

EXTENSION ASSISTANT PROMOTION

DEVELOPING COMPETENCIES AND SKILLS IN PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE

JUNE 19, 2025

DAVE VARNER

NEBRASKA EXTENSION



Today's Objectives

- **Improve clarity and understanding of the Extension assistant promotion process, timeline and resources.**
- **Help Extension assistants achieve promotion.**
- **Answer questions regarding the promotion process and expectations.**

Today's Agenda

- **What** is promotion?
- **Why** is promotion important?
- **What** is the promotion file process and timeline?
- **How** to develop a quality promotion file.

What is Promotion?

- **Advancement from Extension Assistant to Extension Associate**
- **Demonstrates a record of contribution and accomplishment**
- **Recognition of skills and competencies**
- **A visible way to recognize sustained excellence**
- **A vote of confidence regarding future performance**
- **Eligible after 5 years in Extension Assistant role—October 1**



Why is Promotion Important?

- **Affirmation of achievements, personal growth, and professional skills and competencies**
- **Career milestone**
- **Supervisor and Extension administration recognition**
- **Rewards (10% salary augmentation)***



*** Assuming funding source decision-makers are supportive**

Today's Agenda

- **Promotion file process and timeline**
- **Promotion file content and expectations**
- **Planning for success**
- **Resources**



QUESTIONS?



PROMOTION FILE PROCESS AND TIMELINE



Unit Administrator is...

- **Department/School/Unit Head**
- **Engagement Zone Coordinator**

Promotion File Timeline

- **March 15**– Letter of intent to apply for promotion to immediate supervisor and unit administrator
- **April 1**– Supervisor and unit administrator meet with candidate to discuss the file preparation and review dates and processes associated with the file review
- **April to July** – Candidate assembles the promotion file. It is recommended that the candidate consult with the mentor, supervisor, and/or unit administrator regarding file preparation.
- **August**– Meet with the supervisor to review the file and provide feedback



Promotion File Timeline

- **October 1** – Submit the electronic file to the unit administrator and copy the immediate supervisor.
- **October/November** – The Unit administrator reviews the file and submits a recommendation letter to the Dean of Extension.
- **December** – Dean of Extension reviews the file and notifies the Unit administrator and immediate supervisor of the recommendation
- **Jan./Feb.** – Dean or Unit administrator notifies applicant of promotion decision
- **July 1** – Promotion takes effect, and the promotion salary increase is awarded*

* Assuming funding source decision-makers are supportive

QUESTIONS?



PROMOTION FILE CONTENT AND EXPECTATIONS



Promotion File Content & Expectations

- ☐ **General information**
- ☐ **Transmittal letter**
- ☐ **Recommendation letters**
- ☐ **Position description**
- ☐ **Performance conversation/evaluation forms (last 5 years)**
- ☐ **Summary of accomplishments**



General Information

- **Cover sheet – Name, unit/location, date of application**
- **Table of contents – Sections 1 - 5**



Section 1 – Transmittal Letter

- **Address to the unit administrator**
- **Declare plans to submit materials for consideration**
- **Explain unique circumstances (position change, etc.)**
- **Limit to one page**



Section 2 – Recommendation

- **Include a letter of support from your immediate supervisor(s).**
- **The unit administrator will add a letter of recommendation after reviewing your file.**



Section 3 – Position Description

- **Include the current position description.**
- **Include previous position description(s) if the position has changed since the appointment.**



Section 4 –Performance Evaluations

- **Include up to five most recent annual performance evaluation documents.**
- **More recently, may be printed summaries of the Performance Management (Trakstar) conversations AND your performance ratings.**



Section 4 –Performance Evaluations—Trakstar Conversation Questions

- **Do you feel you are important to the success of your team?**
- **What accomplishments have you had since our last performance conversation?**
- **What to you hope to accomplish before our next performance conversation?**
- **What steps will you take to develop professionally?**
- **How can you further utilize these in your job and within our team?**
- **What challenges are you facing today?**
- **How can your natural strengths and talents be used to overcome these challenges?**
- **Do my supervisor and I think my accomplishments align with what is expected for this position?**
- **How can I help you be at your best?**



Section 5 – Summary of Accomplishments

- **Most important section of the promotion file!**
- **Begin with an overview/abstract of section content**
- **Generally grouped into 2-3 primary categories, issues, or program focus areas (i.e., 4-H - STEM, Ag and Food Systems, College and Career Pathways)**
- **Selectively include other accomplishments that document programming excellence**



Section 5 – Summary of Accomplishments

- **Growth in professional competence and the ability to work with less supervision**
- **Participation in educational curriculum and program delivery to address issues and reach new audiences**
- **Professional development efforts that enhanced subject matter expertise in program focus areas and Extension pedagogy.**



Section 5– Summary of Accomplishments

- **Rapport with learners, demonstrating the candidate has gained their confidence**
- **Summarize accomplishments, impacts and verification of behavior change (when possible)**
- **Demonstrate breadth and depth of programming**
- **Demonstrated initiative and leadership**



Section 5 – Summary of Accomplishments

- **Manage educational activities and events**
- **Teamwork contributions at the local, regional and state levels**
- **Demonstrated innovative program delivery**
- **Successfully managing volunteers**
- **Examples of inclusive excellence**



Section 5– Summary of Accomplishments

- **Contributions to grant applications and other external funding**
- **Contributions to, Program Area Teams, Focus Teams, etc.**
- **Partnerships with educators, specialists and assistants/associates**
- **Capture the essence of your work – sustained excellence with positive trajectory**



Section 5 – Think About...

Possible format for each primary program category:

- **Situation/Problem/Issue**
- **Duration (e.g., 4 years)**
- **Outcomes/Indicators**
- **Target audience**
- **Number of learners reached**
- **Methods of delivery**
- **Partners/Coalitions/Collaborations**
- **Funding**
- **Accomplishments**
- **Impacts**



QUESTIONS?



PLANNING FOR SUCCESS



Planning for Success

- **Begin early**
- **Identify measurable goals/objectives or outcomes/indicators with your supervisor, where you can document behavior change and impact**
- **Alignment with Program Area Team, Focus Team, Extension team, and/or local office program outcomes and indicators.**
- **Ask peers, supervisor and unit administrator for guidance**



Planning for Success

- **Collect and document impact data**
- **Review recent examples of successful promotion files**
- **Follow guidance on Annual Performance Evaluation documents/Trakstar**
- **Ask colleagues to review your file for content, readability, clarity, etc.**



Tips for Success

- **Well organized**
- **Concise yet thorough**
- **Clarity**
- **Effective use of graphics, charts, etc.**
- **Select reviewers who will provide quality feedback regarding the clarity and content of your file.**



QUESTIONS?



RESOURCES



Resources

- **Alignment with The Big 3**
- **Annual Performance Evaluation Feedback**
- **Colleagues, peers, mentor(s) supervisor, lead educator, unit administrator**
- **Recent successful Extension assistant promotion files – available from colleagues**

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