



ALES Faculty Evaluation Committee Report for 2017 Annual Reports

The ALES Faculty Evaluation Committee (FEC) met on February 22nd and 23rd, 2018. This report summarizes the FEC process and outcomes, and provides some reflections on this year's annual reporting process. The report also outlines the changes to come for the 2018 reporting period.

The ALES FEC is made up of the Vice Dean (Chair), four Department Chairs, four elected members, a representative from the President's Review Committee (PRC) and a Faculty Service Officer (FSO) representative. The PRC and FSO representatives are not from ALES. The Dean also attends FEC to report on Faculty members for whom he has supervisory responsibility, and to participate in discussions about the FEC process and potential improvements. Two individuals from the Dean's office provide administrative support. This year's FEC members are listed at the end of this report.

At the February meeting FEC reviews promotions to full professor, FSO annual reports and assistant, associate and full professor annual reports. This year there were:

- 5 Associate Professors promoted to Full Professor. Congratulations!
- 11 Faculty Service Officer annual reports
- 20 Assistant Professor reports
- 34 Associate Professor reports
- 49 Full Professor reports (including two Associate Dean reports)
- The Dean also evaluated the 4 Department Chairs; this evaluation is done outside of the regular FEC process, but the increments for this group are from the ALES allocation.

The increment pool available to ALES is calculated as the number of eligible Faculty member times 1.2 merit increments (Faculty members at ceiling are not included in the calculation). The same formula is applied to FSOs¹. Reports are assessed on all three areas (teaching, research and service/admin) based on the nature of the appointment (i.e., split of responsibilities) and rank/seniority, taking into account disciplinary differences.

Statistics

When making initial increment recommendations, Chairs were asked to achieve a target of 1.18 increments per eligible Faculty member. Awards of one increment were given to 30.5% of faculty (not including those faculty members at ceiling), 1.25 increments were awarded to 42.1% of faculty, 1.50 was awarded to 13.7% and 1.75 increments were awarded to 7.0% of faculty. Some increments below 1.0 were also awarded. Relative to the initial recommendation from Department Chairs, FEC increased 16 increment awards and decreased 7.

¹ Since there are only a small number of FSOs and some are at their salary (and increment) ceiling, this report will not provide statistics on the FSO increment allocation (to protect privacy).



Reflections from the FEC Discussions

Overall the discussion at FEC highlights the amazing productivity, innovation, and industriousness of ALES Faculty members. It is truly remarkable to read about successful courses, graduate students, research projects, extension outcomes, and service to the profession, the community and the university. Faculty members in ALES are very busy! ALES FEC also receives the USRI scores from classes taught by ALES Faculty members. USRI scores are known to vary by class size, year or program and other factors. FEC was pleased to see so many high scores across a range of classes taught in ALES. One interesting outcome relates to the score for the USRI question “Overall, the instructor was excellent.” No ALES instructor fell below the Tukey Fence (the Tukey fence is defined on the U of A USRI web page as “the 25th percentile minus 1.5 times the distance from the 25th to the 75th percentile, defines a reasonable limit beyond which a score can be considered an outlier”). This is something ALES can be proud of.

Every year there are a number of issues that FEC observes in the completion of annual reports that could be improved upon. Next year we will be using the FAR online form, so some of the points raised this year will be addressed through drop down menus or other mechanisms. Nevertheless, here are a few items that were identified throughout the meeting regarding the completion of reports.

- Reporting on courses – remember to include information on whether the Faculty member attended lab sessions or not. Also try to provide reflection / evaluation of teaching. If there are student concerns or issues identified, speak to them in the reflections.
- On each publication remember to discuss your contribution. Some individuals report a percentage while others report their role only. If possible report your role in some detail, something along the lines of publications like the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS) or similar journals.
- In some cases, individuals reported committee membership on committees that they were no longer members of (e.g. program committees). Please check the dates of committee membership.
- If reporting a major, lead U of A service activity (e.g. directly reporting to the VP Research, Provost, or Dean of Graduate Studies) a report from the “supervisor” on the performance of the service activity helps in the annual report process.
- If parental, maternity or other leaves occur during the reporting period, please contact your department chair as soon as possible regarding whether the report will be evaluated by FEC or whether a non-adjudicated increment be awarded.
- Concerning admin/service, try to provide an indication of nature of activities; for example, if on a committee, did the committee meet, did it undertake/complete any initiatives, etc.?
- Report graduate committee activities in the section for graduate students – not in service / administration sections. This includes chairing graduate oral examinations.

General Issues

Predatory Journals: FEC has had more than one discussion about predatory journals. These are journals that may not have a review process, or that may simply be interested in capturing page charges and



publication fees and not in the academic review and publication process. They may also report misleading or inaccurate impact factors. There is growing concern about such journals. Unfortunately, it is not always easy to identify predatory journals and in some cases it is not clear if a journal is predatory or not. While a paper in a predatory journal may be a “good paper” it may be tainted by other papers that are not scientifically well done and published in the journal or it may be affected by the reputation of the journal itself. There are some lists of suspect or known predatory journals, but these lists use different criteria and are often difficult to maintain. The earliest and most comprehensive list, the Bealle list, has been discontinued by the founder because of the challenges received from various publishers and journals. FEC’s advice to Faculty members is simply to be aware of this issue and to be vigilant when selecting journals or when agreeing on journals with co-authors.

Composition of FEC: FEC discussed the issue of departmental representation for elected members as well as the term length of elected members. FEC agreed to discuss with Faculty members and to examine models used elsewhere on campus before bringing any proposal to Faculty Council.

Due Dates for Annual Reports in 2018: In 2018 ALES will be changing to an academic year and thus will only be reporting on the period January 1, 2018 to June 30, 2018. The FAR online reporting system will be available to Faculty members very soon – we hope by May. Individuals can begin filling in their annual reports as soon as the form is ready, but should submit after July 1. The expected due date for the 2018 January – June reports will be in September, 2018. Specific dates will be provided by your Department Chair.

If you have any questions or comments please feel free to contact Vic Adamowicz, FEC Chair.

FEC Membership

Vic Adamowicz, Vice Dean, (FEC Committee Chair)
Ellen Macdonald, Chair, Renewable Resources
Peter Boxall, Chair, Resource Economics and Environmental Sociology
Ruurd Zijlstra, Chair, Agricultural, Food & Nutritional Science
Deanna Williamson, Chair, Human Ecology
Solina Richter, External Representative (President Review Committee)
David Sharp, External Representative (FSO)

Elected Members

Nat Kav, Professor, AFNS (until June 2020)
Scott Jeffrey, Professor, REES (until June 2020)
John Parkins, REES (until June 2019)
Leluo Guan, AFNS (until June 2018, acting as a replacement for Spencer Proctor who is on sabbatical leave)

Administrative Support (ex officio)

Shayantani Sarkar, ALES Human Resources Manager
Rehana Bennett, ALES Executive Assistant