



— ASSOCIATED —
COLLEGES OF THE SOUTH

A Process for Revisiting Faculty Evaluation: Situational Factors

As campuses begin the work of reviewing and realigning faculty evaluation processes, a diverse group of relevant campus stakeholders (e.g., administrative leaders, department chairs, faculty governance committee, tenure committee, or an *ad hoc* group of faculty leaders from all ranks) should consider the questions below first to assess the situational factors for each level and then to identify how current faculty evaluation policies and procedures align with those factors.

Institution-level

Situational Factors

1. What are our institutional values? Here are two resources that can assist in addressing this question: "[Understanding Our Core Values: An Exercise for Individuals and Teams](#)" and "[Scope of the Living Values Themselves: A Prospectus of Possibilities for Institutional Choice.](#)"
2. Where are these institutional values articulated (e.g., mission statement, recruitment materials, etc.)?
3. What institutional claims/promises do we make to students? What knowledge, skills, and attitudes do we say we cultivate in our students and for what ultimate purpose(s)?
4. In what ways are our faculty members expected to uphold these values and promises? Are these institutional values and promises valued in our faculty evaluation procedures?
5. Do the expectations of faculty articulated in a variety of documents (listed below) align with the expectations outlined in our faculty evaluation policies and procedures?
 - a. Position advertisements
 - b. New faculty orientation/ongoing professional development
 - c. Faculty handbook, including annual evaluation and tenure policies.
 - d. Faculty meetings
 - e. Department meetings, retreats, and website
 - f. Social gatherings
 - g. Curriculum (e.g., General Education)

Faculty Evaluation on the Institutional Level

1. How do we currently evaluate faculty on these institution-level priorities? For example, if personalized attention (e.g., high-quality advising) is a top priority, how is it valued and assessed in the faculty evaluation process?
2. Do the faculty evaluation policies, procedures, and documents (e.g., faculty handbook) align with the institutional values, claims, and promises?
3. Have awards or denial of tenure and promotion in the last 10 years been equitable and unbiased? How would we be able to tell one way or the other?
4. Is resource distribution consistent with the institutional values and expectations for faculty?

Department-level

Situational Factors

1. What are our departmental values? Where are these values articulated (e.g., department handbooks, etc.)? Are these values aligned with our institutional values?

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2. What expectations does the department have for its faculty? Where are they articulated? Are they aligned with departmental and institutional values and the claims/promises we make to students?
3. Are there evaluation criteria that are implicit or otherwise unstated (e.g., good citizenship)? If so, why aren't these criteria explicitly stated and aligned with faculty expectations?
4. Is the work we value distributed equitably with consideration of rank, gender, and racial or other identity group?
5. Are we sensitive and appropriately appreciative of "hidden work" that may place additional burdens on some individuals or groups?
6. How do we message our values and priorities (e.g., in email, chair requests, social gatherings, public shaming)?

Faculty Evaluation on the Departmental Level

1. When a colleague is struggling, how do we support them? How/when do we escalate/communicate this need to the administration/institution level?
2. How do we currently evaluate faculty on the departmental level? At what points? What documents and processes are created?
3. Do the faculty evaluation instruments on the departmental level align with the values, claims/promises, and faculty expectations articulated in our other documents?
4. Are there evaluation criteria that are implicit or otherwise unstated? If so, why aren't these criteria explicitly stated and aligned with departmental expectations for faculty?
5. Is how we have recommended tenure and promotion at the departmental level in the last 10 years equitable and unbiased? How would we be able to tell one way or the other?

Individual-level

Situational Factors

1. What does being a good colleague mean at our institution? Where is this articulated? Is this aligned with departmental/institutional values and expectations?
2. What do we do in a given week to prepare for teaching? Where/how does this happen (see this [James Lang article](#) for a process), and how is this work valued in evaluation?
3. Are the amount and accessibility of resources available to individual faculty members (e.g., time, funding, non-financial support, etc.) consistent with departmental/institutional values and expectations for faculty productivity in their area of scholarship or professional productivity?
4. Are the amount and accessibility of resources available to individual faculty members (e.g., time, funding, non-financial support, etc.) consistent with claims/promises made to students?

Faculty Evaluation on the Individual Level

1. Are individuals provided with opportunities for self-reflection/self-evaluation? At what points? What documents are created?
2. If individuals are struggling to meet goals (e.g., due to care-giving needs), is it clear how to seek and receive support? How are the individual's concerns communicated to the departmental and/or institutional level?
3. Are individuals prompted to highlight departmental/institutional values and expectations in our self-reflections/self-evaluations?
4. In our self-reflections/self-evaluations, are we prompted to highlight ways we have helped effect departmental and/or institutional claims/promises made to students?
5. In our self-reflections/self-evaluations, are we prompted to highlight accomplishments that may not be explicitly requested? If not, why not?
6. Have our self-reflections/self-evaluations in the last 10 years been assessed by others in an equitable and unbiased manner? How would we be able to tell one way or the other?

A Deeper Dive

If you find you need deeper analysis to inform and support your alignment work, refer to the prompts below for strategies that can help you unpack the landscape, context, and challenges in your specific environment.

1. Conduct a SWOT Analysis Focused on Faculty Readiness

Institutions must be willing to confront uncomfortable realities in order to make progress. Use a SWOT to assess your institution's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to faculty members' ability to navigate change and engage in difficult conversations.

2. Map Existing Structures for Faculty Evaluation Conversations

Identify current forums where discussions about faculty evaluation occur — or could naturally be integrated. The goal is to normalize these conversations within familiar, trusted environments to build shared understanding and language. Potential venues include:

- Offices of Faculty Development
- Academic Affairs initiatives
- Tenure and Promotion Committees
- Department Meetings
- Chair Trainings
- Teaching and Evaluation Committees
- Offices of Diversity and Inclusion
- Strategic Initiatives for Faculty Retention
- Diversity and Equity Committees
- Faculty Professional Interest Groups
- Appeals Committees

3. Establish a Common Language Around Key Concepts

Develop a shared understanding of critical terms related to bias, identity, and workplace climate to support consistent, meaningful conversations. Terms should include:

- Conscious Bias, Implicit Bias
- Workplace Toxicity, Microaggressions, Microinvalidations, Microinsults
- Racism, Sexism, Ableism
- Identity, Cultural Awareness, Colorblindness (and why it's problematic)
- Privilege, Stereotype Threat, Imposter Syndrome, Stereotype Lift
- Structural Racism, Inequity

All participants involved in faculty evaluation should be able to define and discuss these concepts objectively.

4. Identify Who Is and Is Not "In the Room"

Power dynamics, status, discipline, and demographic differences can silence marginalized voices. Critically assess who participates in evaluation-related discussions — and who is absent. Ensure you can hear both present and absent perspectives.

5. Analyze Tenure and Promotion Outcomes

Examine who attains tenure and promotion and who does not, disaggregating data by:

- Identity factors (e.g., race, gender, accessibility status)
- Department, division, or program
- Career progression patterns (e.g., early departures, timeline to full professor)

Develop surveys to capture experiences of faculty during evaluation processes, focusing on clarity of expectations, sense of support, and overall climate.

6. *Create Feedback Mechanisms on Faculty Evaluation Processes*

Establish multiple feedback points to gather insights on processes and experiences.

- Collect identity-specific, career stage-specific, and individual-specific feedback.
- Analyze trends from employee exit surveys.
- Include evaluations from term faculty as well as tenure-track faculty.

7. *Engage an External Consultant*

If you don't have the bandwidth on your own and have the fiscal resources to outsource, consider hiring an external expert to review your faculty evaluation system. An outsider can surface blind spots and deliver objective recommendations. Possible consultant activities:

- Facilitate identity-specific and role-specific focus groups.
- Administer surveys to identify system growth areas.

Note: Ensure administrators actively participate in shaping, supporting, and understanding this process.

8. *Pair Evaluation Data with Departmental Climate Assessments*

Faculty development largely occurs at the departmental level, so department climates are critical.

Integrate evaluation outcomes with:

- Departmental climate surveys
- Chair assessments
- Reports to HR, bias reporting systems, and similar mechanisms

9. *Review Existing Literature on Tenure and Marginalization*

Use peer-reviewed research to ground discussions in broader patterns. This is especially important where internal sample sizes are too small for significant statistical analysis.

10. *Audit Resource Distribution*

Investigate how resources (e.g., funding, mentorship opportunities) are allocated. Ensure transparency in criteria, equitable application across groups, and mechanisms to evaluate intended vs. actual outcomes.

11. *Review Policies Addressing Workplace Climate Issues*

Understand existing structures for reporting and addressing:

- Hostile work environments
- Title VII violations
- Workplace incivility

Ensure faculty are aware of their options and that avenues for addressing concerns are accessible and effective.

12. *Make the Business Case: Innovation and Inequity*

Demonstrate how inequitable evaluation practices inhibit innovation. Use this case to engage faculty, administration, DEI offices, and faculty development leaders.

13. *Analyze Service Expectations and Their Evaluation*

Study how service work is assigned, assessed, reported, and weighted — especially hidden or informal service that often disproportionately burdens marginalized faculty. (See the Toolkit's section on hidden workloads.)

14. *Review and Align Tenure and Promotion Policies*

Conduct a thorough review to ensure clarity, consistency, and accountability across evaluation materials:

- Departmental definitions for scholarship, teaching, and service

- Alignment of departmental policies with institutional guidelines
- Clarity around improvement plans for faculty not on track
- Evaluation of intervention programs: effectiveness, participation trends, identity impacts
- Fair and transparent appeals processes
- Consistent, accessible, and multimodal presentation of all materials (e.g., written guides, flowcharts, tables)