

Evaluating Split Appointments: Agronomist (___ in the Agricultural Experiment Station) With a Professorial Title ¹

Titles in the Professorial and Agronomist (___ in the Agricultural Experiment Station) series are complementary and increase the value of an appointee as a teacher and researcher in both roles. Therefore, persons with an appointment split between the Professorial and Agronomist series can serve goals and missions of both without detriment to either. In order to achieve a synergy, the partial appointments in each series have to be realistically evaluated with an eye toward encouraging the synergy. The purpose of this exhibit is to define how aspects of the work for each portion of an appointment are parallel and overlap, how the nature of the work is defined, and how the accomplishments of an appointee may be fairly evaluated in a way that encourages further accomplishment in each series.

Parallel and Overlapping Goals and Missions

For a person with a split appointment, the goals of the Professorial component of an appointment are parallel to the missions of the Agricultural Experiment Station (AES) portion of the appointment, and these may overlap. The clear and unequivocal goal of Professorial series appointees is (1) to instruct undergraduate and graduate students matriculating in campus curricula as defined by the department, (2) to pursue research or other creative and scholarly activities as defined by the highest standards of the academic discipline(s) of the appointee, (3) to serve the academic discipline in a way appropriate to the professional interests and skills of the appointee (Section APM 220-10), and (4) to serve the campus and community in a way appropriate to the professional interests and skills of the appointee.

The role of an Agronomist is (1) to carry out research or other creative activity, the work being aligned to the mission of the AES. Like the work of the Professorial portion of the appointment, AES research must be performed at the highest of scholarly standards. Research done for the Professorial portion of the appointment in many cases may overlap the research done for the Agronomist portion of the appointment, as the mission of the AES may align well with the academic direction of the appointee's discipline. However, work for the AES in some cases may differ substantially in content (but not in quality). (2) An Agronomist is also expected to perform outreach activities; the purpose of these activities is to provide people and groups served by the mission of the AES with information derived from or related to the research of the appointee. Outreach activities may be conducted on or off campus, but will vary by person and/or discipline. Frequently the person with a split appointment may use research-based information from the Agronomist portion of the appointment in his or her Professorial teaching. (3) Professional competence activities of the Agronomist series should serve the academic discipline in a way appropriate to the professional interests and skills of the appointee. The professional competence activities for the Agronomist portion of a split appointment clearly overlap with the professional competence activities of the Professorial portion of the appointment. (4) In a similar way, the service component of an Agronomist's appointment is guided by the organizational needs of the AES and the needs of the clientele as they relate to the mission of the AES. The service work for the Professorial portion of an appointment may overlap considerably with the service work done for the Agronomist portion of the appointment, because both are based upon the research competence of the appointee and organizational needs of the University and the community.

It should be clear to persons with split appointments and to those evaluating accomplishments of those persons that the goals and missions of both components of a split appointment must be met, whether they are met by identical or discrete accomplishments.

Defining How Accomplishments of a Person with a Split Appointment are to be Weighted

Means of evaluating the quality of work for a person with a Professorial series appointment are defined by Section APM-220. Means of evaluating the quality of work for a person with an Agronomist series title are defined by Section UCD-320. The quality of work must be evaluated independently of the percentages of each portion of the split appointment.

The quantity of work for each aspect of the split appointment, however, will be influenced by the percentage of the appointment in the Professorial and Agronomist series. Ideally, the appointee should have accomplishments aligning with the Professorial and Agronomist appointments consistent with the percentage of appointment in each title series. For example, if a person has a 25% appointment in the Professorial series and a 75% appointment in the Agronomist series, approximately 25% of the accomplishments should be aligned with the Professorial goals and 75% of the accomplishments should be aligned with the mission of the AES. In reality, this splitting of work cannot be done precisely, because of the overlapping nature of goals and missions. Therefore, it is necessary for the appointee, department chair, and Director of the AES to come to an agreement on the balance of the appointee's work (see Note 2). This understanding should serve to focus the appointee's work in a way that is mutually agreeable to the appointee, department chair, and Director of the AES (or delegates). In addition, this understanding should be communicated to the committees and persons that evaluate the appointee's accomplishments with regard to continuing appointment, merit raises, and promotions. The understanding should be communicated to the appointee in all the conventional ways that appointees interact with department chairs and the Director of the AES (or delegates) and be done in full regard of the principles of academic freedom relevant to the Professorial title. With regard to the Agronomist portion of the appointment, the approved project description (see Section UCD-320-4) should give a conceptual and specific overview of the expectations for that portion of the appointment.

With regard to evaluations, the merit or promotion dossier of the appointee should have sections corresponding to all aspects of the split appointment. It is incumbent upon the appointee in his or her self-statement and upon the department chair in the departmental letter to elucidate clearly the understanding concerning the balance of activities in a way that the evaluators can determine whether an appropriate balance has been met. The evaluative departmental letter is a document of utmost importance to the evaluation process.

The understanding among the appointee, department chair, and Director of the AES (or delegates) with regard to the balance of work expected with a split appointment must follow certain guidelines. First, it should be understood by all that the balance of work for the research, outreach, and service portions of each type of appointment is flexible. A person must have accomplishments in each aspect of the appointment, but the percentage of work in each must reflect the unique situation of each appointee. For example, a person may de-emphasize the outreach portion of the appointment if that aspect of the work is offset by a higher level of accomplishment in research or service if this fits the needs of the department and the AES at that time. Alternatively, if service is particularly high during one period of evaluation and is done at the expense of research productivity, the appointee may wish to de-emphasize service in the next evaluation period, again with the understanding that the needs of the department and the AES are met. In principle, however, no aspect of an appointment may be completely disregarded during any review period. It should be noted that for full title, Step VI and above, the appointee must perform exceptionally in all categories of consideration.

Second, campus and departmental norms for accomplishment should be considered as highly relevant when the expectations are formulated and the accomplishments are evaluated. There are campus teaching norms relative to number of classes presented and the amount of non-classroom

teaching effort for a 100% Professorial appointee. This norm is not often stated officially for fear that it will be used in too restrictive a way, and because it varies over time. However, the appointee and department chair must understand that substantial deviation from that norm in the expectations of the appointee will not be viewed as beneficial to that person's merit evaluation and promotion prospects. The quality of teaching should not be affected by the percentage of the Professorial appointment. The quantitative teaching expectations should correspond to the percentage of the Professorial appointment. For example, if the teaching load expectation for the campus and a department were that 4-5 courses be presented per academic year for a 100% Professorial appointment, along with other appropriate teaching activities, then the expectations for a 25% Professorial appointment would be about 25% of the 100% work load. Such a level of accomplishment for a single aspect of the appointment must be viewed in a way consistent with the flexibility guideline expressed above. The quality of research output should not be influenced by the percentage appointments in the Professor and Agronomist series. The quantity of research work will be influenced, however, with less output being expected from appointees with larger teaching workloads. Quantitative norms for research output cannot be specified for the campus because they are very dependent on the teaching load and because norms differ by discipline. Persons reviewing dossiers, therefore, should use performance standards for research that are appropriate for the appointee's discipline and all other responsibilities.

Third, some accomplishments of research aligned with the outreach missions of the AES may be reported in venues other than peer-reviewed scholarly journals. Mission-oriented research done for the AES must be reported in a way that can be used by the persons and groups that the AES serves. For example, research that evaluates technologies must be conveyed to the potential users of those technologies in language and form that is appropriate to the users. Such reporting might be unacceptable for purely academic research. For instance, limited distribution publications from the Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources are appropriate for conveying research results to farmers but would not be appropriate as the sole means of reporting academic research for persons with solely Professorial titles. Such reporting does not replace the need for also publishing in peer-reviewed scholarly journals, but the balance between scholarly articles and reports to clientele must be appropriate. For evaluative purposes, it is incumbent upon the departmental letter to specify how the activities reported in the appointee's dossier are appropriate to the research and missions of the campus and the AES.

NOTE 1: The Agricultural Experiment Station is an "organized research" (OR) unit, and appointments in the Agricultural Experiment Station are sometimes colloquially referred to as OR appointments. Professorial appointments are referred to as "instruction and research" (I&R) positions. Hence split appointments are colloquially referred to as I&R/OR appointments.

NOTE 2: In practice the Director of the AES delegates the responsibility for direct contact with the appointee to campus personnel (e.g., the dean) who then may redelegate responsibilities to department chairs. In most cases the department chair serves as the primary contact for appointees when interpreting the appropriate balance in workload.