

CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING EXTENSION PROGRAMMING AND EXTENSION FACULTY FOR MERIT AND PROMOTION PURPOSES

Introduction

Institutional assessment of teaching and research follows generally well-established criteria at most land grant universities including colleges of agriculture and related sciences. A unique aspect of land grant colleges of agriculture is a commitment to formal outreach and non-credit education through Cooperative Extension as part of their federally mandated land grant mission. UConn receives federal funds to deliver extension programming which must be matched with state funds.

Institutional assessment of extension programming and extension faculty tends to fall outside of institutional norms and common practice making formal assessment somewhat problematic particularly for tenure track faculty. This document seeks to provide a framework for defining criteria that should be used for assessing extension programs and personnel.

The University of Connecticut uses a variety of tenure track and non-tenure track positions in Cooperative Extension. A number of these positions are historically based but changes in titles and tenure status have created models that better reflect the needs for both department-based tenure track and non-tenure track faculty and county-based extension educators. Department based faculty will continue to be primarily PhD faculty with defined appointments split among teaching, research and extension. These appointments may be tenure track or non-tenure track depending on the balance between the three functions. County-based faculty will remain primarily MS level faculty with a primary responsibility for program development and delivery but could also be PhD, non-tenure track faculty if the programmatic need requires a doctoral degree. Criteria for assessment and promotion should differ for these two types of positions.

Institutional assessment of extension appointments is challenged with how to fairly assess: (1) program excellence and impact, (2) the types of applied research conducted and funding source, and (3) the appropriate outlets for publication or communication. The definition of scholarship can vary widely based on the appointment. While differing from traditional faculty responsibilities, extension programming can and should be evidence-based and scholarly.

Assessment Criteria

A high quality extension program engages stakeholders to identify and solve issues through research and evidence-based education. Programs should be original, dynamic, utilize appropriate technology and integrate collaborations among university,

governmental, and public/private stakeholders. Program outputs enable people to make informed decisions, resulting in measurable impacts and changed behaviors.

A high quality extension educator engages stakeholders and opinion leaders to identify and solve issues through research and evidence-based education. Educators produce evidence of measurable impacts.

Outputs from extension programs include products and activities developed to educate and/or enable stakeholders that meet the needs of the target audience. Outputs can occur in a number of forms, such as one-on-one interactions, workshops, presentations, journal articles, non-referred publications such as factsheets and trade articles, web sites, and other outlets. While some of these outputs can be classified as peer-reviewed others may be non-peer-reviewed with each playing a vital (and necessary) role in the growth and sustainability of a high quality extension program.

Extension faculty and educators should seek to publish in peer-reviewed journals in addition to developing published work to serve the needs of clientele. Examples of journals having an extension related focus is included in the appendix. The list is not exhaustive and is given as a starting point for evaluation of peer-reviewed publications of extension faculty and educators.

Other Scholarly Activities

Journal articles are not the only form of scholarly work that are indicators of a high quality extension program. Other outputs can help elevate the quality and credibility of extension programs developed for stakeholder education.

Such outputs include but are not limited to:

- Factsheets and bulletins
- Industry or popular press articles
- Field guides or manuals
- Research reports
- Newsletters
- Web pages
- Computer-based applications
- Videos or DVDs
- On-line media
- Presentations or workshops
- Coordination of meetings, workshops or field days

Promotion Criteria

For a tenure track faculty member with an extension appointment, the individual would be expected to develop an applied research program that generates research results that addresses stakeholder needs and is connected to the extension program. They would be expected to publish in appropriate journals and demonstrate the ability to attract funds to support their research and extension program activities. In addition, there would be an expectation that they be able to demonstrate the development of a targeted extension program appropriate for clientele and demonstrate both program outputs and impacts.

For a non-tenure track county-based extension educator we expect to see evidence of development and delivery of a high quality extension program with evidence of impacts from the program. Scholarly works should reflect the needs of clientele and support program delivery.

The current UConn promotion document makes it difficult to clearly document extension program activities and there may be a need to modify the document for use by extension faculty and educators.

Appendix: Common Peer-Reviewed Journals with an Extension Related Focus

Cross Discipline Journals

Journal of Extension
Journal of Higher Education, Outreach and Engagement

Department of Animal Science

Journal of Animal Science
Journal of Equine Veterinary Science
The Professional Animal Scientist
Journal of Agricultural Education

Department of Extension

Journal of Agricultural Education and Extension
Journal of Human Sciences and Extension
Journal of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development
International Journal of Agricultural Extension

Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics

International Food and Agribusiness Management Review
Choices
Journal of Food Distribution Research

Department of Plant Science and Landscape Architecture

Plant Disease
Plant Health Progress (Diagnostic Guide section)
Plant Health Progress (Management Guide section)
Crop Science
Agronomy Journal
HortScience
HortTechnology
Journal of Environmental Horticulture
Applied Turfgrass Science
Applied Turfgrass Science (Management Guide section)
Soil Science Society of America Journal

Department of Nutritional Sciences / Department of Allied Health Sciences

Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior (including GEMS)
Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences (online)
Health Education and Behavior
Childhood Obesity
Journal of Hunger & Environmental Nutrition
Public Health Nutrition
Journal of Allied Health

Department of Pathobiology and Veterinary Science

Journal of Equine Veterinary Science

Journal of Applied Microbiology

Journal of Veterinary Diagnostic Investigation

Department of Natural Resources and the Environment

Journal of Forestry

Northern Journal of Applied Forestry