

Specifications for an “Ideal University Professor”

The following description of an ideal or model university professor delineates characteristics, activities, and values that the University considers important in its faculty. The composite description provides benchmarks for assessing faculty performance in annual evaluations and merit raise considerations, as well as in tenure and promotion decisions.

Teaching

The primary function of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette is education. A sound educational program is one in which capable students are guided, engaged, and inspired by outstanding teachers. Superior physical plant and equipment, carefully developed curricula and effective administration are useless without master teachers. It is expected that all faculty members will be active educators in their fields. This requires more than routine meeting of classes and being popular with students. The teacher should be personally interested in students as individuals, recognizing their potentialities, limitations and difficulties, and should serve as mentor to them. The teacher should be flexible in pedagogical approaches and methods and should create classes that maximize active student learning. An outstanding teacher can always number outstanding graduates and alumni among former students. The teacher should join his/her colleagues in actively seeking to improve undergraduate and graduate courses and curricula. The teacher should keep courses up to date technically and should be an authority in his/her major fields of interest. The teacher should do research in his/her areas of competence.

Research and Scholarship

University faculty are teacher-scholars. As such, they should conduct research and produce scholarship and/or creative works in their respective areas of specialization. The usual expectation is that faculty will produce scholarly articles, monographs, and textbooks that are current and well-written and recognized by colleagues and peers as worthwhile contributions to the literature in the field. Additionally, they are active in professional and related societies on both the local and national levels. The objectives of faculty research, scholarship, and creative endeavors should be to improve both humanity and the faculty member's own effectiveness by generating new knowledge and understanding and by providing opportunity for their students to learn. There is no substitute for a research program at the forefront of knowledge. In many disciplines, external support acquired through a process of peer review provides a direct measure of the relevance and quality of research. Refereed research publications of high quality are generally far more important than other publications. Model university professors should be recognized among their colleagues for distinguished contributions to the discipline, in the form of literature, exhibits, and/or performance, and for the accomplishments of their students. Additionally, such faculty are research leaders within their department and college, often collaborating with and mentoring other faculty.

Citizenship and Service

Membership in the University community requires support of and active engagement in the operation of the institution, the college, and the department. The ideal faculty member is a model citizen of that community, helping to create an environment of collegiality. Such citizenship is manifested, for instance, in assuming administrative and leadership roles and in committee work at the department, college, and university levels. Institutional citizenship is displayed by assuming responsibility for improving the educational and research efforts of the institution, in counseling students about academic and personal matters, and in participating in the department's and University's outreach efforts in the community. Faculty are expected to treat all members of the campus community with respect and civility. Faculty members should be leaders in their chosen professions. They should participate in professional and related activities at the local, state and national levels. They should also be conscious of the role of the teaching profession in public life and should seek to use their skills toward improvement of the professional and public environment of their communities. When faculty members are asked to serve on various governmental, industrial, or non-profit agencies' committees and advisory boards, they should give freely of their time and energy. They should be highly regarded consultants to government, education, and industry on matters within their expertise. They should have a strong sense of ethics, and their personal conduct and professional activities and relations should be such that students and colleagues recognize them as professionals in the highest sense of the term.