

Roadmap for Excellence
Utah State University Extension Specialists
May, 2009

This document is intended as a “roadmap” to assist Extension specialists as they navigate the USU Extension promotion and tenure system. This document parallels the construction and the intent of the *Roadmap for Excellence* guidance for agents. In short, the Extension specialist is expected to be a diverse academic with an array of traits:

- Is a good communicator (both as a speaker and as a listener).
- Is a good team player, and able to assume leadership when appropriate (leads to success in collaboration, cooperation, and coordination with others).
- Is able to assess and address statewide needs for both research and programming in their field/discipline.
- Is able to develop programmatic strategies and plans (can grasp the “big picture”).
- Is successful at multi-tasking and can develop a linked Extension/research/teaching program, depending on the structure of one’s role statement.
- Can develop expertise in his/her field and develop a solid professional reputation with his/her peers, both in Utah and nationally.
- Is successful in garnering funding to support his/her programs.
- Can produce a range of scholarly products from his/her work, including peer-reviewed publications.

This document is not formal University policy or guidance; it represents a good faith effort to portray the kinds of program choices that help specialists sail smoothly through the evaluation process. While accomplishing all of the tasks within this document will not guarantee tenure and/or promotion, these steps are typically completed by specialists who have successfully accomplished tenure and/or promotion. By the same token, failure to accomplish the tasks as laid out here does not mean that promotion or tenure will be denied.

Policy 405 of the Utah State University Policy Manual provides specific details on the process for reviews of promotion and tenure, annual performance, and post-tenure. All faculty are expected to have a signed role statement that contains percentage assignments, as well as expectations under each assignment. The annual work plan, which is signed by the faculty member and his/her direct supervisor, provides more specific details on expectations for the coming year.

All specialists hired in the same calendar year have the same tenure date, unless credit is given for previous time served in a tenure-track or equivalent position. A review for faculty in the pre-tenure probationary period is done at least once each calendar year, regardless of hire date. Faculty members with no credit for previous time will have six reviews, the last being the final year for consideration of tenure. The third year review is also one of heightened scrutiny to ensure that the candidate is making timely progress.

The Specialist's role

Specialists at USU are supported by a mixture of Extension funds (state and federal), research funds (often the Utah Agricultural Experiment Station), and/or teaching funds (Education and General or E&G). Specialists are typically housed in academic departments administered by a department head who supervises his/her work in all assigned areas (Extension, research, and/or teaching). In addition, each specialist is responsible to Extension administration for the Extension portion of his/her assignment. Each specialist has a role statement which indicates the relative weight that will be placed on each major assignment. The role statement also includes expectations for each assignment, including scholarship that is largely indistinguishable from that produced by other faculty in the department.

Some departments have few specialists, and some department heads—particularly ones new to the job—do not have experience in supervising and evaluating specialists. The kinds of activities that specialists do to support county faculty are often not visible to on-campus departmental colleagues and may not be entirely understood or appreciated by them. Specialists may need to proactively educate their departmental colleagues and their department head on what the specialist's role is and in what activities they are engaged around the state. Having other Extension personnel on one's Promotion and Tenure committee also helps this process.

There are two basic models for being successful as a specialist: the agent-centric model and the partner-centric model. When specialists spend the majority of their time working with agents in the development and delivery of educational programming, they are pursuing an agent-centric model. Certainly this is a classic structure for Extension organizations. But some specialists do not have a network of agents around the state who are logical collaborators with them. Examples might be specialists who deal with landscape architecture/community planning or water quality. These specialists tend to put together coalitions involving partners from outside the University, although agents may become engaged in the conduct of programmatic activities when it enhances their own in-county activities. This partner-centric model may also involve coalition building with other specialists at the regional or national level, particularly when there are only a few specialists with a particular specialty in Utah.

The agent-centric and partner-centric models are certainly not mutually exclusive; most specialists have a mix of both kinds of collaboration. But even those who are extensively partner-centric need to be responsive to the information requests and opportunities for collaboration with the agents. The specialists play a critical bridging role between the expertise that exists on campus and the county-based faculty who are the front lines of program delivery in the state. County faculty are expected to use relevant, research-based information to develop educational resources and programs; specialists are a major conduit through which agents can access that research basis for their programming.

The Secret to Success as an Extension Specialist

The following sections parcel the task of being a specialist into five categories: program development, program delivery, funding, scholarship, and service. Within each of these categories, specific tasks are identified and assigned to the years when it is advisable to accomplish that task. This creates the appearance that a specialist's career can be viewed as a set of mini-tasks accomplished in a checklist sort of way, but this is not prudent.

If there is a secret to being a successful faculty member, it boils down to **thinking strategically**. *The fundamental task that a specialist is charged with is to create a cogent body of scholarship that makes a difference.* That means that needs assessments, program area choices, partnership development, fund raising, evaluation, and publication efforts all need to work in concert to create and document that scholarship. The most effective specialists tend to be issue entrepreneurs: they think strategically about what needs to be done, with whom they can partner, how they can raise the funds needed to offer their program at an impact scale, and then document and disseminate their accomplishments to their peers. They do not think about these as disconnected tasks, but as interlinked building blocks of programmatic success. Their program choices are not money driven, but they also do not base their careers on an area where they do not see some realistic prospects for growing a program. They think about evaluation criteria before they even begin the project, and may construct part of their needs assessment to gather some pre-treatment data that will be a useful evaluation benchmark in the future. In short, they are thinking about the big picture and a multi-year programmatic trajectory rather than merely this year's work plan or P&T checklist.

Program Development

Specialists are typically hired to fill a particular role that meets both Extension and departmental needs. There are very few specialists in the Utah State University Extension system with 100% Extension appointments. Much of the broad array of expectations for the specialist position and its allocation between Extension and the home department has been established in the role statement that was developed when the specialist was hired. The first set of tasks is to become integrated into the departmental and Extension networks to understand how best to meet those expectations. A specialist is expected to conduct scholarship that contributes to his/her field. They are also expected to partner with county Extension faculty in the development, delivery, and/or evaluation of Extension programming. The extent to which these two scholarly expectations can be linked will be a significant factor in his/her success. There should be a focused and coherent theme in the body of Extension work that establishes the specialist's professional reputation and expertise appropriate to his/her faculty rank.

Documenting impacts of the program. Meaningful and rigorous evaluation of Extension programming is crucial for two broad reasons. First, USU Extension is funded through federal, state and county sources, with each funding source articulating expectations for outcomes. In addition, Extension has a federal civil rights mandate to deliver programs to under-served audiences and must be able to demonstrate achievement of parity goals. Second, documenting the impacts of some of major programs is an essential part of the scholarship expectation for a faculty member and will allow others to

assess your program effectiveness. Effective evaluation metrics also allows the specialist to compete for funding, both from internal and external sources.

In order to document outcomes leading to impacts, the specialist should develop evaluation strategies during (not after) program development. Rigorous evaluation often requires pre-program “benchmark” measurements that can be compared to post-program measurements for monitoring progress and impact. The outcomes may be described as learning, actions, or long term changes (impacts) that occurred because of participation of clients in the Extension program. USU Extension uses the Logic Model as the standard rubric for program planning and evaluation. A complete discussion of the Logic Model exceeds the purpose of this Roadmap, but additional resources are available. Specialists are encouraged to become proficient with the Logic Model, particularly if it is a new to you.

Program Development

Years 1-3	Years 4-6	Promotion to Professor
<p><u>Year 1</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on building professional networks and partnerships in your home department and in Extension. • Review Extension’s five-year Plan of Work and existing program-ming efforts in your specialty area. • Visit a cross-section of counties to observe the agents’ programming. • Participate in in-service training for agents. • Include evaluation methods in program planning. • Join multi-state research/Extension working groups if relevant to your specialty. <p><u>Years 2-3</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in strategic thinking and dialogue with other faculty and outside partners to identify emerging issues. • Focus on 2-3 areas for program emphasis with one program clearly identified as your specialty or signature program. Clearly defined research and outreach products should be emerging by Year 3. • Involve county-based faculty in your peer-reviewed writing projects. 	<p>Fulfill expectations for Years 1-3 plus the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a steady flow of articles in the peer-reviewed publication pipeline. • Reach out to recently hired agents. • Begin to assume leadership roles in your professional networks with allied organizations. 	<p>Fulfill expectations for promotion to Extension Associate Professor plus the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentor pre-tenure agents. • Integrate and provide leadership in Extension programs while including other agents, specialists, volunteers, and appropriate county and state agencies. • Have an outstanding record of accomplishment demonstrated by county-based activities in support of issue-based programs, with appropriate numbers of participants and demonstrated impacts. • Have strong evidence of emerging or recognized leadership in Extension at the state and national level.

Program Delivery

Extension agents provide educational opportunities to local clientele in a wide variety of settings such as workshops, short courses, seminars, demonstrations, and one-on-one consultations. Your assistance to their efforts may be as a co-developer of educational events and programs, as a guest lecturer in events the agents develop, or as an evaluator of the programs. There is therefore a wide range of ways in which you can partner with other specialists and agents in developing and delivering Extension programming. While you might develop materials that you expect to deliver personally, you should also seek to develop materials designed in a manner that allows delivery by others.

Program Delivery

Years 1-3	Years 4-6	Promotion to Professor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form collaborative relationships with other specialists, other agents, and community resources to create collaborative efforts. • Collaborate with agents to identify needs for new curriculum materials for use in Extension educational activities. • Deliver presentations, demonstrations, classes, workshops, or other educational activities and/or events*. • Assist agents in the interpretation of program evaluation data. • Provide peer-review for the materials written by county faculty. 	<p>Fulfill expectations for Years 1-3 plus the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin to shift from a participant role in collaborative projects to a leadership role. • Exhibit mastery in subject matter as demonstrated by development of printed material, publications, presentations to clientele and peers, and other means. • Formulate strategies to acquire on-going program support from sources outside of Utah State University. • Maintain an up-to-date grasp of innovations in your field and relay those innovations to county faculty. • Use evaluation results to modify existing programs. 	<p>Fulfill expectations for promotion to Extension Associate Professor plus the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistently use creative and innovative methods for educational events and activities. • Deliver invited presentations at state, region, and/or national levels (as a demonstration of your reputation and relevance).

*An event is the delivery of information to clientele or teaching opportunity, especially an activity, workshop, presentation, or other occurrence that is significant. An event is not professional development, staff meetings or trainings, meetings with funders, planning meetings, working on reports or preparation time for events.

Scholarship

Regardless of the percentage allocations in your role statement, you have a scholarship obligation as a faculty member at USU. Scholarship in Extension is broadly defined as creative activity in the development and/or application of Extension materials. These materials are then reviewed by peers (i.e. other Extension professionals) and used or adopted into other Extension programs. Scholarship is demonstrated through peer reviewed professional and Extension publications, as well as curriculum materials of many forms, which are either new instructional material or existing instructional material that has been significantly adapted.

It is important that the specialist's Extension information is disseminated and that its originality and quality is validated by your peers. This external validation can be accomplished in many ways, including (but not limited to):

- Adoption of educational curricula by other Extension personnel.
- Publication of programs, curricula, or research in peer reviewed journals or in other peer reviewed outlets.
- Presentation of programs or curricula to peers at professional meetings.
- Receipt of awards from Extension professional associations at the state, regional, or national level.
- Outside funding that supports major programs.

Specialists have two fundamental obligations in terms of scholarship: to conduct their own scholarship and to assist the county agents in their programming so that it can result in scholarly outputs as well. This partnership between a specialist and the agents can be mutually beneficial; both need the same scholarly outputs and can (indeed, should) be co-authors on curricula and publications that emerge from their joint efforts. A single innovative program can yield multiple publications, such as a theoretical/technical article (on which the specialist might be lead author) and a how-to article for other Extension professionals (on which the agent might be lead author.)

The publication of peer reviewed journal articles is the single most unambiguous and valued way to demonstrate scholarship. The expectation for the number of peer-reviewed journal articles varies, depending on one's role statement. Extension agents with no peer reviewed publications have been tenured and promoted in recent years, although that is not the norm. Having 2 to 3 publications tends to make a much stronger dossier for agents. Teaching/research faculty in academic departments with the typical 50% research assignment would usually have 10 to 15 publications over the pre-tenure period. Extension specialists with a 50% Extension assignment have intermediate expectations for 6 to 9 publications, although that expectation drifts up if their role statements include large research assignments and down if they have significant teaching assignments. However, representing the publication expectations with a simple publication count glosses over other important considerations—the quality of the journal, the impact of the paper, the authorship role, the pace of publication over time, etc.—all of which are

considered by University review committees and external evaluators. There is no magic number that either guarantees successful promotion if achieved, or denial if not achieved.

Scholarship

Years 1-3	Years 4-6	Promotion to Professor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 1-2 peer reviewed abstract each year, including those from professional events in Utah. • At least 2-3 peer-reviewed fact sheets or curriculum materials per year, targeted towards county agents. • No less than 5-6 project collaborations with county faculty is prudent, since not all of them will necessarily be successful. • Peer reviewed Extension publications should begin to appear in Years 2-3. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Around 6-9 peer reviewed journal articles¹ by Year 6, with at least three as a major contributor. There is very little added credit for sole-authored publications. The articles should be well distributed throughout the period. • At least 2 peer reviewed abstracts and/or proceedings per year. • At least 3-5 peer-reviewed fact sheets or curriculum materials per year, with county agents included as co-authors. • At least 2 scholarly presentations per year at national, regional, and/or state meetings, which have been chosen through a peer review process or are invited. • Dissemination of Extension education information through use of media such as a newsletter, newspaper articles, a newspaper column, radio guest, or TV appearances as guest or show host. • Apply for and receive awards as recognition of program excellence at the state or national level. 	<p>Fulfill expectations for promotion to Extension Associate Professor plus the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustained productivity of peer reviewed research. • Achieve prominence at the national and international levels, as measured by awards, speaking invitations, positions in professional societies, etc. • Provide research mentoring and assistance to junior colleagues and students.

¹ Number conditioned on the percentage allocations in the role statement.

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Program Funding

Funding in support of Extension programs can come from internal (USU) and external grants and in-kind contributions. Funding is important to the delivery of Extension programming to research, but it also serves as an important indicator of the value and quality of the specialist's work. Significantly more weight is placed on external funding than internal funding.

Program Funding

Years 1-3	Years 4-6	Promotion to Professor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply for USU Extension and/or USU Vice President for Research grants. • Serve as a junior partner on grant applications being led by senior faculty. • Think strategically about a business model for priority programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply for USU Extension and/or USU Vice President for Research grants, with collaboration with county faculty encouraged. • Serve as lead PI on funding proposals. Can be in partnership with specialists and/or other agents. Should have at least two funded external grants at the end of six years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure significant external funding for development and support of major program(s).

Service

Every employee of Utah State University is expected to perform service activities on behalf of the department, college, and university, as well as on behalf of their academic/professional organizations. Without this service, the University would cease to function.

Service

Years 1-3	Years 4-6	Promotion to Professor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become a member of the academic professional society most relevant to your work. • Become a member of the Extension professional society 	Fulfill expectations for Years 1-3 plus the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue the memberships and activities begun in Years 1-3. • Seek leadership roles in 	Fulfill expectations for promotion to Extension Associate Professor plus the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assume senior leadership in the professional academic societies.

<p>most relevant to your assignment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the first years, accept only minimal service responsibilities on behalf of your department and Extension. • If you feel that your service expectations are becoming excessive, raise it as a discussion point with your P&T committee and/or department head during the annual review. 	<p>the professional societies to which you belong.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve on departmental, college, and university levels, as assigned by the department head. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair major initiatives and standing committees in the University. • Assume more than “your share” of service obligations in order to protect the junior faculty.
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