

USC VITERBI SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING POLICY ON ANNUAL FACULTY EVALUATION

The faculty of the USC Viterbi School of Engineering are evaluated on an annual basis. The results of the evaluation primarily are used for recommending annual merit salary raises and providing constructive feedback to faculty. The procedure for the evaluation consists of the following steps¹:

1. By the end of the Spring semester of the previous year (ideally at the meeting between the faculty member and the Department Chair, described in step 7 below), a faculty activity profile is formulated and assigned for the subsequent academic year. For tenured/tenure-track faculty, the default profile consists of weights of 40% teaching, 40% research and 20% service; 40% teaching normally corresponds to 3 regular courses per year. Different faculty profiles (e.g., for faculty at the beginning of their appointment or for faculty concentrating for a short period on specific research, teaching, or service assignments) can be formulated based on discussions between the Department Chair and the faculty member, and subject to the approval of the Dean. Overall, balanced activities in teaching and research, and to a lesser degree in service, as denoted above, should dictate the typical faculty profile. Research faculty and teaching faculty have profiles weighted heavily towards research or teaching, respectively, and part-time faculty have reduced profiles. Also by the end of the Spring semester, a Chair activity profile is also formulated between the Department Chair and the Dean, on the expected activities of the Chair for the coming year.
2. At the beginning of the Spring Semester of the evaluation year, all faculty should submit to their academic departments their Annual Faculty Record (AFR). The AFR contains detailed teaching, research and service components describing the faculty member's activities and accomplishments during the preceding calendar year. An abbreviated AFR may be used for part-time faculty, as applicable. It is the responsibility of the department to verify the accuracy of the AFR contents.
3. The department proceeds with the rating of the performance of each faculty member in accordance with the weights specified in the faculty activity profile during the previous year. Evaluation years are calendar years, while faculty activity profiles are formulated for academic years. Thus, in some cases, the weights specified for the Spring semester may be different from the weights specified for the Fall semester. With the exception of the Department Chairs, Vice Deans and Institute Directors who are evaluated by the Dean, all faculty are evaluated by the department.

The evaluation includes two separate processes, one mandatory and one recommended. Peer review of faculty members by a faculty-approved departmental faculty committee is mandatory for every department. Separate review by the Department Chair is optional, although strongly encouraged by the School. Whenever possible, different committees should evaluate the tenured/tenure-track (T/TT) faculty and research or teaching faculty (full-time and part-time). Individual departments are allowed flexibility in the composition of the two committees. However, the School encourages use of the following general guidelines:

¹ A similar procedure is followed for evaluating faculty in academic program units, with the Program Director taking the role of Department Chair described in this document.

A. Evaluation of tenured/tenure-track faculty members

(i) The committee that evaluates T/TT faculty is elected by the T/TT faculty of the department; (ii) all T/TT faculty members are eligible to serve; (iii) research or teaching faculty members are not eligible to serve; (iii) at least one committee member should be a full Professor; (iv) at least two-thirds of the committee members should be tenured faculty members; (v) faculty members should not serve on the committee more than two consecutive terms.

B. Evaluation of research faculty and teaching faculty members

(i) The committee that evaluates research faculty and teaching faculty is elected by the faculty of the department; (ii) all faculty members are eligible to serve; (iii) one half of the membership of the committee should consist of tenured faculty and the other half should consist of research or teaching faculty; (iv) faculty members should not serve more than two consecutive terms.

Departments have different histories, cultures and circumstances. Different rules for the composition of these committees are acceptable, subject to approval by the department faculty. In the case of small departments, the entire faculty may serve as these committees, or conversely, the faculty evaluation can be completed entirely by the Department Chair. However, the latter requires prior *unanimous* approval by the department faculty.

The evaluation by the faculty committees accounts for the faculty performance as described in the AFR, and the work expectations described in the faculty load profile. The profile describes the relative effort the faculty member was supposed to have spent in the previous years, not the relative effort actually spent. Ratings on the basis of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent) are assigned for the three categories of teaching, research, and service, with a rating of 3 (meets expectations) denoting average performance for the department. Ratings must be weighed in accordance with the faculty load profile. The specific metrics and criteria to be used by the faculty committees in obtaining their ratings should be documented at a level of detail necessary, and approved by the faculty, prior to the evaluation process. The final committee ratings are expected to reflect a fair and unbiased assessment of a combination of work effort, work quality, and results obtained in each of the three categories, as applicable. The merit rating must have significant variance, per the Provost's memo of August 21, 2014. In addition to numerical ratings, conclusions drawn from the review and reasons for them should be stated in summary form as constructive feedback to the faculty member regarding his/her strengths and possible areas for improvement, also in compliance with the Provost's memo. This evaluation procedure follows closely the procedure applied to appointment, mid-probationary and promotion dossiers. The procedure should involve at least one committee meeting before the ratings are finalized. Committee members do not provide an evaluation of their own performance.

For faculty with joint appointments that include budgetary obligations for more than one school or department, the evaluation is completed as specified in the Joint Appointment Checklist and the faculty activity profile.

As indicated above, the Department Chair is encouraged to separately provide his/her own evaluation of the department faculty. Chairs have additional insights on the performance of

individual faculty members, and it is important that they have the opportunity to express their own assessment of faculty performance.

4. The results of the evaluation by the faculty committee are communicated to the Department Chair. If there is a substantial discrepancy between the ratings from the faculty committee and the ratings from the Chair, then the Department Chair should state his/her opinion about the discrepancy. The committee's and Chair's evaluations of each faculty member's performance, relative to other faculty members in the Department, is separately and confidentially communicated to the individual faculty members by the Department Chair.
5. The Department Chair provides to the Dean a list of recommended merit raises for all faculty members, except for research faculty affiliated with institutes, such as ISI and ICT. These recommended merit raises are based on the findings of the faculty review committees. The Chair also has the option to recommend, in a different column, different merit raises based on his/her own findings. The merit raise recommendations and the faculty ratings are sent to the Dean, as well as to the Merit Review Subcommittee of the School in anonymized summary form. The latter, drawn jointly from faculty on the Engineering Faculty Council and the School's Committee on Appointments, Promotion and Tenure, is charged with reviewing the procedures of each department and assessing whether or not due process was indeed followed in making the merit recommendations (refer to the VSoE APT Guidelines). Merit raises for research faculty affiliated with institutes, such as ISI and ICT, are recommended to the Dean by the Institute Director, after taking into consideration the faculty committee ratings.
6. The performance of Department Chairs, Vice Deans, and Institute Directors is evaluated separately by the Dean, based on information contained in their AFR as well as on other indicators, as specified in their activity profile.
7. The Dean sets the final merit raise recommendations in consultation with the Department Chair or, in the case of some research faculty, the respective Institute Director. The evaluation results and raise recommendations are promptly communicated to the individual faculty members by their respective Department Chair or Institute Director. The Department Chairs or Institute Directors will meet with faculty members whose performance is identified as needing improvement and with any faculty member who requests a meeting, in compliance with the Provost's memo. In these meetings, the Department Chair or the Institute Director will elaborate the link between the faculty member's performance and his or her final merit raise, and she/he will be available to discuss possible faculty questions and concerns. The faculty activity profiles for the next academic year will normally be formulated in these meetings and sent to the Dean for final approval.
8. Merit review ratings of 1.5 or lower in any category, and those with 2.0 or lower overall, indicate faculty with performance problems, in the sense described in the Provost's 2009 memo on Individual Development Plans. The action suggested in that memo will be followed in such cases.

If there is a claim of some procedural irregularity, the Dean will decide what remedy, if any, is appropriate.