

**Position Responsibility Statements for Faculty Members
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences**

**Approved by the College Faculty Senators in May, 2008
Revised by the College Faculty Senators in April 2013**

Preamble

The Faculty Senate recently changed the Position Responsibility Statement (PRS) policy, requiring that at least every five years tenured faculty members re-evaluate their position responsibilities with their chairs, and providing for a department-level PRS Mediation Panel in cases where a faculty member and the department chair disagree with a proposed change to the faculty member's PRS. The revised document also specifies that if an agreement between the faculty member and the department chair does not emerge after the PRS panel issues an opinion on how the disagreement should be resolved, the matter will be forwarded by the party disagreeing with the proposed change to the faculty member's college where a mechanism will be in place for further consideration and resolution. The present proposal suggests polices at the departmental and college levels to: (1) provide a starting point from which to construct individual position responsibility statements, (2) incorporate a fixed term for position responsibility statements, and (3) supply a mechanism to arbitrate disagreements at the college level.

The strength of the university is the underlying creative energy and diversity of its faculty members. The underlying philosophy of this proposal is that individual faculty members contribute to the mission of the university in many different ways and that their individual responsibilities may change over time to reflect the needs of the university, their own expertise, productivity and interests, and new opportunities to enhance the overall quality of the academy and the broader community that it serves.

Differential work loads. Flexible position responsibility statements are based on the concept of differential workloads within and among departments. In some disciplines, a faculty member with an active research program may teach two classes per year while another faculty member in the department may teach six courses per year and devote little time to research or other time-intensive activities. Similarly, in another department, a faculty member may teach one class per year, manage several large external grants, or serve as director of a center. Or a faculty member may lead an Extension program, carry out a nationally recognized applied research program, and do little on-campus teaching. Thus, PRSs are to be developed in accordance with the differing departmental norms and individual expectations with respect to teaching, research, Extension programs and outreach, and service.

Evaluation. Faculty members will be evaluated based on their PRSs; a person with a large commitment to research in their PRS would be expected to publish more and direct more graduate students than a person whose PRS commits a small part of their effort to research with a greater commitment to Extension programs and outreach, teaching, and other activities (e.g., administration).

Appointments in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Tenured and tenure-track faculty members in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences will have a default or “standard” position responsibility statement that is consistent with their research, teaching, Extension programs and outreach, and service responsibilities. We propose the following default position responsibility statement as a basis on which to construct individual statements.

A standard appointment for tenured and tenure-track faculty in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences in the Department of _____ is 45% teaching and advising, 45% research, and 10% service to the institution and broader community.

Faculty members are expected to provide an effective learning experience for students. Faculty members also advise undergraduate students in a manner consistent with departmental practices.

Faculty members with active research programs are expected to supervise graduate students, present research findings at national and international conferences as appropriate, and publish research results on a regular basis in discipline-appropriate refereed outlets. Faculty members are expected to attempt to secure extramural funding to the extent necessary to sustain their research program and support graduate students.

Tenured faculty members provide leadership at the local and national levels to research areas and educational programs.

Faculty members are expected to provide service to the department, the college and the university as needed for the efficient operation thereof, and to contribute to professional societies and the public as a natural outcome of their activities.

We emphasize that the foregoing is simply a default PRS to be adopted if no other statement is in effect. The PRS for each faculty member will reflect their own talents and interests and the expectations and needs of the department, the college and the university.

Fixed Term Position Responsibility Statements

We propose that all PRSs be written for fixed terms not to exceed five years. Given typical changes in faculty member interests and opportunities, as well as departmental needs, it is appropriate to revise PRSs on a regular basis. The Faculty Handbook requires that they be reviewed at least every five years. At the time of initial hire and at appropriate intervals thereafter, the department chair and the faculty member will develop an individualized PRS reflecting the interests and expertise of the faculty member, the needs of the department and the university, research productivity, Extension program plans, outreach opportunities, teaching, and other considerations. This initial PRS will be part of the original offer letter or will be developed during the first semester under contract. The offer letter will specify that this initial PRS is for a fixed term and that it will be renegotiated when it expires, or earlier, by mutual agreement of the faculty member and the department chair.

New faculty members. New assistant professors will have a three-year term for their initial PRS and third-year review. They will negotiate a second PRS with the department chair

upon completion of the third-year review. In most cases, content of the original PRS will remain unchanged until the tenure review.

Department Chairs. Department chairs will have a position responsibility statement, written by the department chair and the dean, describing the administrative and other departmental responsibilities of the position.

Some Examples of Changes in Position Responsibility Statements

- a. An increase in teaching or research appointment for individuals whose relative allocation of time to teaching and research changes. It is not necessary to negotiate a new PRS for minor adjustments in teaching loads or research commitments, but this should be done when base teaching loads are increased or decreased beyond that indicated by an existing PRS.
- b. A decrease in general teaching and/or research responsibilities may be warranted in cases where a faculty member assumes major administrative commitments on behalf of the department, college, or university.
- c. A decrease in general teaching and/or research responsibilities in order to provide leadership to a specific Extension programs and/or outreach on a continuing basis. A continuing program involves research, program design and construction, relationship development, and content delivery.

Negotiation of Position Responsibility Statements

At the time of initial hiring, or with the expiration of a PRS, or at other times as desired by the faculty member or the chair, an individual faculty member and the department chair will discuss a new PRS for the faculty member. An agreed upon new PRS with a new fixed term would be effective immediately upon signing by both parties. If there is not agreement on a new PRS, the old PRS will be in force until a new agreement is reached or until the mediation process as outlined in the Faculty Handbook has run its course, whichever occurs first.

Disagreements on Position Responsibility Statements

The Faculty Handbook specifies that if either the faculty member or the department chair disagrees with a proposed change to the faculty member's PRS, either party may refer the matter to a department-level PRS Mediation Panel. The procedures specified by the Faculty Handbook for handling such a disagreement follow.

This (PRS Mediation Panel) will consist of one tenured faculty member selected by the faculty member involved in the disagreement and one tenured faculty member selected by the department chair. A third tenured faculty member will also serve, and unless the department decides otherwise, the default policy for obtaining that member will be by faculty election in the department at the beginning of each year [Departments that desire another method of obtaining the third member may choose one of the following: a) a tenured faculty member who is chair of an elected departmental council; b) a tenured faculty member who has been elected by the department to the promotion and tenure review committee and who chairs that committee; c) a tenured faculty member who has been elected by the department to the post-tenure review committee and who chairs that committee.]. The elected faculty

member must be in place as soon as possible following passage of this change and no later than the end of the following semester. The faculty members selected by the two parties will be selected at the time of the disagreement between those two parties. The party referring the matter to the PRS Mediation Panel will submit to the panel the faculty member's existing PRS, the text of the proposed PRS, an explanation of why the change is being sought/or is not acceptable, and the faculty member's curriculum vita. The other party should provide a written explanation of why the proposed change is not acceptable/is being sought. The PRS Mediation Panel will review the materials that have been submitted, meet with both parties, deliberate on the issue, and deliver a written opinion in a timely fashion (not more than two months) on how the disagreement should be resolved. The faculty member and the department chair should then reconsider the matter to see if an agreement can now be reached based on the panel's recommendation. If an agreement between the faculty member and the department chair does not then emerge within ten working days, the matter will be forwarded by the party disagreeing with the proposed change to the faculty member's college. During the time of this mediation process, the existing signed and dated PRS will remain in effect.

Disagreements on changes in PRS statements will be handled by a college-level PRS Arbitration Panel. In the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, this panel will consist of all members of the college Promotion and Tenure Committee plus one member selected by the faculty member and one member selected by the department chair. The college PRS Arbitration Panel will deliberate and write a binding opinion within four weeks of receiving the request on how the disagreement should be resolved. If a faculty member is dissatisfied with the proposed resolution at this point, he or she may file a complaint through normal grievance procedures to the Dean of the College. The PRS approved by the college PRS Arbitration Panel would be in effect during this process.