

Overview & Top Lines

Obstacles to address



- There is a need to better assign credit for impact and influence and for non-traditional ways of influencing beyond peer-reviewed publications.
- Current evaluations are quantitative and measurable. How do we measure qualitative data and incorporate it into our system and assess it?
- Once we change the actual evaluation process, more guidance will be needed about how to shift thinking, culture, and norms to the new standards.

Indicators of success



- The four broad indicators of success that generated the greatest amount of enthusiasm were:
 - Impact on the larger community
 - Visibility/reputation
 - Impact on students
 - Professional service/leadership
- Many embrace the use of qualitative measures.
- Defining the ways in which impact can be measured will be a difficult but important step, as some impacts are not immediately apparent.

Themes



What makes it difficult to evaluate quality and impact?

Consider your own research, teaching, and service as well as the work of your field/discipline. What do you see as obstacles that need to be removed or addressed to incorporate quality and impact into the evaluation and promotion process?

A. Very different measures across fields

- It will be hard to determine [quality and impact] because different disciplines have different definitions; these could be very different.
"You could have articles in 10 publications and the impact is not as high because it's not broad."
- A single very influential article, essay, tweet, podcast may have more impact than many less influential articles, essays, tweets, etc.
- One size does not fit all; *"promotion criteria shouldn't be the same and can't be the same."*
Example: in the policy realm, some advise Congress or Annapolis on policy matters. Others use social media (e.g., Twitter), or blogs, or podcasts that have many followers and they use their influence on these platforms.
- It is challenging to communicate what is *"gold standard"* in a particular field to those outside the field. As people get further into departmental work, there is a push for more specialization; but the deeper the specialization, the harder it becomes to evaluate the work.
"[Example] is a big deal in my field, but not obvious to people outside my field."
- Trying to standardize metrics across multiple disciplines is almost impossible, as there are so many different ways to measure impact, and there are differing expectations at different levels in the organization (e.g., colleges vs. departments).
- The purpose of a university is to look at things that are not in the main awareness, to uncover and expose new ideas; trying to standardize expectations goes against this curiosity.
"I worry that the shift on impact doesn't take into account things we do that aren't in the 'main awareness.'"

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B. Difficult to measure

- What we value may be hard to measure.
 - "It is difficult to imagine another way of doing it."*
 - "It is hard to measure impacts with the current beans [bean counting]."*
 - "Some of the things we do are not counted or are difficult to measure."*
- There is both long-term and short-term impact. Impact often takes time to materialize. For new topics, it can take a while for papers/concepts to catch on, become talked about, and built upon by others in the field.
- Difficult to assess and document scope of impact.
 - "My impact is the training of students and networking, which is hard to measure. Training of students has lots of hidden work."*
- People can "game" the system, causing harm to those who do not play the game.
 - "You can write a book and then a short one on the same subject or 2 books on 2 very different subjects with extensive additional work required. The University's system should not encourage or reward shortcuts."*
- Platforms for faculty to publish, present or perform are meant to be exclusive, and their values and priorities are not generally aligned with the values of the University. This applies to funding sources as well.
 - "These systems often do not consider impact."*
 - "With journals, rigor is based on the number of rejections, how competitive it is."*
- Much weight is given to the personal statement, but the specific criteria are vague, with much room for interpretation. This opens the door for individual and institutional bias.
- It will be hard to include external reviewers in the conversation.

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C. Some roles and responsibilities do not fit neatly into promotion criteria

- Administrative roles are not acknowledged. Not currently a good way to incorporate contributions in administrative leadership (e.g., service as an associate dean).
- Some PTK have responsibilities outside “traditional” academic roles (e.g., leading large support units for performing arts or labs with staff and budget oversight and responsibility; coordinating and scheduling complex symposia and events that require the alignment of many people and have high visibility and risk for failure).

“When trying to expand my skills into the areas of teaching so I can have a better chance of promotion, I’m told it’s not “in scope” for my job description.”

D. Work changes over time do not match the contract

- Areas of research and responsibilities change over time, but no change is reflected in contracts or written statement of responsibilities. Changes should be reflected in the process and updated as appropriate.
- Faculty may apply and receive funding for activities that are indirectly related to the mission for which they were hired. They are unable to reallocate time and must accomplish their own responsibilities (teaching, research).
- Some duties are not enumerated in the contract and yet take up significant amounts of time. For example, mentoring becomes a full-time job.

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E. Documentation required

- A lot of paperwork and different deadlines for evaluation throughout the year; you can be busy documenting and evaluating the work instead of actually performing the work.
- Evaluation can become the focus rather than the mission of our work.
- It is time consuming to capture accurately and we do not have good systems for it.

F. Sharing information about best practices

- Campus “silos” prevent the sharing of best practices with respect to AEP/APT.
“Maybe there are examples in the performing arts that could be adapted for Extension, or Public Health.”

Themes



Identifying measures of success

How will we know whether to give someone a high rating in the area of quality and impact? What would they be doing or accomplishing if their work demonstrated excellence in quality or impact?

Data collected via online brainstorm tool, Ideaboardz

A. Impact on the larger community

Ideas related to community impact and involvement made up the largest group of suggestions by far. Many of these community-related recommendations fell into one of three subtopics:

- **Evidence of policy or community change** (13 comments) - pointed to the direct impact of faculty research and teaching on community outcomes and policy changes.
- **Local community involvement** (4 comments) - related to the level of involvement with the community outside of campus.
- **Relevance/responsiveness to community needs** (3 comments) - spoke to how well faculty members' involvement with local community entities met the most pressing needs of that community.

B. Visibility/Reputation

This grouping of comments centered on the reputation and visibility of faculty beyond campus. Almost all in this theme could be grouped into one of four subtopics:

- **Reputation among colleagues** (11 comments) - highlighted the esteem in which faculty are held by their colleagues (both staff and faculty within their department, and peers in their field). Examples of measurements include book reviews and evaluative comments.
- **General visibility** (6 comments) - suggested measuring appearances beyond campus (e.g., seminars, media appearances, conference posters), as well as the visibility of their published research (e.g., citations, white papers, policy briefs).
- **Awards/recognition** (5 comments) – noted tracking the ways in which faculty are recognized (e.g., awards) both on campus and more broadly in their field.
- **Invited presentations/collaborations** (4 comments) - pointed to the number of invitations faculty members received to speak and/or collaborate.

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C. Impact on students

Students were the second most popular topic among the ideas offered. Three student-related subtopics emerged:

- **Student experience** (7 comments) - dealt with how engaged and satisfied students were, and how they would evaluate their faculty members.
- **Student success** (7 comments) - spoke to specific measures of student success, such as graduation rates, job placement rates, internship placements, and dissertation quality and completion.
- **Number of students** (2 comments) - suggested tracking the number of students/postdocs served.

D. Professional service/leadership

This theme focused on the time and effort faculty spend taking on roles not directly related to teaching or research. Two subtopics emerged:

- **Contributions to department** (6 comments) - centered on service to one's department/program, including the department-related administrative work and/or leadership roles faculty take on and the impact that work can have on the success of a program.
- **Involvement in professional organizations** (2 comments) – noted professional service in one's field.

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E. Publications

Several comments related to evaluating publications in different and more nuanced ways, instead of relying solely on the quantity of publications.

F. Funding/Grants

The comments in this theme related to tracking the different types of external funding faculty members bring in (e.g., grants, fellowships).

G. Meeting goals

This theme centered on the degree to which faculty members achieved their goals (those in their contract, or those set by them/their department).

H. Developing/Re-developing programs and courses

These comments suggested looking at what new programs or courses faculty members created and/or what programs or courses they have redeveloped/improved.

I. Mentoring

This set of comments concerned the extent to which faculty members mentored junior faculty and graduate and undergraduate students.

Provost Faculty Promotion Dialogue | February 28, 2022

Quality & Impact

Themes



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Notes

- Several breakout room groups wrestled with how to differentiate activity *volume* from the *impact* of that activity. There was a great deal of agreement with the suggestion of focusing more on quality (not just quantity).
- There was also a high level of interest in how to measure impact, and an acknowledgment that impact can be extremely hard to measure, particularly because often the true impact is apparent only over a long period of time.
- A grouping of five comments pointed to the importance of clear definitions (e.g., how do we define quality?), attention to the language used to define the “indicator of success” categories, and the processes by which we collect information about these indicators.
- There were 17 additional comments that did not fit into any of the listed themes.

Provost Faculty Promotion Dialogue | February 28, 2022

Quality & Impact



Themes from Chat

In a few words, share your reaction to the comments you just heard from the Provost.

Many participants expressed appreciation for being invited to share their perspectives and excitement about looking at *"multiple dimensions of impact."*

Considerations related specifically to impact included:

- exploring *"the common connection between 'quality' and 'exclusive' and how that relates to the importance of 'impact'"*
- being cognizant that *"impact can be delayed or not immediately evident"*
- recognizing that impact *"goes beyond our scholarly work"*

Additionally, several comments about measurement were shared such as:

- *"Hard to measure but important"*
- *"Like the move away from quantitative metrics"*

What is something that caught your attention today?

Several participants described an awareness of common concerns and desires across the disciplines (*"I am not alone in my concerns"*), while others referenced variation, such as with experiences with evaluation systems and indicators of success.

Many applauded the variety and quantity of participants and were heartened by *"the commitment of so many people to align values with what we do."*