How to Improve Your P&T Dossier

Suggestions from past College and Texas A&M AgriLife Peer Review Committees

The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines and best practices related to the preparation of dossiers for promotion and tenure consideration. The suggestions come from former members of the College and Texas A&M AgriLife Peer Review Committee that meet college and agency administrators after each promotion cycle. The intent is to provide a resource that can be used by candidates and their mentors to assure that all the necessary information is provided in a format that is easy to interpret and allows for consistent evaluation.

All Dossiers are prepared according to the Submission Guidelines for Promotion and Tenure Packages posted on the Dean of Faculties web site. All faculty of the College, AgriLife Research and AgriLife Extension follow the same guideline.

General Dossier Preparation

- The Dossier should comply with a uniform submission style.
- Consider using the College’s suggested CV format.
- DO NOT submit CVs of excessive length, e.g. 200-300 pages.
- Be reasonable in the volume of information you put in Section 13 – Other. Many reviewers may spend little time reading it.
- Use tabular summaries and bulleted lists to highlight key accomplishments.
- Always use SPELL CHECK!

Salary and % Employment versus Job Expectation and % Effort

- Appointment: The % of your salary from TAMU, AgriLife Research and AgriLife Extension determines your fiscal ad loc.
- Job Expectation: % salary is not the same as you’re the job expectation or effort.
  - Describe your job expectation in your CV. This is similar to your position description in enough detail to accurately describe what you were hired to do, and which should be agreed upon by you and your Head or Resident Director.
- Explain any special functions of the position, such as managing a service lab, maintaining a collection, meeting specific demands of a clientele group, etc.
- Administrative Assignments: Explain any significant administrative assignment, such as Associate Head, Center Director, etc. Explain how this should be taken into account relative to the promotion decision, for example does it give you release time from teaching. FYI, University Rule 12.01.99.M2 does not list “administration” as a Category of Performance.

Career Vs. Since Last Appointment: Accomplishments and Metrics

- Present accomplishments (publications, grants, graduate students trained, etc.) as both career totals and since last promotion or since hired at TAMU.

Collaborative Efforts – Publications, grants, graduate students, etc.

- On collaborative efforts, indicate the degree of involvement, degree of responsibility or % contribution. This is especially important on reporting grant dollars. You must report total and amount to your program.
• Senior Author: On publications, explain authorship, e.g. senior author, collaborating author, etc., if it is unique to your field.

• Graduate Students: On publications, you must indicate graduate students. But also indicates those that conducted their research under your direction.

External Letters
• External letters. DO NOT include external references with whom the candidate has worked closely.
  o University Dossier guidelines:
    “Be aware that letters from dissertation advisors may not carry the same weight as those from unbiased evaluators, and letters from former students are irrelevant except as supportive documents for the teaching evaluation.”
  o Select external reviews “…whose objectivity is not open to challenge (i.e. avoid co-authors, longtime personal friends, former students or former mentors unless more than the minimum of three letters are presented)”.

General Comments that arise almost every year
• The dossier should be organized so it is readable and the information is easy to find.
• The dossier should be reviewed by “mentors” or “senior faculty” to aid in organization and presentation.
• A successful “template” for that department might be a good model to follow.
• Seriously consider use of summary tables or bullets to highlight items such as teaching evaluations, scholarly publications, grants, clientele contact, etc.; possible formats are on the following pages.
• SPELL CHECK
• DO NOT submit an excessively long dossier, i.e. should be less than 100 pages.
• Departmental Votes: must be justified if you want them to carry weight; should be consistent across multiple candidates
• Each reviewer is spending days combing through dozen of packets. Make the Dossier of a reasonable length, well written and easy to read, organized so the key information is easy to find; use summary tables or bulleted lists to highlight major accomplishments, etc. In other words, market yourself clearly, concisely and therefore effectively.
• A few common comments:
  o Publications: Refereed publications are “no brainers” to demonstrate scholarly work. Other forms of scholarship must be explained.
  o Excellence: One must demonstrate significant accomplishment in teaching, research, service, and extension where applicable. One must demonstrate true “excellence” in at least one area (teaching, research or extension), and a “strength” in another, and competence in the third (usually service).
  o Money: Must procure sufficient funds to maintain a quality program; therefore the exact dollar amount varies with the program.
  o Professor Rank: Must demonstrate national and/or international recognition.
• Inclusion of a detailed position description in CV, consistent with position description used for annual evaluations, is highly recommended.
• The CV should reflect a trend of continuous accomplishment in all the major areas.
Suggestions for specific Dossier Items

Item 1. Candidate's statement on teaching, research, extension and service
- Should be a “statement on goals, philosophies, strategies and emphases,”. This will be obvious if you write in the first person.
- The new rule suggest that “impact” of one’s teaching, research and service should be given.
- SHOULD NOT be an abstract, recap or summary of one’s activities and program.

Item 2. Candidate's curriculum vitae (with signed acknowledgement of correct, up-to-date content)
The CV must contain a signed statement that the CV being submitted is the most current, and is correct as of the date of the signature.

Position Description
Include an explicit description of position responsibilities and expectations. This should be consistent with the position description used for annual reviews. The division of teaching, research, and extension responsibilities should be defined by the position description and not by the salary sources.

Teaching
- List undergraduate and graduate courses taught and frequency.
- Numerical teaching evaluations must be included and broken down by the course. Show trends over time.
- Teaching evaluations - departmental average should be presented for comparison.
- Provide evidence from peer reviews, if they have been done.
- Do not include copies of student evaluation forms; if you want the information included in the packet, insert a page or two of typical comments in “Item 13 - Other Materials and Documentation.”
- Put syllabi, exams, etc. in “Item 13 - Other Materials and Documentation”; however, many reviewers do not look at syllabi and/or exams.

Research and Scholarly Work
- “Scholarly work” is most easily demonstrated by refereed publications.
- Other forms of scholarly work should be documented and explained.
- Refereed publications must be truly refereed or peer-reviewed
  - Journal should be accepted as refereed by the department
  - publication must have a rejection rate
  - editor-reviewed does not qualify as peer-reviewed
  - abstracts cannot be included under refereed publications
- “submitted” should be listed separately, and university rules do not allow them to be counted
- “accepted” and “in press”; some departments might require by a letter of verification from the editor or journal
- Copies of articles (reprints) typically are not be included, and if included, should be in “Item 13 - Other Materials and Documentation”. Some departments may require articles to be included. If included, articles are not forwarded out of college.
Extension Program Impacts
- Summarize and quantify the focus and diversity of educational programs (number, topic, products, strategies, etc.)
- Present evaluation results (i.e., customer satisfaction, outcome evaluation data) of extension programming
- Indicate number or magnitude of clientele contacts
- Indicate programming effectiveness by verifying clientele acceptance, use, or behavior change
- Applied research studies: Differentiate published peer reviewed articles from reports published by agency

Grants and Contracts
- Must indicate total $s and $s allocated to the candidate’s program.
- List chronologically by year(s) or since last promotion so a track record can be determined.
- Reference to the grant or contract should include all investigators listed in the order that they appear on award, name of the agency or private company that is the source of the award, the duration of the award, the dollar amount allocated to candidate’s program, and the total award.
- Indicate “internal” versus “external” competitive funding.
- List separately proposals that were submitted, but not funded.
- Grant Summary Chart: Either integrate into CV or place at end of CV.

Item 3. Verification Statement
- The candidate must include a signed and dated statement that lists the items the candidate supplied for the Dossier. This includes the CV, Statements or T, R, E and S, and material supplied for Item 13 Other.

Item 4-7. Departmental evaluation of quality of teaching, research, service, and extension.
- These evaluation reports are written by faculty who are members of the department’s promotion and tenure committee. Authorship of each report should be made clear, and a statement should be included at the end of each report reading, “The opinions and conclusions stated in this report regarding the candidate accurately reflect the views of the T&P committee.”
- The report should evaluate the record, and not advocate or repeat information in the CV.
- The report should be concise, one or two pages.
- The report should reference evidence from the curriculum vitae and outside letters to support the evaluation.
- The report should be cognizant of promotion criteria in the area being assessed.
- The report should be objective, mentioning positive factors, but not omitting negative aspects of the record. Explain any seemingly negative points in outside letters.
- The report should highlight evidence of peer acceptance; regional, national and international reputation and impact; and the value of the program to society, the State, the University, and the Texas A&M University System.
Item 8. Statement on qualifications of outside reviewers; All letters received (indicate candidate selection or dept. selection);
- Include copy of solicitation letter
- The outside letters requested should be truly “outside” letters. Most outside reviewers should be from AAU or peer institutions or better, but letters from clear leaders in the field are also acceptable. If not obvious, include explanation of why it is appropriate.
- Candidate can supply a contact list and a no contact list.
- Minimum of 3 letters, but preferably 5 to 7. No more than one reviewer per institution.
- Outside letters should not be from the candidate’s former major professor, fellow classmates in graduate school, former students, or collaborators.

Item 9. Departmental committee summary report and recommendation
- The committee report should include a summary evaluation of the candidate, referring to the “Evaluation of Quality” reports.
- The report should explain the reasons for any negative votes by the P&T Committee.
- The report should also describe the membership of the P&T Committee and how selected.
- Explain the voting process and results. Separate the votes for tenured and non-tenure track faculty.
- The report is signed by all voters that they agree that the report reflects the discussion.
- Letters from intercollegiate faculties or interdisciplinary programs, of which the candidate is a member, should be included here.

Item 10. Recommendation of Department Head and/or Resident Director
- Supplied by Head, and Resident Director where appropriate.

Item 11. College Committee summary report and recommendation
- Supplied by the Agriculture Peer Review Committee.

Item 12. Recommendation of Dean
- Supplied by the Dean.

Item 13. Other materials and documentation (optional)
- This section is for any materials deemed pertinent to the case, but not appropriate for placement elsewhere. This might include letters from students or peers that were not part of a structured evaluation process, or letters from TAMU faculty members.
- Supportive materials such as the teaching portfolio (if utilized) and copies of books or articles should be retained in the college, and not sent to the Office of the Dean of Faculties with the T&P package.
- **Best Practice:** Minimize the material included in this section.

Committee Members:
Original draft prepared by Ronnie Edwards, Chair, David Baltensperger, John Nichols, Greg Reinhart, Chris Townsend. The document is updated yearly after meetings with the members of the College and Texas A&M AgriLife Peer Review Committee.