

# College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Faculty Evaluation Policy

Revised December 2009

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## 1. Policy

The College considers that evaluation of faculty impacts and of departmental achievement is a critical element in developing and sustaining growth in instructional, research, international and Extension programs. The annual evaluation system within the College uses an on-line reporting and evaluation tool (eFARS) that facilitates annual goal planning, performance reporting, assessment, and developmental planning at both the individual and unit level. The primary intent of the system is to assist in identifying areas of successes and programmatic strength while simultaneously allowing for a dialogue between individual faculty, their Unit Leader, and the College administration aimed at identifying new directions, developmental, and infrastructure (e.g. facilities and equipment) needs.

### Purpose of Evaluation

- Allow faculty to develop an annual record of achievements, productivity, and impact in instruction, research, Extension, international programs, and service.
- Promote scholarship as a cornerstone of faculty activities.
- Enable easy access to data in support of annual federal reporting requirements.
- Assist faculty members to identify areas for program growth and to develop the resources necessary for growth.
- Allow Unit Leaders to assess the impact of the entire faculty and align with the needs of students, partners, citizens, and other stakeholders.
- Facilitate dialogue between Unit Leaders and the College administration to identify new or evolving partnership opportunities and to gain resource support for new initiatives.

### Participation

All tenured and tenure track faculty, continued appointment, and continued appointment track faculty and all Extension agents in the College are required to complete an annual faculty report using eFARS by the published deadline. The report describes activities, impacts, and achievement of goals that the faculty member had during the preceding calendar year. All faculty (including A/P and Special Research faculty) are required to complete an annual report. Unit leaders may require A/P and Special Research faculty to use eFARS or develop another report format for their use<sup>1</sup>. Unit leaders should be aware that faculty contributions (such as publications and funding) that are not reported as part of an eFARS report will not be included in the unit performance measures shown in eFARS. Unit leaders should review the list of individuals for their department that have access to eFARS and update it each year to ensure that appropriate faculty are using eFARS or an alternative reporting tool.

## 2. Unit Leader Responsibilities

Unit Leaders include academic Department Heads, Extension District Directors and AREC Directors. Faculty (non Unit Leaders) will complete their reports in eFARS by **midnight, Sunday January 17, 2010**. Unit Leaders may grant extensions to the report deadline to faculty but all evaluations must be provided to the faculty by the Unit Leader at least **14 days** prior to the unit review meeting scheduled with the Dean and Associate Deans so that the Executive Council have time to read the completed reports and evaluations. Unit Leaders are responsible for evaluating faculty performance and providing appropriate feedback using eFARS. The Executive Council provides guidance to the Unit Leader to ensure a process

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<sup>1</sup> A sample report format is included at the end of this document.

# College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Faculty Evaluation Policy

Revised December 2009

---

that is fair, consistent, and realistic. Unit Leaders must complete the Unit Leader report including goals and benchmarks for the upcoming year. The deadline for the Unit Leader report will be published annually along with the schedule of meetings with the Executive Council.

## Review of Reports

Unit Leaders use the eFARS system to access and review each faculty report after the report deadline. The system allows access to reports in two ways:

1. Individual faculty reports can be accessed from the “Faculty Evaluations” section of the “Unit Review” tab. These reports are generated in real time and contain all the current report data for the selected faculty member.
2. A collection of all faculty reports for a unit is also available from the “Unit Review” tab in eFARS. These files are provided to Unit Leaders to facilitate easy printing of individual faculty reports and to capture an official record of the report. These reports contain only the report data as of the official eFARS deadline. Unit Leaders must select individual faculty reports from the list of faculty evaluations to review and print faculty reports for those who have been given an extension to the deadline.

In VCE, a special collection of files of Extension agent reports will be provided to the State Program Leaders by program area to assist in joint review of agent performance.

A collection of archived faculty reports and evaluations from previous years is available from the archive column on the “faculty evaluations” page. Select “show” to list the available archive reports.

## Evaluations

Evaluations will be completed by the Unit Leader in advance of individual meetings held between the Unit Leader and the faculty member. Unit Leaders are expected to coordinate the review and evaluation of faculty where faculty may have a dual reporting relationship. For example, District Directors should consult with the relevant Extension Program Leader and AREC Directors should consult with the relevant academic Department Head.

Each faculty member’s performance as reflected in the annual report will be rated in each of the relevant rating areas: RESEARCH, TEACHING, EXTENSION, **SCHOLARSHIP**<sup>2</sup>, ADVISING, INTERNATIONAL, OUTREACH/SERVICE, CITIZENSHIP, EXTERNAL FUNDING, and MANAGEMENT/LEADERSHIP. All tenure and tenure track faculty should be rated using the rating scale in at least **one** mission area (teaching, research and Extension) as well as in **scholarship**, outreach/service, citizenship, external funding, and management/leadership. All other faculty should be rated in categories appropriate to their appointment. All faculty must be given an OVERALL rating. Unit Leaders are expected to assess the level of performance and contribution in each area using the category definitions and the faculty evaluation principles described at <http://www.cals.vt.edu/facultystaff/evaluation/index.html>.

Unit Leader comments should highlight those activities which are particularly noteworthy (such as activities that have a strategic impact, have received critical acclaim, or correct prior problems) and any areas of concerns. Unit Leader comments on faculty activity should be **evaluative and formative** rather than simply descriptive of activities that are already included in the report. It is important that the Unit Leader provide faculty members with a **clear statement of what went well and what might need improvement**. Unit Leaders should provide faculty with developmental suggestions that address areas of need or opportunities for future career and professional development. Comments should be based on the

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<sup>2</sup> Added for 2009 evaluations

# College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Faculty Evaluation Policy

Revised December 2009

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documented performance and support the ratings. Unit Leader comments should be one to three paragraphs in length.

Any rating of “Needs Improvement” or “Unacceptable” on a performance element should receive specific comment. Not only should the rating be justified, but the Unit Leader is expected to recommend improvement activities for the coming year. Faculty members who receive an overall rating of “unacceptable” for two consecutive years should be recommended for further performance review including, where appropriate, post tenure review.

To complete evaluations of faculty:

1. Log on to eFARS at <http://efars.cals.vt.edu> after the submission deadline.
2. Select “Unit Review” tab.
3. Select “Evaluate Faculty” from the list of tasks.
4. Under the “Documents” column, select the “FacRpt” to open and review the current faculty report. This report is created in real time using the most recent report data. The report opens in a new browser window so that it may be read while completing the evaluation.
5. After reading the report, under the “Faculty Evaluation” column, click on the faculty member’s name to open the evaluation form. This form shows
  - The summary data from the current faculty report.
  - The proposed faculty objectives for the upcoming year.
  - The evaluation ratings for the current evaluation year.
  - The evaluation rating for the previous year.
  - The evaluation statement from the prior year.
  - The Unit Leader statement for this current year.
  - A space for the Unit Leader to make private notes which are not available to the faculty.
6. Enter a written comment and select ratings for individual performance elements as well as an overall performance rating.
7. Under the “Actions” column, click “Send Notification” to automatically create an e-mail to the faculty. In the e-mail page, click “Send Email” to send an e-mail to the faculty member to inform them that the evaluation is available for their review.

## Faculty Meetings

Unit Leaders must meet with each faculty member to review the report and the evaluation prior to meeting with the Executive Council. The purpose of the faculty meeting is to enable discussion of both the report and the evaluation and to address any concerns. During this meeting, any inaccuracies in the report or the evaluation can be discussed. The faculty member may add to their report at any time, but must take the responsibility to let their Unit Leader know of changes. The Unit Leader may edit the evaluation and send the faculty member the changes. To redo an evaluation, the Unit Leader can select the “Redo Evaluation” link from the actions column of the faculty evaluations page, make and save the desired changes, and then select "Send Notification" followed by clicking the "Send Email" button on the subsequent screen. All faculty members should acknowledge that they have received and read their updated evaluation.

To view and respond to evaluation:

1. Log in to eFARS after receiving notification that the evaluation is complete.
2. From the “My Reports” tab, select “View and Acknowledge Evaluation.”
3. Review evaluation and comment as needed.
4. Select “Acknowledge” to finalize comments and submit to Unit Leader.
5. The Unit Leader will receive an e-mail notification that the evaluation has been acknowledged and if a comment was made. An asterisk next to the faculty member’s name on the “Evaluate Faculty” page indicates those faculty who have made written comments.
6. Once acknowledged, the evaluation will be available to the faculty member under “Current Year Reports” in the “My Reports” tab.

# College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Faculty Evaluation Policy

Revised December 2009

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## 3. Unit Assessment

Each Unit Leader will complete and summarize the activities of the entire unit using the sections under the “**Unit Review**” tab. Unit Leaders must enter the **Weighted Student Credit Hours** and the **Appointment FTE** for their Tenure and Tenure Track faculty. Note that the total appointment FTE may vary from the funded FTE in each unit. The “**Noteworthy Unit Achievements and Impacts**” section is used to highlight activities and impacts from the unit that are especially important. These should align with the College’s strategic goals (<http://www.cals.vt.edu/about/mission.html>) and the unit’s goals and benchmarks for evaluation year. Unit Leaders should comment on the extent to which they achieved the benchmarks set at the beginning of the year.

Under “**Unit Goals and Benchmarks**,” list goals for the unit for the coming year in each of the 12 areas. Unit Leaders may have more than one goal in each area, but academic departments should have at least one for all areas. The goals for the coming year may be continued from the prior year with new benchmarks or may be new goals. Goals should also link to the objectives of the faculty.

A **goal** is a broad statement of overall direction which includes a specific action verb and describes measurable outcomes. Example: “The department will increase the number of PhD students to 29 per year by 2012.” A benchmark describes the current level (baseline) of performance and the expectation for change within the coming year. Example: “The baseline for 2006 was 17 PhD students; the benchmark for 2008 is 25 PhD students.”

**Downloads**, includes links for PDF versions of:

- Private Comments made by the Unit Leader on faculty evaluations
- Unit Summary
- Noteworthy Achievement and Impacts
- Unit Goals and Benchmarks

## 4. Executive Council Meeting

The Executive Council will receive instructions to access PDF versions of faculty reports the day after the published due date for evaluations for each unit. These files are provided to assist in access and printing reports which have been finalized by Unit Leaders.

Each Unit Leader will meet with the Executive Council to review unit performance and discuss the strengths and weakness of the faculty. The purpose of this meeting is to:

- Assist Unit Leaders in providing feedback to faculty.
- Assist in planning for the future.
- Review unit performance in relation to resource allocations and future needs.
- Review unit performance in relation to college and university strategy’s and goals.
- Provide for on-going justification for current unit resource allocations.
- Enable the Unit Leader to make requests for future funding and resources.

# College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Faculty Evaluation Policy

Revised December 2009

---

Unit Leaders may use recommendations from the Executive Council to modify evaluation ratings or comments. In which case, faculty members will be informed of any changes and given the opportunity to comment upon those changes through the eFARS system.

Prior to meeting with the Executive Council, Unit Leaders should ensure that:

1. The faculty reports are completed.
2. The evaluations have been completed and sent to the faculty members.
3. Each faculty member has met with the Unit Leader.
4. Each faculty member has acknowledged their evaluation.
5. The Unit Assessment (noteworthy achievements, goals and benchmarks) is completed.

## 5. Final Reports and Evaluations

In May of each year, the eFARS system will close for the year and no further changes to either reports or evaluations can be made. (Specific deadlines will be published.) The eFARS system will archive the evaluations and reports will be available to faculty and Unit Leaders as part of the evaluation history in eFARS. The system will reopen in the summer of each year for the next cycle.

# College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Faculty Evaluation Policy

Revised December 2009

## Annual Report for Calendar Year \_\_\_\_\_

For Special Research Faculty, Administrative and Professional Faculty Only

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Position Type  Special Research faculty  AP Faculty  
Department \_\_\_\_\_  
Hire date \_\_\_\_\_  
Appointment end date \_\_\_\_\_

Accomplishment of annual goals from previous year:

Other major activities and accomplishments:

Goals for following year:

Evaluation comments by supervisor:

Supervisor overall rating:

Exemplary  Excellent  Successful  Needs Improvement  Unacceptable

I have discussed this evaluation with the faculty member:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor Name                      Signature                      Date                      Position Number

Comments from faculty member:

I have reviewed my evaluation, and have had the opportunity to comment. I understand that my signature below does not necessarily constitute agreement, and that once I signed, I will not be able to make further written comment.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Name                      Signature                      Date                      Position Number

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Revised December 2009

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