given the opportunity for referral of the matter to a nonbinding alternative dispute resolution process as described in Chapter 154, Civil Practices and Remedies Code. If both parties agree, an alternative dispute resolution method may be elected. The governing board must give specific reasons in writing for any decision to terminate a faculty member on the basis of an evaluation conducted pursuant to this policy.

THE PLAN FOR ASSISTED FACULTY DEVELOPMENT (PAFD)
(Move this up)
See language in current policy here, 7.22

Reference Policy 7.29