

Evaluating Permanent Status/Promotion Packets

D. Mitchell Flinchum, Professor and Director, South Central Extension District;
Co-Director, UF/IFAS Lake Okeechobee Protection Program
Larry R. Arrington, Professor and Associate Dean, Cooperative Extension
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida
(Revised July 1, 2002)

Introduction

The permanent status/promotion process is the University of Florida's method of determining if faculty have been productive in a scholarly manner during each stage of their careers. By offering you the opportunity to vote on your colleagues' packets, you are accepting the responsibility of helping the University maintain high quality faculty who will continue upholding the University of Florida as a respected, world class institution.

Evaluating and voting on your colleague's permanent status and/or promotion packet is not easy. Such judgment requires serious study, difficult decisions and the ability to separate your personal feelings for the people from the quality and presentation of their professional endeavors. Keep in mind that most of the reviewers at the University of Florida will not be personally acquainted with the individual who submitted the package. The presentation of the package is the only evidence that they will have on which to base their recommendation. Therefore, the quality of the packet is critically important and it should accurately reflect the quality and quantity of the work.

General

The first thing you should consider on any packet (whether permanent status or promotion to EAII, III or IV) is the obvious – overall appearance. One could argue that appearance has no relationship to program quality. However, given the word processing and computer technology available today, it is likely that if a packet isn't attractive and professionally prepared, neither were the programs they are trying to describe.

...voting on your colleague's permanent status and promotion packet is not easy.

Visual Quality

Visually, does the packet "look" professional?

Based on its appearance only, does it invite your interest? Are there too many bold prints? Does the font and font size make it easy reading? Are too many words underlined or in special "effects?" Is the information in the packet consistently presented? Are the bibliographic entries consistent in format? Are title headers consistent in type and size? Are tables and graphs presented clearly and in a way that they are easily understood?

...it should accurately reflect the quality and quantity of the work.

Don't forget spelling errors! A packet riddled with spelling errors should never be submitted to the University for review. Spelling is certainly a major indicator of scholarly achievement — or the lack thereof!

Content Quality

The Extension Program section will be the most important portion of the packet for County Extension Faculty. The programs described in this section should be consistent with the individual's position description. Programmatic criteria should include identifiable educational programs. These should reflect advisory committee involvement that addresses clientele or societal needs, problems, concerns or issues.

The Extension Program section is the most important portion of the packet for County Extension faculty.

The programs should target definitive audiences through the use of a variety of educational methods. The results of the program should reflect substantial progress or impact and represent accountability to requisite stakeholders and interest groups.

Individuals submitting the packet should show evidence of involvement in the actual teaching of clientele by presentation of subject matter content through workshops, short courses, computers, clinics and meetings. They should show evidence of writing and developing educational materials in support of planned programs. These include fact sheets, leaflets, pamphlets, news articles, exhibits and radio/television as appropriate.

Your colleagues who submit packets should introduce their major programs in a way for you to have a clear understanding of areas in which they have been working. They should introduce these in the order that they are presented in the packet. It is advisable that each candidate's packet contain some information in this section regarding the role of their Advisory Committees or other ways in which major program themes were selected.

...each packet should contain information about the role of the Advisory Committee in selecting major programs.

Each major program should then be defined and presented by the following headings:

- (1) Situation
- (2) Program Objectives
- (3) Educational Efforts/Activities
- (4) Accomplishments/Impacts

In analyzing each of the major programs, try to make decisions regarding the following:

- Was the program necessary, useful and one in which extension should be involved?
- Are the objectives of the program clearly articulated and understandable?
- Did the candidate devote adequate energy and effort to the program?

- Were various teaching methods used to implement the program? Do the numbers of teaching hours, or teaching/student contact hours seem reasonable?
- Did the candidate reach a reasonable number of clients for the amount of time devoted to the program?
- Did the results of the program show accountable knowledge gained, behaviors developed or changed and if possible, some impacts from social, economic or environmental perspectives relative to program objectives?

(1) Situation Statement

Each situation statement should clearly justify the need for that program in that county. Simply because it corresponds to a State Major Program doesn't necessarily justify the need in that county. The situation should reflect the individual county and should contain local data—a "snapshot" or image of the circumstances that existed when the faculty member began the program, and possibly some of the challenges that were experienced throughout the program's history. If the program supported some of the county government's short or long range goals, this information should be included.

...programs should support long and short term goals of county government.

(2) Program Objectives

Program objectives should include three or four main objectives that were planned throughout the life of the program. These objectives should be client-oriented, emphasizing knowledge gained and behaviors that the individual faculty member expected to change or develop throughout the programmatic period presented.

Program objectives should be client oriented.

(3) Educational Efforts

This section should give the reader a clear, concise impression of the educational activities that were implemented to support the program objectives. It should be presented as a summary of the appropriate years for which the program was conducted. By no means should every teaching activity be listed!

Here is an excellent place for the candidate to use some carefully thought out tables to present numbers of educational contacts (or teaching/contact hours) per year per educational method for them, their program assistants, and volunteers.

Titles of various curricula that were used should also be presented in this section.

There are many ways that educational efforts can be concisely and meaningfully presented.

Some individuals choose to categorize their teaching activities by mass media, group teaching or individual contacts. There are many ways that educational efforts can be concisely and meaningfully presented.

(4) Accomplishments/Impacts

Of primary importance under this section is whether the data presented relate to the program objectives. For clarity, many faculty will present their accomplishments/impacts relative to each of their original objectives. This helps the reader keep track of the main programmatic objectives.

Do the results presented relate to the accomplishment data? Are data “crisp” and presented in a way that makes sense? Or, are data camouflaged, leaving the reader to make inferences regarding program outcomes? Do the tables and graphs actually reveal something important about the program and its objectives, or are they just there for “show?”

Can you determine if efforts were made at keeping and reporting accountable records or did the individual just throw these together at the last minute? Are the words “many,” “some,” “several,” and “few” scattered throughout the educational efforts and accomplishments/impacts

sections? Is the information, or are the entries, redundant or repetitive?

Did the educational efforts actually support the objectives of the program? After reading the documentation, are you able to understand clearly **what** the person attempted to do, **why** they needed to do it, **how** they tried to do it and finally **what** the person and program actually accomplished?

Publications: In studying the packet, analyze the quality of the publications and other creative works. Do they

appear to be substantial, scholarly contributions

Do publications indicate different levels of effort?

containing useful information? Based on the information that they have presented to you, do the publications indicate different levels of efforts by the individual? If so, can you decide how these different levels might have influenced the quality of their programs? Do the publications/creative works show a positive relationship to their programs?

Invited Presentations: Are these presentations part of their major programs? If so, they might not be appropriately listed under this heading. Listing them here would give the impression of redundancy and that the faculty member is “padding” the packet. If a county faculty made presentations to their targeted clientele, most likely they should not be in this section. However, if a county faculty member was asked by a non-targeted clientele to give a presentation, it could be appropriately entered here.

An excellent example for presentations under this category would be those given to professional groups or associations which don’t qualify as the target clientele. Presentations given in the faculty’s home county will generally not be considered as regional efforts, unless a regional meeting was hosted in the county which includes participants from a larger geographical area.

Grants and In-Kind Contributions: Are the grants substantial? On team efforts, are you able to decide what role the individual submitting the packet played? Can you decide from the entries if the grant required “deliverables” and if so, what are the desired outcomes? Did the “deliverables” from the grant play a part in the faculty member’s major programs? Do the in-kind contributions appear as rough guesses or are you convinced that the faculty member kept good records or reliable estimates?

University Governance and Service: The entries in this section should include committees, task forces and other activities that the faculty has conducted at the University level, or at least a level higher than the county in which the person works. Examples include Search and Screen Committees for out-of-county positions, membership on University level Advisory Committees, and District-wide committees assigned by the District Director.

Permanent Status of New Faculty: In deciding about permanent status for new faculty, remember that the average faculty member stays at the University 22 years. So, is this a person you believe would be productive for the next 22 years? Does this new faculty member give you the impression of having adjusted to the requirements of academia and county extension during these first few years? Keep in mind that program areas presented by new faculty may not have the numbers that seasoned faculty would have, due to the adjustment period for new faculty. However, does this person show potential in reaching the numbers and producing accountable programming in the future?

Program areas presented by new faculty may not have the high numbers of participants that seasoned faculty might have.

Permanent Status of Seasoned Faculty: Due to faculty coming to the University of Florida with previous County Extension experience, some faculty who are EAI, EAII and EAIIV will be submitting for permanent status. Generally, a seasoned faculty member submitting for

permanent status should show strong organization of the packet.

Major programs that are presented should show evidence of previous experience.

Levels of productivity and accomplishments should be more than what one would expect of an EAI who is submitting for permanent status and promotion.

Faculty with prior extension experience should show strong organization of the packet.

Promotion of EAI to EAII: Individuals submitting for promotion for EAI to EAII should show evidence of their programs being defined. They may not have very high numbers, and they may not have strong data on knowledge gained or behaviors changed or developed, but they should have a sound framework established.

Were the program areas of the new county faculty member highly supported by State Specialists, or did the new faculty member basically develop the county program from scratch? This could make a big difference in how the results of the program were presented. The individual should receive some extra “credit” if the program is one which was needed in the county and very few resources from Specialists were utilized.

With the exception of multi-county faculty, one wouldn’t expect to see much multi-county, district, regional, state or national activity at this rank. The numbers and quality of the publications under this rank may be somewhat limited – grants and in-kinds, as well.

After all, most of the new faculty’s efforts have been in developing their programmatic framework and presentations. However, by the end of the 5th year it should be evident that the individual is well underway to good, targeted and accountable programming even if the “numbers” aren’t there.

...one wouldn’t expect to see much multi-county, district, regional, state or national activity at this rank.

Promotion of EAII to EAIII: Do the programs of this individual show maturity? Do the numbers of clientele and teaching hours reflect that the person is a solid extension programmer? Does the person show that he or she has developed sound objectives and follow-through in implementing and evaluating strong, accountable programs.

Do the programs.... show maturity?

In going from EAII to EAIII, one would expect to see an individual well known and respected within the county and extension district. The individual will show more activity in their professional organizations than a person going from EAI to EAII. Examples include activities such as chairing committees and holding lower offices and other elected positions in some professional organization.

There should be activities beginning to surface within the category of University Governance and Service. Grants and In-kinds should be higher than one going from EAI to EAII. Publications should be substantial and numerous. Programmatic activities should represent a sound knowledge of program development, implementation and evaluation resulting in strong accomplishments.

Finally, to achieve EAIII, an individual must have a reputation as a leader in his/her field. Did the packet impress you that the person is a leader?

Are you convinced that the individual represents the discipline and Florida Extension in a manner in which you would be proud to refer to that person as a colleague?

Is this person a leader in his/her field?

Promotion of EAIII to EAIV: This is no easy rank to achieve. In summary, this rank is based on professional and programmatic exposure indicating excellence. A person submitting for rank IV should have excellent county programs with strong accomplishments. In addition, they must have at least area or statewide recognition for their educational programs within one or more

assigned program areas, and evidence of contributions to their profession.

They should exhibit creativity in program

This rank is based on professional and programmatic exposure indicating excellence.

development and implementation. These people should be able to carry out their programs with minor support from State Specialists. Often, these people will have co-authored publications with State Specialists. Their publication records should be substantial and numerous. They will have served major officer roles in their professional associations, or two or three lower offices in several professional associations.

Their programs, professional behaviors and stature should serve as models for other county faculty. Grants and In-Kind funding should be impressive. Invited professional presentations within and outside the state should be obvious. Several major activities should be attributed to University Governance and Service. Every county extension faculty in the state should be familiar with this person's name and programs.

...programs, professional behaviors and stature should serve as models for other county faculty.

To achieve the rank of EAIV, an individual must have demonstrated the highest quality of programming and professional development and be recognized statewide for high-quality performance. Candidates for EAIV must have consistently received above-average performance evaluations.

Program Leaders/Coordinators: In addition to the criteria for either of the previously described ranks, Program Leaders or Coordinators should have evidence of programmatic leadership in their assigned area. These people should assist other county faculty within their discipline in developing strong, focused plans of work and accomplishment reports. They should assure that agents in their program areas are kept current with the latest developments within their disciplines.

County Extension Directors: All nominees for permanent status or promotion who are County Extension Directors must have, in addition to evidence of accomplishments within assigned area(s) of program responsibility, evidence of program leadership for all program areas in their county.

CEDs must show programmatic accomplishments and evidence of leadership for all program areas in their county.

Also, County Extension Directors should reflect leadership and teaching in such areas as staff development and training, organization and training of advisory committees, budget development, and program accountability with government and clientele groups.

Summary

Voting on your colleagues' packets is not easy. It takes effort on your behalf to carefully read the packets and to avoid being influenced by your personal feelings for the individual. It is an important responsibility and one that should be taken seriously.

...avoid being influenced by your personal feelings...

A well-defined and focused extension program is the key indicator of scholarly achievement. The extension program should be built upon a strong rationale reflecting advisory committee input. Client-based objectives should lead to a variety of educational efforts. Accomplishments and impacts should clearly document positive clientele and/or environmental changes relative to the original objectives.

Extension programs should be based upon strong rationale reflecting advisory committee input.

DON'T MAKE EXCUSES...

Avoid the temptation to abstain from voting or to make excuses about why you shouldn't vote on an individual. Even if the discipline or subject matter of the candidate is different from yours, as an Extension professional you should be able to evaluate each candidate's performance based on the information that was submitted in the packet.

Finally, adhere to the deadline and the instructions regarding the process.

Your signature should not be on the white envelope that contains the individual ballot, otherwise,

Follow instructions and respect the deadline

the votes will not be anonymous. Also, ballots that are not received by the deadline date are not even opened.

Do your part in carefully studying all packets for which you are eligible to vote. Seriously consider the points which have been addressed in this guide and determine if the candidates have successfully fulfilled their professional obligations. The University of Florida's reputation as a respectable, world class, institution depends upon your votes.



