



COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

2018 Extension Faculty FAQs

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Does everyone have to participate and what is the timeframe to “qualify”?

Everyone who is part of CSU, not county funded, will be required to enter into the system at the entry level and then can request to move to the higher levels based on their time in extension, qualifications, and eligibilities. Those who are eligible to move up levels during the conversion, but choose not to, can apply later. There will be no negative consequences – but could be some lost opportunities – of not having a higher rank. See Section 3, subsections 3.2 and 3.3.

How will this “new” status be created so it is fair and equitable?

See section 2.5 *Extension Faculty – Promotion* in the Conversion Framework for all the details.

What kind of documentation and justification will be required?

See section 2.5 *Extension Faculty – Promotion* in the Conversion Framework for all the details.

How would someone with “faculty” status work differently than someone without that designation?

Everyone under the CSU, not County, system would be under this new system. For those in the county who are essentially doing the same thing but won’t have the title (or any pay raise/ professional development that goes along with the two upper tiers), their work would be the same, just as it is for a CSU Extension 4-H Agent versus the County paid 4-H Coordinator currently.

Who will “evaluate” us on whether we attain the higher levels?

See section 2.5 *Extension Faculty – Promotion* in the Conversion Framework for all the details.

Will this create an additional level of reporting on top of the CPRS and PAS system?

No, in fact Extension is currently researching the possibility of moving to the “Digital Measures” reporting system, which is what the rest of CSU uses. This would make things much easier for our specialists who are currently reporting to two systems. It would also allow us to create our Vitae from the system, along with a lot of the supporting documentation for advancement in the proposed system, reducing the time for putting together the advancement package.

Would there be any additional campus-level work requirements such as graduate student committees or teaching credited courses?

Not in the campus departments since we are not moving under another department/unit. There will be additional time required for those on the review committee. See section 2.5.7.5 in the Conversion Framework for more information on who sits on the review committee.

Will we have to “defend” our position/rank each year?

No, once you’ve achieved the rank, there is no additional review other than your annual review as we currently receive now.

What happens to county employees doing the same work as CSUE agents?

For those in the county who are essentially doing the same thing but won’t have the title (or any pay raise/professional development), their work would be the same, just as it is for a CSU Extension 4-H Agent versus the County paid 4-H Coordinator currently. They would maintain their current status and titles.

I’m worried that it will be a lot of additional work for only a change in title that really doesn’t mean anything. What are the financial and professional development (in the spirit of sabbatical leave for tenured faculty) benefits?

We are working hard to receive some sort of financial benefit for advancing to the two upper tiers. Regardless of whether you choose to advance or not, you’ll be eligible for some sort of professional development time in addition to your vacation time. There may be some sort of stipend to support travel/courses/etc. There would be a separate committee formed to work out the details if we decide to go ahead with the proposal and it is accepted by CSU.

I’m worried that the new positions will have little to do with my County work and change my work focus.

Again, you can choose to not advance, in which case nothing will change workwise for you. If you choose to advance once you’ve met the minimum requirements, then the time requirement will be however long it takes you to compile the appropriate documentation. If there are areas that you have not met to advance, then yes, to be able to advance, you will have to adjust your work time to meet those requirements.

How will those without master’s degrees be treated within the system?

Because we aren’t going to be considered tenured faculty because of a ratio the university needs to maintain for certain designations, those who were hired without the requirement of a

master's degree will still be eligible for advancement and all that goes along with it. For those who were hired on without a master's degree and the stipulation that they would be required to get a master's within five years of employment, that would still be required.

How will the public perceive us if we change titles? I like the term "Agent."

Our titles will change for CSU purposes only. Extension professionals may retain the "Agent", "Specialists", and/or other appropriate designations. See Section 2, Subsection 1.1.

I'm worried hierarchical system will create egos and place some Extension professionals (agent, specialist, other) above others.

This will naturally happen to a certain degree. If we're honest, there's already a perceived hierarchy in that 4-H Agents are higher than 4-H Coordinators, who are then above 4-H Assistants. Or, the specialists are often thought of as outside, or above, the county positions. In some locations Ag is viewed as the most relevant area. Or how about that sore spot we hear that without 4-H we might not even have Extension...but that's not as significant in the Front Range where it may be Horticulture or Community Development that defines the importance of Extension in that County. What we're trying to get at is that we all create some sort of hierarchy within our current system and that this change may create another opportunity for some to look down on those who haven't achieved their "rank" but we believe it will be rare for that to happen.

How will you prevent "favoritism" during the advancement process so it doesn't become a popularity contest for advancement?

We're hoping that we've designed the evaluation committee in such a way (section 4.7.4.5.) that we minimize that from occurring. There will also be an appeals process in place along with a report back to the candidate stating the areas they need to improve on to place better. We are considering a rubric to make things more objective and we will develop that if we decide to move forward and receive approval from CSU.

I'm worried that if I don't choose to advance that it could be used against me in a future reduction in staff.

This is a very valid concern. We're being very careful on how we develop the proposal to ensure every way possible that this doesn't become a tool if a reduction in forces were necessary. If you have ideas to help us with this potential pitfall, we'd appreciate your input.

How would it affect retirement for those who have been at CSUE for their entire career?
The transition and “new” status will not affect retirement.

I’m worried that we might lose Extension professionals because of the additional expectations, work, and requirements.

As mentioned in an earlier question, if an Extension professional chooses not to advance, there is no requirement to do so, and therefore, no additional work required. If the person wants to advance in an organization that is pretty “flat” in a hierarchical sense, then this would provide that opportunity. In fact, check out the last question on the survey, which shows that 56% view it as a reason to stay in Extension. And, since we are one of only a few states that aren’t considered faculty (or some semblance of faculty), it is currently a demotion for people to move from other states and go from faculty to Administrative Professional. The committee believes that moving to this proposed structure could possibly increase the number of applicants from other universities.

Will Extension still be a standalone unit or will we be absorbed into campus departments?
We will continue to be our own standalone unit as we currently are.

Will I be required to go to campus more often? This could create problems with my county travel budget.

No. Even the advancement committee work can be done via zoom and doesn’t require a face-to-face meeting.

How will this affect my flexibility to receive grants, funding, and use non-appropriated account funds? Will I be required to run it all through campus?

Nothing will change from how you are currently conducting business. If you currently run your accounts through CSU, it will continue that way and if you run it through the non-appropriated account in your county, that is fine also. Now, that being said, our financial rules are always changing and there may be some financial changes that happen to coincide with the transition if we decide to move in that direction. Having the ability to use a title “Associate Professor of Practice” or “Professor of Practice” may be viewed by some funders as more credible than a title like “Extension Agent”.