

EXTENSION EDUCATOR PROMOTION

A JOURNEY OF POSITIVE TRAJECTORY AND SUSTAINED EXCELLENCE

APRIL 15, 2026

DAVE VARNER

NEBRASKA EXTENSION



Today's Objectives

- **Improve clarity and understanding of the Extension educator promotion process, timeline, and resources.**
- **Help Extension educators 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.



Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources

NEBRASKA EXTENSION EMPLOYEE RESOURCES

[Collaborations/Partnerships](#)[General Resources](#)[Onboarding & Evaluation](#)[Professional Development](#)[Unit Management](#)[Nebraska](#) › [IANR](#) › [Extension](#) › [Nebraska Extension Employee Resources](#) › [Faculty/Staff](#) › Promotion & Tenure

Promotion & Tenure

Guidelines and Documentation

[IANR Guidelines for Promotion and Tenure](#)

IANR guidelines for annual evaluation, promotion, tenure and reappointment.

[UNL Guidelines for Promotion and Tenure](#)

UNL guidelines for annual evaluation, promotion, tenure and reappointment.

[IANR Documentation Request for Promotion and/or Tenure](#)

This document lists the required and supplementary materials requested for tenure and/or promotion files for faculty.

[Extension Excellence Key Practices](#)

Extension Excellence Key Practice Definitions.

[Nebraska Extension Programming Roles and Responsibilities](#)

[Promotion and Tenure and Faculty Evaluation Timeline for 2025-2026](#)

Educator Promotion Committees

▶ [4-H Youth Development Committee](#)

▶ [Human Sciences Committee](#)

▶ [Ag and Natural Resources Committee](#)

▶ [Campus/Statewide Committee](#)

<https://myextension.unl.edu/facultystaff/promotion-tenure/>



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Promotion & Tenure

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What is Academic Promotion?

- **An acknowledgement of contribution, reputation and impact**
- **Evidence of intentional Extension**
- **Demonstrates a record of accomplishment**
- **A visible way to recognize sustained excellence**
- **A vote of confidence regarding future performance**



Criteria for Appointment/Promotion in Rank

Assistant Extension Educator to Associate Extension Educator Rank

- **Time-in-rank at assistant level is ordinarily at least five years and typically is six years. Candidates should typically have a minimum of five years in rank as of the October 1 due date for promotion files. Submitting a file early should be a rare exception.**
- **Candidate should be an accomplished extension professional with a strong record of sustained scholarly and creative work in extension that fulfills the individual's position description.**

NOTE: Learn more at: Criteria for Promotion in Rank – Extension Educators

Has the candidate met the standard of sustained excellence in Extension over time?

Criteria for Appointment/Promotion in Rank

Associate Extension Educator to Extension Educator Rank

- All qualifications of lower ranks.
- Ordinary time-in-rank is at least six years and typically seven years. Candidates should typically have a minimum of six years in rank as of the October 1 due date for promotion files. Submitting a file early should be a rare exception.
- Candidate's achievements are sufficient to merit distinguished recognition in their discipline and who hold the professional respect of their colleagues. The file should demonstrate a high level of sustained accomplishment in the identified key practices and indicators of Extension Excellence.

NOTE: Learn more at: [Criteria for Promotion in Rank – Extension Educators](#)

Has the candidate met the standard of sustained excellence in Excellence over time?

Criteria for Appointment/Promotion in Rank

Are you ready for promotion?

Criteria for Appointment/Promotion in Rank

NOTE: Extension Instructors are not eligible for academic promotion until they obtain a master's degree and are appointed to an Extension educator role. Extension assistant and Instructor **years of service do not count** toward the required years of service for promotion to associate rank, Extension educator.

Why is Promotion Important?

- **Affirmation of achievements, scholarly work and professional growth**
- **Career milestone**
- **Peer and administrative recognition**
- **More leadership opportunities**
- **Rewards (Associate, \$4,200/7%; Full \$6,400/9%)**



Today's Agenda

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



QUESTIONS?



PROMOTION FILE PROCESS AND TIMELINE



Educator Promotion Committees

- **4-H Youth Development**
- **Agriculture and Natural Resources**
- **Human Sciences**
- **Campus/Statewide**

Educator Promotion Committees

- **Guided by Academic Promotion Committee Structure and Operating Principles for Nebraska Extension Educators**
- **Populated by educators who have attained full (and associate) extension educator rank**
- **Committee members are nominated and elected by peers**
- **Committees may include external members (e.g. members from other disciplines)**
- **Committee members are posted at:**

<https://myextension.unl.edu/facultystaff/promotion-tenure/>

Unit Administrator is...

- **Department/School/Unit Head**
- **Engagement Zone Coordinator**
- **Typically, your direct supervisor**

Promotion File Timeline

- **April** – Letter of intent to apply for promotion to unit administrator. Copy Dave Varner and Linda Tempel on this correspondence.
- **May** – Unit administrator meets with candidate to discuss readiness, file preparation and assist with the candidate section.
- **June to July** – Candidate assembles the promotion file. It is recommended that the candidate consult with mentor(s) and the unit administrator regarding file preparation. May ask the promotion committee **chair** questions.



Promotion File Timeline

- **August** – Mentors and peers review the file and provide feedback.
- **October 1** – Submit electronic PDF file to unit administrator. **NOTE:** Annual Report documents NOT due. Highly recommend sending the file to your unit administrator at least a week before the due date to allow time to review the administrative section for completeness. Also, send the file to Linda Tempel and Dave Varner.
- **October 16** – Promotion committee independently reviews the file and sends a recommendation to the unit administrator, with a copy to the candidate and the candidate's file (Linda Tempel).



Promotion File Timeline

- **October** – Candidate appeals (if applicable)
- **No later than November 1** – Promotion committee meets to address appeals (if applicable)
- **No later than November 1** – Program Area Leader is asked to write a letter to the unit Administrator assessing the candidate's work. The letter is added to the candidate's file (Linda Tempel). This is not a recommendation letter.



Promotion File Timeline

- **Early November** – Unit administrator conducts an independent review of all materials contained in the file, including the promotion committee recommendation.
- **Early November** – Unit administrator independently reviews the file and sends a recommendation to the candidate with a copy to the Extension Dean and the candidate's file (Linda Tempel).
- **Early November** – Candidate appeal (if applicable)
- **Prior to November 15** – Unit administrator re-evaluation due to an appeal (if applicable)



Promotion File Timeline

- **November 15** – File due to IANR Administration
- **Early December** – Extension Dean reviews file and makes a recommendation to the IANR Deans Committee. The Committee reviews the file, provides a recommendation to the IANR Vice Chancellor, and notifies the candidate of their status
- **December** – Candidate appeals (if applicable)
- **January** – Deans meet to address appeals



Promotion File Timeline

- **January-March** – IANR Vice Chancellor reviews file, provides recommendation to UNL Chancellor and notifies candidate of status
- **Late April or May** – UNL celebration of promotion and tenure
- **July 1** – Promotions take effect, and promotion salary increases are awarded



Internal Evaluation Process

Promotion Committee

NO ↓

↓ YES

Unit Administrator

NO ↓

↓ YES

Extension Dean

STOP NO ↓

↓ YES

IANR Deans Committee

STOP NO ↓

↓ YES

IANR Vice Chancellor

STOP NO ↓

↓ YES

UNL Chancellor

Recommendation Letter

- **Communicates the reviewer's recommendation to the candidate**
- **Reasons that support the decision are included in the letter**
- **Important to note that the recommendation letter is based solely upon the contents of the file**



Appeal Process

- **Candidate must be notified of a negative recommendation within two working days.**
- **Candidate must inform group or individual not recommending promotion of intent to appeal within two working days**



Appeal Process

- **Candidate has five working days following notification to prepare appeal and present it orally, in writing, or both.**
- **Group and individual to whom appeal is being made must inform candidate of decision within five working days after appeal has been presented.**



QUESTIONS?



PROMOTION FILE CONTENT AND EXPECTATIONS



Promotion File Content & Expectations

- General Information (Candidate)**
- Administrative Section (Supervisor)**
- Candidate Section (Candidate)**



IANR Documentation Request for Promotion and/or Tenure

General Information

- Cover sheet – Name, unit, date and desired rank**
- Table of contents – (Use bookmarks in PDF)**



Administrative Section

- Faculty Promotion Recommendation Form**
- Promotion internal evaluations**
 - Letter from the promotion committee**
 - Letter from Program Area Leader (work assessment/contribution, not a recommendation)**
 - Letter from unit administrator (supervisor)**
 - Letter from IANR Dean's Committee**
- Position description**
- Letter of offer**
- Annual performance evaluations and Annual Progress Forms (since last promotion or initial appointment)**
- Copy of unit's current promotion and/or tenure standards ([Extension Educator Promotion Criteria document](#))**



Faculty Promotion Recommendation Form

DEPARTMENTAL PROMOTION AND TENURE COMMITTEE

Promotion Tenure Letter Attached Date

Breakdown of Committee Vote on Action: # of Yes Votes # of No Votes # of Abstaining Votes

Comments (if no letter is attached):

See attached letter.

Revised 3/20/2019

**INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES
SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION FOR PROMOTION AND/OR TENURE FORM**

Form Use: _____

Tenure-track position If yes, date of initial tenure-track position

Recommendation for Tenure Recommendation for Promotion Recommendation for Promotion/Tenure

Faculty Member Unit(s) U. S. Citizen

FTE % CASNR ARD CED Other

Current Rank Date of Current Rank

Proposed Promotion Rank Tenured If yes, date tenure was granted

DEPARTMENTAL PROMOTION AND TENURE COMMITTEE

Promotion Tenure Letter Attached Date

Breakdown of Committee Vote on Action: # of Yes Votes # of No Votes # of Abstaining Votes

Comments (if no letter is attached):

ACTION BY UNIT ADMINISTRATOR

Promotion Tenure Letter Attached Date

Comments (if no letter is attached):

ACTION BY DEAN(S) AND/OR DIRECTOR(S)

Promotion Tenure Letter Attached Date

Comments (if no letter is attached):

ACTION BY IANR DEANS

Promotion Tenure Letter Attached Date

ACTION BY VICE CHANCELLOR

Promotion Tenure Letter Attached Date

Position Description

Signature
CLUB PAUL REED SMITH GUITARS

- **Include current position description (signed)**
- **If your position description has changed since your last promotion or your appointment, also include the previous position description(s).**



Letter of Offer

- **Include current letter of offer (signed)**
- **If you have had more than one letter of offer since your last promotion or your appointment, also include the previous letters of offer.**



Annual Faculty Performance Evaluations & Annual Progress Forms

- **Include performance evaluation documents since last promotion in reverse chronological order (signed)**
- **Include Annual Progress Forms since last promotion in reverse chronological order (signed)**



Annual Progress Form

DEPARTMENTAL PROMOTION AND TENURE COMMITTEE

Progress Toward Promotion Progress Toward Tenure Date

Explanation (must provide):

Gaps in promotion portfolio

Revised 3/29/2019

INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES ANNUAL FACULTY PROGRESS FORM

Form Use:

Tenure-track position If yes, date of initial tenure-track appointment

Progress Toward Promotion Progress Toward Tenure Appointment Renewal

Faculty Member Unit(s) U. S. Citizen

FTE % CASNR ARD CED Other

Date Evaluation Year

Date of Current Rank Current Rank

Tenured If yes, date tenure was granted

DEPARTMENTAL PROMOTION AND TENURE COMMITTEE

Progress Toward Promotion Progress Toward Tenure Date

Explanation (must provide):

ACTION BY UNIT ADMINISTRATOR

Progress Toward Promotion Progress Toward Tenure Date

Explanation (must provide):

APPOINTMENT RENEWAL

Recommended for Appointment Renewal Unit Head Initials

Comments:

I have reviewed this document

Faculty Member Signature Date

(Faculty member comments provided on back if needed)

NOTE: All specific term and special term appointments can be terminated as outlined in the University of Nebraska Board of Regents Chapter IV, Section 4.4.41 and Section 4.4.2.

Candidate Section

- Candidate's letter of intent (Transmittal letter)**
- Curriculum vitae or resume**
- Candidate's statement (See Appendix B—Candidate Section for Extension Educators)**
 - Summary of Accomplishments**
 - University Service, Professional Service and Community Engagement**



Candidate's Letter of Intent

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



Curriculum Vitae or Resume

- **Clearly note extent of contributions if collaborative work**



Candidate Statement— Summary of Accomplishments

- **It is the candidate's responsibility to make the case for promotion, not the promotion committee's or supervisor's responsibility. Don't assume others know the relevance and impact of the candidate's contributions.**
- **Do not exceed the 15-page limit.**
- **Committee members are instructed not to read content beyond the page limit.**



Candidate Statement—

Extension Excellence

- **Professionalism**
- **Engagement**
- **Innovation**
- **Relevance**
- **Meaningful**
- **Impactful**
- **Exceptional Teaching and Learning**
- **Research and Discovery**
- **Accessibility**



Candidate Statement—

University Service, Professional Service, and Community Engagement

- **Service to the University via participation on committees and leadership roles for UNL, IANR, Extension, Program Area Teams, Focus Teams, etc.**
- **Professional service in NCEA, ESP, ANREP, NACAA, NAE4-HA, NEAFCS and in subject matter professional organizations (e.g., American Society of Agronomy, Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, etc.)**
- **Active involvement in communities via research, collaboration, co-creating solutions and other evidence of engagement reciprocity.**



CANDIDATE STATEMENT

- **Most important section of the promotion file!**
- **Begin with an overview/abstract of the section content and how it is organized**
- **Generally grouped into 2-3 program focus areas**
 - **RPN – Leadership, Business Development, Regional Food Systems**
 - **4-H - STEM, Ag and Food Systems, College and Career Readiness**



CANDIDATE STATEMENT



CANDIDATE STATEMENT

- **Campus-based, statewide-focused, and other unique educator positions may consider including a brief half-page or less summary at the beginning of this section further describing their specific role assignments.**



CANDIDATE STATEMENT

- **Concise yet thorough**
- **Summarize accomplishments, impacts and verification of behavior change**
- **Demonstrated breadth and depth of programming**
- **Demonstrated initiative and leadership**



CANDIDATE STATEMENT

- **Programming partnerships, engagement and collaborative work**
- **Creativity, entrepreneurship and innovation**
- **External program funding- Most Valuable Programming (MVP) (grants, contracts, fees, sponsorships, etc.)**



CANDIDATE STATEMENT

- **Partnerships with specialists, researchers, others**
- **Program leveraging strategies**
- **Documented excellence and scholarly work**
- **Regional/national contribution and recognition**
- **Stakeholder driven programming**



CANDIDATE STATEMENT

- **Peer reviewed programs, publications and products**
- **Contributions to teams**
- **Interdisciplinary approach to solving complex issues**
- **Translational and/or action research**
- **Compelling data, evidence, testimonials**



CANDIDATE STATEMENT

- **New program delivery methods**
- **Documented and verified learner behavior change**
- **Examples of providing accessible programming**
- **Capture the essence of your work – sustained excellence with positive trajectory**



CANDIDATE STATEMENT

Possible format for each focus area:

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



CANDIDATE STATEMENT

Building a Program

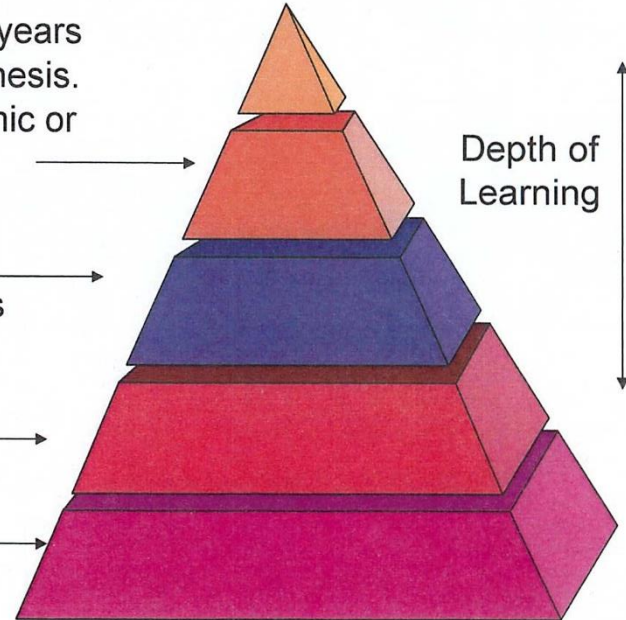
Both a breadth and depth of educational activities on a targeted goal.

Work with participants over several years
– they achieve application and synthesis.
Significant change in social, economic or
environmental (SEE) condition.

In-depth workshops for smaller
numbers, using a curriculum, results
in the adoption of new ideas

Presentations, short programs
focus on knowledge

Print, radio reaching large
numbers of people awareness



University of Nebraska–Lincoln



Supporting Materials

- **Must be directly associated with the candidate statement**
- **Sample** publications, websites, apps, curriculum, etc.
- **May be included as an appendix (Do not count towards page limit)**
- **Limit supporting materials to a reasonable quantity**
- **Limit** hyperlinks to this content



QUESTIONS?



PLANNING FOR SUCCESS



Planning for Success

- **Begin early**
- **Identify measurable outcomes and indicators where you can document behavior change**
- **Alignment with The Big 3, Program Area Teams, other Extension teamwork, IANR, UNL and NU.**
- **Plan and conduct programs/develop scholarly products**
- **Collect and document impact data**



Planning for Success

- **Ask peers and unit administrator for guidance**
- **Review examples of recent successful promotion files**
- **Heed feedback on Progress Towards Promotion form**
- **Ask colleagues within and outside your subject matter discipline to review for content, grammar, spelling, readability, and other aspects.**
- **Don't surprise your direct supervisor with a promotion file near the submission deadline.**



Also Consider...

- **Organization**
- **Correct spelling**
- **Grammar**
- **Clarity**
- **Neatness**
- **Be concise yet thorough**
- **Effective use of graphics, charts, etc.**
- **Define acronyms**
- **Select reviewers who will invest time reading your file and will give you constructive feedback**

QUESTIONS?



RESOURCES



Resources

- **Criteria for Promotion in Rank— Extension Educators ***
- **Evaluating Extension Excellence—Academic Rank Coaching Questions ***
- **University of Nebraska-Lincoln Guidelines for the Evaluation of Faculty: Annual Evaluations, Promotion, and Tenure ***
- **Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources Guidelines for the Evaluation of Faculty: Annual Evaluations, Promotion, and Tenure ***
- **IANR Documentation Request for Promotion and/or Tenure ***

* Website: <https://myextension.unl.edu/facultystaff/promotion-tenure/>

Resources

- **Progress Towards Promotion form feedback**
- **Colleagues, peers, mentors, supervisor, unit administrator, past promotion committee members**
- **Recent successful promotion files – available from colleagues**
- **Academic Promotion Committee Structure and Operating Principles for Nebraska Extension Educators***
- **Alignment with The Big 3**

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