MEMORANDUM

To: Deans, Associate Deans, Directors and Chairs – Norman Campus

From: Kyle Harper
Senior Vice President and Provost

Date: January 6, 2020

Subject: Annual Faculty Performance Evaluations

Faculty performance evaluations are integral to everything we do at this institution, and they have never been more important. As we begin the new cycle of annual evaluation, I am writing to encourage that all departments approach the evaluation process with a renewed spirit of rigor, thoughtfulness, and fairness. By policy, faculty performance evaluations are to be the basis of merit-based compensation programs. Future raise programs will take account of annual evaluation scores in the determination of compensation adjustments. Therefore, it is crucial that every Chair/Director and Committee A leads a thorough and meaningful process of evaluation. For this cycle, we encourage you to aim for a balanced distribution curve for your faculty.

Faculty performance evaluations are an opportunity to measure achievement relative to institutional goals and College and Unit standards. As you go through the process this year, please be mindful of ways that we can improve our system of faculty evaluation to make it more impactful going forward. This might include updating unit guidelines and standards to reflect our ambitious institutional goals and to benchmark against peers and aspirational peers. But even as we look for ways to improve, it is crucial to uphold the highest possible standards and to communicate to departmental faculty the meaning of those standards and the criteria used to measure performance. Please be in communication with your Deans about this process, and you can reach out to me directly or to Jill Irvine with questions or ideas. This is a high priority.

In accordance with the OU Regents' policy since 1977, annual faculty evaluations are conducted for each calendar year. The policy requires individual units to establish their own criteria, subject to dean and provost approval, and to the general standards and limits enacted by the Regents. The process of this annual evaluation usually begins in December and ends in April. It is the policy of the University of Oklahoma (Norman Campus) that all salaried faculty, temporary and permanent, tenure-track and non-tenure-track, and renewable term be subject to the same performance evaluation process.

The basic process of faculty evaluation is described in Section 3.13 of the Faculty Handbook; Sections 3.6.1, 3.6.2 and 3.6.3 provide definitions of teaching, research and service. For
split faculty appointments, see Section 3.5.2 of the Faculty Handbook. The basic process of director or chair evaluation is described in Section 2.8.2 (e) of the Faculty Handbook. In 1986, the President approved a Faculty Senate recommendation that the evaluation process produce results that can be reflected on a uniform summary report. To serve this purpose, the Summary Report of Annual Faculty Evaluation form (attached) and a mini-vitaes must be completed through the Faculty Activity System (FAS) for each faculty member's 2019 evaluation.

The Summary Report of Annual Faculty Evaluation records the ratings of each faculty member's contributions in the areas of teaching, research scholarship/creative activity and service using a numerical scale ranging from 0.01, unacceptable, to 5.00, outstanding. The rationale section of this form should include a brief qualitative justification for the rating in each area. The mini-vitae, which enumerates each faculty member's calendar year contributions, provides the basis for the qualitative assessment reported on the Summary Report of Annual Faculty Evaluation form. Units may ask faculty members for additional details about their contributions and request the inclusion of mini-vitaes for the previous year or two.

Regular faculty in all colleges are asked to use the Faculty Activity System (FAS) to document their 2019 activities. FAS workflow will be used by faculty to submit their Annual Faculty Mini-Vitae and optional departmental documents to their review committee. Faculty members may enter activity information into the system by going to http://www.ou.edu/provost/faculty-activity-system and login with 4+4 username and password.

The evaluation should follow the criteria and procedures approved by each faculty member's academic unit. For faculty with appointments split across budget units, deans, directors/chairs should evaluate that portion of the faculty’s effort within their own budget. However, Chairs, Directors and Committee A members are encouraged to meet jointly to discuss the person in a holistic manner. A listing of faculty on permanent split appointments across college is attached to assist you. Each dean is responsible for maintaining a list of faculty split appointments across budgetary units within their own college.

According to University policy, the Summary Report of Annual Faculty Evaluation is to be submitted to the faculty member who should have at least one week in which to either meet with the chair/director and Committee A to discuss the evaluation or to respond in writing to the evaluation before it leaves the academic unit. All members of the unit should be provided with some means of interpreting the relative meaning of their evaluation (e.g., means and standard deviations for all evaluations in the unit, a report of ranking in terms of deciles, a listing of the rank order of the evaluations without names).

All annual faculty evaluations (summary report forms and one-page mini-vitaes), evaluation criteria used and the procedure followed for the evaluations are due in the Provost's Office by April 3rd, 2020. Using the Faculty Activity System (FAS) workflow, chairs/directors should submit the summary reports and the unit mini-vitaes first to their college deans, who in turn, will submit them to the Provost's Office by the April 3rd deadline. It is the responsibility of the deans to ensure that each unit turn in a complete set of evaluations and other required documents. The deans will establish college deadlines for completion of the summary report forms by the departments. I will schedule a meeting with each dean in June/July to review the college's faculty
and unit evaluations.

Thank you for your assistance in making this evaluation process a useful one for faculty, academic units, colleges and the university.

Attachments

cc:  Joseph Harroz, Jr., Interim President  
     Joshua Nelson, Faculty Senate Chair  
     Tomás Díaz de la Rubia, Vice President for Research and Partnerships  
     Jill Irvine, Senior Vice Provost