A Process for Revisiting Faculty Evaluation:
Activities

The following activities help align institutional and departmental values with best practices identified in current and emerging scholarship.

Institution-level

1. Conduct an audit of position advertisements across multiple departments. Does the language in the ads reflect institutional values and expectations? If not, how should new ads be structured? Assemble a working group or committee, work with Dean of Faculty Reviews, and/or Faculty Development Director to create a set of requirements and guidelines for the content of all future job ads. The job ad sets the stage for the new faculty member's expectations, performance, and evaluation. Detail and transparency are critical.

2. In focus groups with representative faculty, ask them to spend two minutes quickly and silently brainstorming a list of what makes for a great faculty member at your institution. Then compare the brainstormed lists with the list of attributes used in faculty evaluations as outlined in the faculty handbook and discuss any discrepancies. Alignment work depends on the faculty handbook's clarity and effectiveness, and the degree to which the faculty handbook genuinely guides daily conduct. If the handbook doesn't say what it should say about what actually makes a faculty member successful, then the handbook needs to be revised before going farther. While this process puts a lot of faith in an institution's faculty handbook, it also assumes that the handbook appropriately reflects clear and explicitly articulated values at the departmental and institutional level. Values guide both the work of faculty and the promises the institution has made to students. If not yet documented at the department level, ask departments to write the values they use in decision making. If documented values differ among departments or between departments and the institution, attend to the tactical revision and the cultural change processes necessary to align values and practices. Gauge whether the collective notion among faculty of what makes a great and successful faculty member *aligns* with the language of faculty expectations and evaluation in the faculty handbook. This can be accomplished through brainstorming in faculty focus groups, as described in the Toolkit. Focus groups should be conducted with faculty participants who are in similar career stages in order to foster safety. Multiple focus groups (with different participant lists that convene faculty from similar career stages at the same time) will generate more realistic data because facilitators will hear voices of faculty at different career stages and from different departments who may have varying ideas of what constitutes success. A working group should be assembled to coordinate the focus group process. These two resources should help guide the working group.

   - "How can departments foster fair and equitable faulty workloads?" An animated, scientific, NSF funded exploration of teaching, service and research and factors in faculty promotions.
   - "Faculty Work Activity Dashboards: A Strategy to Increase Transparency Workload" A 2020 article from Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning building the case and an approach for increasing transparency in how workloads get distributed.

   If faculty workload and/or service are contentious in your institution, attend to Hidden Workloads for a deeper dive into available resources. One example of what institutions and departments need to explore is whether or not marginalized faculty are bearing excessive service workloads, and if so by what inadvertent means? Hiring an external reviewer/evaluator may be a necessary component of this workload audit because of political sensitivities involved. Investments in surveys such as COACHE and

in training for faculty evaluators will be well worth the cost.

3. Conduct workload audits among faculty across a variety of departments. (See "[Faculty Workload Activity Dashboards: A Strategy to Increase Transparency](#)" for an illustrative process.) Have faculty keep track of the amount of time spent in a given week on teaching (course preparation, in the classroom, out-of-class help), scholarship, advising, mentoring (such as independent undergraduate research) and service of various types. Analyze the results by identity groups to determine distribution of work. As a faculty, discuss ways to mitigate any skew in the results, keeping in mind institutional values and commitments/promises to students.

4. Invite an external reviewer to investigate equity of workload and evaluation processes, and share the results with the faculty and develop and implement an action plan.

5. Conduct a job satisfaction survey (e.g., [COACHE](#)), share the results with the faculty, and develop and implement an action plan that responds to the results.

6. Invest in faculty evaluator training to ensure an equitable process.

Department-level

1. Conduct a position advertisement audit.   Do the ads reflect departmental values and expectations and are they aligned with institutional values and priorities? If not, how should new ads be structured?

2. Conduct a time audit within the department, as described above.

3. Bring in an independent reviewer to meet with each member to gather perceptions of the evaluation process, climate of the department, and equity of workload. Commit to acting upon the results.