Preliminary Review of the Position Responsibility Statement
responses received by May 1, 2014

The most general response was that it seems to be working well as it is.

Questions and Concerns

**What areas must be part of the PRS?**

Although the wording in FH 5.1.1.2 and FH 5.2.2.1 suggests that four areas should be explicitly addressed in all PRSs, the preliminary review showed that this does not occur in many cases.

- Should all four areas be included in every PRS, even if to state that no activity is expected?

   Yes, they should.

**Each PRS should have the following four categories**

1. Teaching
2. Research/creative activities
3. Service (including professional and institutional)
4. Other (could include extension and administration)
   and a percent time should be reflected for each even - if it is zero.

No – there should be flexibility in the models used by chairs and their faculty.

No, there is no need to mention areas where the faculty have no time.

Waste of space and what’s the purpose? And, the FH 5.1.1.2 already says to “only include the significant responsibilities of the faculty member”. We have faculty with NO teaching responsibilities in our department – so there is no mention of teaching in their PRS but in the P&T process they still list the section for Teaching (because it’s mandated in the documentation) and simply explain it is not part of their job duties. It works just fine for us, as is.

All four areas are addressed in P&T so since PRS is a foundation document for P&T, probably best to include.

A broad description of the fundamental aspects of the position, which may include teaching, research, outreach and service. It should clarify the general expectations for the individual.

- Should extension and professional practice be combined into one area or are they separate? (This question is also being addressed by the *Task Force on the Scholarship of Engagement and Outreach.*)
I was on this task force – we have recommended that these be separated. We recommended that we move to using the terms clinical and professional practice together. Extension is a different thing.

These should be separate. See #3 and #4 above. Professional service should be reflected in #3 while extension work is shown in #4.

This does not apply to faculty in engineering.

I am a member of this Task Force and we are not addressing whether extension and PP should be combined into one area. We have focused on SCHOLARSHIP, not professional practice. The advantages to having Extension as a separate section (outside of Professional Practice) would be to encourage/enable assigning it a separate percentage as well as making it more prominent/important. No one in our department has Extension opportunities as part of their job duties per se….although many of us voluntarily choose to do community outreach as part of being a public service unit we don’t get credit for it since it is not part of our PRSs. Personally, I want to encourage more community outreach, not just as us performing public service to them, but engaging with them in a more reciprocal nature.

Those differ and could be one category but should be defined as to what they are in the PS. Categories differ since “extension” is associated with the Extension in Ag and I a specific faculty position/assignment.

What other areas can/should be part of the PRS?

- PRS templates are provided by some colleges. Some mention collegiality & citizenship. Should this be part of the PRS? If so, is noncollegiality a basis for denying promotion and/or tenure or for an unsatisfactory annual performance review?

Yes, it should. Absolutely it should be.

I do not believe that collegiality belongs on a PRS. The PRS should reflect quantifiable work expectations. There are other tools for a department chair to use to address this issue.

Yes.

Noncollegiality can be used in an evaluation (annual or P&T) whether it is on the PRS or not.

The fact is that no collegiality is used as a metric for promotion and tenure and always will be even if it is not stated. I was told early on as a young faculty member that the P&T committee, chair, etc. can either put a positive spin or a negative spin on your P&T documents based on your relationship in the department. Mentioning it in the PRS may make younger faculty aware of this requirement.
We have an external evaluator for SP@ISU, and in her last report, this was identified. Excerpt from the report: "Consider developing best practices for ways departments can include broader impacts activities in the position responsibility statement and the promotion and tenure process and assist the support of the provost’s office in building institutional support for these best practices."
(p. 21, item 2, annual report: http://www.spisu.iastate.edu/sites/default/files/uploads/Reports/Year%203%20Annual%20Report%20Final.pdf)

We also have an advisory council, http://www.spisu.iastate.edu/about/who-we-are/advisory-council, which includes the associate deans for research and several faculty from the STEM colleges. This group has discussed the potential inclusion of broader impacts work in the PRS.

The SP@ISU team (copied) discussed how we might respond to the preliminary review. Here is a short response:

We recommend that other areas of work be listed as recognized and valuable types of faculty work. Some of these areas may intersect with broader impacts (BI) areas being addressed by SP@ISU; see list of BI outcomes that benefit society at the website. It would be important to be specific and list examples of activities that are deemed valuable.

Some of these activities may result in scholarly outputs and thus align with a research/scholarship category of the PRS. However, some of these activities contribute to the greater good and institutional mission with different outputs, and thus corresponding faculty effort should be identified and recognized.

My colleagues might disagree with me on this but, yes, I do think collegiality should be included in annual performance reviews – both positive AND negative – as a part of professional practice performance. An unsatisfactory rating should depend on the extent of the issues and whether or not there is improvement. As for P&T, non-collegiality is a concern that affects the functioning and morale of the entire department. By itself, it is unlikely this could constitute an unsatisfactory rating or denial of promotion or tenure unless it’s an extreme situation. However, in cases I have seen, non-collegiality is but one symptom in a larger issue within performance of professional practice. I like having it in the PRS, and mentioning it in the P&T criteria documentation, to show the importance of this which has increased in recent years with the need to work on interdisciplinary projects and cross-departmental teams. Good collegiality also improves faculty/staff retention rates. Citizenship on the other hand is a red flag to me - - are we singling out or trying to make non-U.S. citizens uncomfortable? A better phrase might be “community participation?”

Cases of a non-collegiality should be a factor for denial and documented. This factor is documented as a negative impact on performance, such as negative interactions with colleagues, inability to sustain research, outreach or teaching collaborations, and hence will hamper the career progression of the faculty member. These actions may negatively impact the progress of other faculty by creating a hostile and intimidating environment. Past Provost’s have been very committed to this. Texas A&M has long held non-collegiality itself, with evidence, is grounds to deny P&T or P or T; clearly stated in their P&T documents. ISU has not
clearly stated this but the aforementioned is a performance issue. Depending on severity, it can be a faculty misconduct issue, or against the law in Iowa; it usually impacts performance.

There may be some areas that are unique to the position. For example, the College of Veterinary Medicine has a non-tenure track position designated as "clinician".

- Under which area, if any, do administrative activities fit? If it is a separate area, what role, if any, can/should it play in promotion? (This is relevant for associate professors who assume administrative roles as program directors and chairs).

  Institutional service.

  **See #4 above.**
  **Suggest administrative duties do not fit in the PRS (other than to document % time) and are only relevant in judging amount of time spent.**

  No consideration what-so-ever is given to someone with Administrative duties which often overshadow time to spend on other activities. I would like to see this as a separate area of the PRS with separate percentage ranges.

  Associate (or assistant) Professors should not assume those roles (aka a significant %) unless there is a scholarship plan supported by the department chair for advancement. Administrative activities as part of the PRS must be part of the promotion and/or tenure process as indicated above via the PRS. The evidence of scholarship and impact is required for administrative appointments as well in the P&T process. This can be in the areas of peer-reviewed products such as presentations, publications, grant awards, and invited moderators, evidence of impact in the area of study, etc. In the past, administration % has been under institutional service and/or outreach depending on the appointment and PRS classification of such. If a position is 90% administration, it is a complete defeat to evaluate someone on only 10% of their PRS. That is not consistent with ISU PRS policy. One can gain scholarship via opportunities and impact in administration. Has been done but not easy.

- SEEC wants faculty involvement in student enrichment activities to be incorporated into PRSs so that the activities will "count" in evaluations. Is this a separate category or part of "teaching"?

  **What are student enrichment activities?**

  **Student enrichment activities can be part of #3 above (institutional service).**

  Administrative activities fit under service. If this is a large portion of a faculty member’s duties, then it should play into promotion. However, in application, this will not be the...
case. Promotion and tenure is only decided by one factor in engineering and that is scholarship. Service and teaching serve as check boxes for basic assessment, but research funding and publications are the sole metric for promotion and tenure in the college of engineering. This will not change regardless of the statements in the PRS.

I believe this would include student mentoring, which in the past was under teaching. This has been discussed in the past to: list students, hours per week dedicated to mentoring, and document student successes mentors facilitate. Campus now has a tracking system since some faculty are assigned large numbers of mentees.

**Who actually develops a PRS?**

FH 5.1.1.5 indicates that for initial hires, the PRS is developed by the chair and a new tenure-eligible/tenured faculty member based on the job advertisement.

Clinical track faculty have PRS’s as well. They should be included in this.

We have had instances where our Dean has requested changes in the text of the PRS – e.g., including new verbiage about collegiality – which I really liked, but some of the other faculty did not. Also, due to budget issues, we no longer have any graduate teaching assistants so the Dean decided that ALL faculty in our area would be required to teach, even though some of them had no prior teaching experience or desire. We have had 1 or 2 faculty refuse to sign their newly revised PRSs because they disagreed that the Dean had the power to change their job duties. I don’t know whether or not the Dean SHOULd have the power to make changes – but it would be nice to have specific language/documentation about this (at the university level) to point to in these sorts of cases.

The faculty member, in consultation with the Department Chair.

- How is the new faculty member informed about the role of the PRS and his/her role in development of the PRS? If the PRS is included with the Letter of Intent, does the new faculty member have the option of signing only the Letter of Intent and waiting until arrival to negotiate the PRS?

  I think the PRS needs to be signed at the time of the letter – negotiation could result in a much different PRS than what the unit needs.

  **It is the department chair’s responsibility and should be documented that the conversation took place.**

The PRS should be assigned to the faculty member by the chair. Negotiating the PRS, especially by new hires, will have little impact on promotion and tenure as most departments have preconceived ideas of what constitutes a successful P&T case which may or may not correspond to the PRS.
This should be during the hire and agreed on by chair and faculty member jointly. Create a draft blending departmental needs and candidate strengths, goals and focus, did via email prior to arrival for clear understanding. In the past, often the Office of the Provost required the PRS be sent forward with the LOI. In the past, that was felt to be important to do ahead of arrival so the faculty member accepting the position did not arrive to a “surprise”.

- Can/should a department develop a "standard" PRS for new assistant professor hires?

  No – too many differences in what services might need.

  **Standard language is fine for LOI, department chair and faculty member should have latitude in PRS.**

  ABSOLUTELY! All assistant hires will be evaluated the same when they go for promotion and tenure. The P&T committee will not change the criteria based on the PRS given the decades of experience as to what constitutes a successful faculty member. Faculty with unique PRS often find that the duties expected of them are the same as other faculty in the department regardless of the breakdown on the PRS.

  Depends on “standard” since jobs vary. There could be some basic template requirements.

- What are the strengths and weakness of having the PRS for each individual within a department be unique to that person (i.e., if a PRS is specific enough to be "unique" is it too specific)?

  **Four categories with approximate percentages/proportions are sufficient. Benefits include an accurate reflection of expectations and allows for unique contributions. One drawback is that it might invite too much annual negotiation (i.e. it is harder to administer/evaluate).**

  I see no strengths to having a PRS be unique to a person. It only introduces rigidity in needed teaching duties and can lead to giving a false sense of security given that the evaluation process will be based on what a “typical” assistant professor should have accomplished before tenure.

  Strength is should be for that faculty member since this is the basis or often called “roadmap” for their career progress. The PRS never seemed to be a complex process to me – it was created as a roadmap for the faculty member as a guide toward P&T and to set forth job expectations. Much better system than most universities.
• What is the role, if any, of the dean in developing/reviewing/approving the PRS? Can a dean require specific components in a hiring PRS? Can a dean require specific components in a revised PRS? If the dean has a role, does the Handbook need to be modified to reflect that?

Dean should have no role in an individual PRS. If the dean has a concern about the PRSs that are being developed by a particular chair, the conversation is with the chair, not in the development of individual PRS.

The PRS should be a department level document that is interpreted by the P&S committee and/or department chair to provide guidance to a faculty member regarding their duties. As such, the dean does not need to even see the PRS until the tenure/promotion time frame.

Deans can give input into anything as the head college hiring officer, and to chairs upon reading a PRS used for hiring. Since the Dean also has to sign the LOI, I would think the dean can recommend. Seems “required/requirement” of any type should be stated in the Faculty Handbook.

**How is the placement of an activity into a PRS area determined (i.e., by the individual, the department, the college, the provost, the Handbook)?**

• Several examples of activities that might fall under each of the four PRS areas are given in the handbook. What flexibility is there in placing activities under an area? Could a department, for example, decide that journal editorship should be counted as research and, if so would it need to be treated that way outside the department?

The task force committee learned that the higher ups seem to like keeping things flexible.

I do not see the problem. All should be clear with the #1 - #4 listed above and where there is some question it can be explicitly stated in the PRS through the negotiation between the chair and the faculty member. Each discipline, department is unique. Let them decide.

The interpretation of the PRS is sole the responsibility of the department. If the department says an activity is research, teaching, or service, then all other evaluators need to view it in the same light when evaluating candidates from that department.

Journal editorship should be in the category it is counted in P&T – not really a PRS topic. The PRS should align with the scholarship and categories described for P&T. Those topics are under each heading for P&T. This example seems too detailed for a PRS.

The placement of a specific item in the PRS should be based on a discussion
between the faculty member and the department chair.

- How should DOGE (and similar) activities be categorized? Are they institutional service or teaching or something else? Can/should this be determined by the department, or is it a college or university decision?

  I would put this as institutional service.

  **These are administrative activities and should be included in #4 above and considered in the % split.**

  This is a departmental decision, but it should count as service.

  *Who defines service?* I really think this should be a higher-level decision ABOVE the department level to ensure consistency on campus. Our department has had some fairly drastic changes in the definitions of institutional service and professional practice service over the years...such that institutional service is now so narrowly defined that some faculty are struggling to identify and participate in these types of activities. In our department, in order to be Institutional Service – it has to be service related to governance, personnel issues, or “community.” Everything else is considered professional practice service. It bothers me immensely that not all university-level committee service is considered Institutional Service. How does this jibe with other definitions elsewhere in the university? Also, a faculty member can currently choose to have a heavy percentage of their professional practice be devoted to service outside the university or the department at the expense of their regular duties. I know in some areas (such as Extension) it can be hard to split out service from professional practice, but in our department, I really wish we would go back to having a separate percent (and section) for professional practice service.

  DOGE most commonly is institutional service. It is a type of department administrative appointment – it does not reflect research or teaching. It is an assignment to adhere to and implement policy. The PI, etc are the mentors – not the DOGE.

  *Should percentages be required and, if so, what do they mean?* Not all PRSs have percentages, but percentages are part of several PRS templates.

  - What do percentages mean in a PRS? Do they refer to proportion of effort/time or are they more symbolic, representing the relative weight or importance of the area in assessing performance?

    I think they should be percentages and they refer to actual proportions of time and effort.

    _This is a very important issue and I wish I had some useful input to help with. Rather, all I have is potential complications that I think need to be considered –especially with respect to the use of percentages which I’ve never understood how to interpret in my own PRS._
• How should activities that incorporate all of the missions be considered? For example, if I am on a client farm, investigating a disease outbreak with students is that teaching or professional practice? What if I collect samples to validate a new diagnostic test? Does that activity become research?

• I think clinical rotations are tough to interpret using a standard for lecture based classes. Especially when clinical case load is variable and for the food animal case, requires some biosecurity downtime that isn’t billed to a farm or case.

• Class SIZE (number of students) needs to be considered in addition to credit hours. A class with 125 students is more demanding that a class with 12 students especially with respect to being available to help students outside of class. Perhaps a matrix of credit hours x enrollment?

I do appreciate your efforts to represent us on this issue – critical evaluation of this issue is way overdue.

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For many years I had a “50%” clinic appointment which in reality was essentially a 75% time commitment, with the expectation that everything else (scholarly activity, teaching prep, service, and vacation time) would be fit into the remaining 25%. Of course that results in working nights & weekends to try to “catch up”, using vacation & holiday time for teaching prep and scholarly activity, losing vacation days entirely, reduced time with (or neglect of) family, sacrifice of personal renewal time, loss of creativity, etc., etc.

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Firstly, the PRS does not do justice to the amount of time clinics take. This was most obvious with regard to my first review when my time on clinics exceeded my PRS statement as I was service 70% compared to what should have been 60%. Sadly this also does not take into account the amount of time clinical duties overflow into the off weeks. It is also interesting the time commitments that our career takes with regards to clinical practice. Many of the professors in VCS keep hours that on many accounts would be considered a little crazy with many working from 7-6 with constant supervision of students, interns, and residents taking place during this time leaving office work, committee work, and research for the hours outside of that timeframe. I feel this situation is unique to the vet school that few outside these walls and even for some of those in the building fail to grasp.

This large time constraint then impinges or better yet takes away from time that needs to be spent on research, writing, and other expectations for which we are mainly evaluated when it comes to P&T. So this time is commonly made up on weekends, at the sacrifice of vacation time, etc. all of which is also needed for clarity when it comes to scholarly activities.

Both of these are never more obvious than when it comes to CV preparation and annual reviews where very little credit is given to our primary responsibility of clinical duty and service. As some would say there is no line on a CV for doing well or exceeding in clinics. We have an obligation here that I know you understand as for many of us we are here to practice, educate future veterinarians (which many of us take very seriously),
and excel in research in our areas of specialty. This balance is difficult and at times it
would be nice if P&T and our PRS actually reflected the goals of this college or at least
its outward statement.

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I’ll start with a point/concern.

In multiple clinician sections, the PRS has clinical time included. There are changes in
the PRSs by faculty/Dept Chairs that affect the remainder of the section and these have
been being made before there is any discussion about implementation or there is never
any discussion and one persons change in PRS affects the entire group.

Example:

Clinician A goes from 50% clinical to 75% clinical. This disrupts the current rotation. It
puts multiple people on clinics dividing up techs, equipment etc which is very inefficient
and in general there is a waste of faculty time by the change in PRS. In effect one
person’s change in PRS may force changes in others.

These PRS details need to be determined by ALL affected BEFORE the changes are
made because in these cases the PRS affects the group.

Yes, I think they should be included. They reflect an expectation of time spent
doing each activity.

Percentages usually refer to effort. If they were relative weights, then the PRS in
engineering would read 90% research, 5% teaching, 5% service.

Are they amount of effort vs. relative weight/importance? I think it should be both. Our
department positions are ALL extremely high professional practice (80-90%) with much smaller
institutional service and scholarship/research components. In the past, we could have shoddy
professional practice but if we had a stellar research record, then tenure would be granted
(which is ridiculous with 80-90% PP). In recent years, that has changed to be Professional
Practice has to be good FIRST, then they look at scholarship, but you can still be denied tenure if
you have stellar PP and mediocre scholarship. Regardless of percentages, scholarship seems to
still be an overriding weight. I know we’re a “research institution” – but this mentality
discourages stellar professional practice and teaching.

Percentages in our annual workplans are often quite different from our PRSs – because in any
given year, we can have projects/tasks that only come along every so often. Our PRS
percentages are the expected norms, but they can deviate from that in the annual evaluations –
within limits. Most of the time they are pretty close to the PRS percentages but we like/need
that flexibility on an annual basis. If you are going to recommend putting percentages in the
PRS, it needs to be a range – e.g., 10-20% - in some years it might be 10% while in other years it
might be larger.

They are of value and should be the estimate of how a faculty member spends their time during
the time of their appointment over a 1 year period. A higher percent would be more time spent
and therefore most scholarship produced. They might vary slightly, see below, over the time
until P&T, but the summary % per category should be that % of effort for the scholarship.
Example: If PRS says 35% teaching; then over time teaching may range from 30-40% but should average close to 35% by the time P&T dossiers are submitted.

Percentages should be general, and only used for guidance in the broadest sense. The reality is that they mean very little.

- Annual performance evaluations and P&T review are done for different purposes and have different time frames.

  I think they should be the same – having been on committees that perform 6 semester reviews, it is way too confusing when the PRS doesn’t match the annual review.

  **Time spent and expected output.**

  I completely disagree. The purpose of the annual review and the P&T review should be the same. This is like having a student get an A on all of the exams/HW’s and then failing the course. The P&T review should just be a continuation of the annual review. If someone is not destined to be promoted/tenured, then this should be clearly stated in the annual review.

  The percents are not symbolic – what a mess that would be. These %s all need to align over time and why significant changes in PRS % are usually discouraged. A prior statement was they should not vary from the prior base by over 5%. Exceptions may be if a faculty member obtains a large grant and then needs more time % for that grant – then a change in PRS is needed.

- Which purpose should be reflected in the percentages? Can/should the same percentages be used?

  How can percentages be different for evals and P&T – it would make no sense otherwise.

- Could there be different percentages for the annual performance evaluation and for P&T review, e.g., effort for annual performance evaluations and symbolic weight for P&T?

  NO, these should be the same for both P&T and annual reviews.
• If percentages reflect effort, then should there be some uniformity across the university for the percentage associated with teaching a **standard 3 credit course**? The variability apparent in the PRS sample was considerable across campus ranging from 7.5% for each course (e.g., 30% in one Human Science PRS with 4 graduate courses and 30% in one Business PRS with 4 courses) to 15% for each course (e.g., 45% in an LAS PRS for 3 courses) and even 18.75% for each course (e.g., 75% in one Human Science PRS with 4 courses).

I don’t really know about this – it seems like a good idea…

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I wish that VetMed had a standard "formula" to determine the appropriate number of lectures for X % teaching. I am 45% teaching but I keep getting new assignments every year because of retirements and incompetencies. I wish that there was a cap on the number of lectures that I could be assigned, and if the cap is exceeded then my PRS must be re-written. Although this will sound provincial, I think that there should be a different standard for VetMed than the rest of the university. Preparing and delivering a VetMed lecture is more challenging than an undergraduate lecture.

**Suggest best practices. The number of credits may not be the right measure. Teaching 3 cr of 250 students is different than 3 cr of 20 students.**

**It should be somewhat standard with some consideration given to the number of students in the course.**

ABSOLUTLY NOT! You cannot possible define a teaching load uniformly. It you did it based on course credits, then this would undermine the enormous effort involved in teaching a large lecture section. Teaching 250 students in a 3 credit class, even with TA support, is a lot more work than teaching 8 graduate students. Furthermore, if you tried to standardize based on student credit hours in some fashion, then those that teach the vitally important small lecture/discussion classes would rightly feel under appreciated. It would of course also depend on how the class was taught. If the grading is all done by a computer or TA’s, then this would be less work than a class where the majority of the grading was done by the professor. Also, grading English papers takes more time, when done correctly, then grading numbers in a math assignment. Therefore, even standardizing on TA support hours is not possible. At most, the teaching load should be standardized within a department, but the differences between different departments are far too vast to ever standardize across the university.

This is a good point that has never been settled but comes up a lot. For some colleges, contact hours are more important since credit hours are not reflective of the time spent with students or in courses. At Vet Med, there are rotations that repeat year round. Example: 1 credit course taught 52 weeks per year as a 2 week rotation, aka 26 times.
Related to the preceding question-How should supervision/mentoring of students be incorporated? Should it be combined with teaching of standard courses? Should it receive a separate percentage? Should departments be allowed to decide?

I think student mentoring (student advisees, intern and resident advisees, student club advising, feral cat alliance supervision, etc) should all count for something. I don’t know where it should go.

Teaching.
Service.

Yes . . . I think. Not sure what “combined with” means in this context, but the percent effort could be added.
No.

Yes.

Yes. I consider mentoring of graduate students part of the teaching expectation but others may feel differently. If there is a pure academic advising component then that should be institutional service.

Departments should be allowed to decide this and ALL aspects of the PRS.

Again, mentoring students is usually listed similar as listing graduate students. Probably helpful to document hours/week. However, if this refers to class hours, helping students, that is related to teaching the course

What types of limiting statements are permissible in the PRS?

• To what extent can a research domain be specified?
  I don’t think so

Specific research domain/agendas should not be specified in a PRS.

The research domain should never be specified. The faculty member needs the freedom to immediately adapt to future needs.

In the Faculty’s area of general expertise.

The PRS could limit activities either by excluding them from the statement (e.g., a
position which has no extension appointment would not include "outreach" in the PRS) or 
by specifically stating that such activities will not be conducted.

- Can/should specific courses be mentioned?

  No

  Not in the PRS. Subsequent conversations between chair and faculty member can 
  work out this detail. Percent time is the key in the PRS.

  Never, this would lock the faculty member into those courses even if the need of the 
department changes unexpectedly (i.e., death of other faculty member, maternity leave, 
etc.)

  NO! Courses come and go – and in some cases are rotated through instructors. Too much 
specificity in the PRS means they need to go through updates too often. Every single PRS has to 
be included in P&T files and there is an expectation that the individual needs to explain why 
their PRS has changed.

  If required to teach and hired to teach a course – yes.

- Can/should the nature of courses be specified (e.g., large lecture, lab, writing intensive)?

  Probably not – this can change frequently

  No it should not be mentioned. A class that is sufficiently challenging for any of the 
reasons stated should simply reduce the number of courses taught or change the 
percentages listed.

  No, this once again limits the flexibility needed in the department for smooth 
functionality and maximum student learning.

  We used course catalog designations.
What role does/should the PRS actually play in evaluations, especially P&T evaluations?

In our department, if something is mentioned in the PRS, it better be mentioned and represented in the P&T dossier/portfolio, or there is a negative perception that you are not doing all of your job duties. However, as I mentioned above, there are some things that do not happen EVERY year, so in any given year, the annual evaluation may not cover a specific duty. I do not even look at the PRSs when I write annual evaluations for my faculty – and never have. When faculty draft their annual workplans, I make sure they are not forgetting to include a particular aspect of the job duties in their PRS - - and if later they choose not to do something that is required, it does get included in their annual evaluations, depending on the severity and reasons for the omission.

They are not mutually exclusive.

Minor, except in cases where the outcome is questionable. If the faculty member has significantly deviated from their PRS over a number of years, and neither the Department Chair or mentor has attempted to correct it, then there are larger issues. Documentation of the attempt to correct the PRS, with no response from the faculty, would be important.

The PRS is supposed to be a general description of activities for which the faculty member is responsible; it is not a checklist. Yet, evaluations are to be based on the PRS.

- Does inclusion of an area/activity in a PRS mean that it will/must be considered in an evaluation?

  Yes.

  Yes.

  It should be, but once again, the PRS needs to be interpreted for the faculty member by their department chair.

Yes, the PRS plays a major role in ensuring a faculty member knows what they are expected to be doing overall. And, PRSs can change, however; generally in any given promotion/tenure file there tend to only be 1-2 PRSs for that 6-7 year time period. We don’t do ANNUAL changes to the PRS. The Workplans and Annual Evaluations are likely to include many more specific duties that are not mentioned in the PRS. Classes rotate among instructors, some are only taught once every 2-3 years. Some major projects only come along every few years so job duties and time spent in each area of the PRS can vary each year - - that’s a good thing. We want to allow that flexibility.

Yes – see faculty handbook.

- If an activity in which a faculty member engages is not part of the faculty member’s PRS, can/should it be considered in an evaluation?
My understanding is that it cannot be considered. Everything is based on the PRS.

**No. If faculty choose to be involved in activities outside their PRS and the chair agrees that it has value, the PRS should be updated with this activity added.**

The PRS should be sufficiently general that accomplishments in any area should be considered. However, if the activity is so far removed from the usual activities of the discipline, such as a faculty member in engineering publishing a science fiction novel, then it should be considered as outside activities and not be used as the bases for tenure/promotion and faculty raises.

Yes – anything that contributes to their advancement.

- If there are percentages in a PRS, how should they be applied in making an overall decision?

  Percentages need to match effort.

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We have both round and square pegs in the university. I am less worried about non-uniformity in the PRS than non-uniform evaluations by administrators. I am brutally aware of several cases in which P&T was approved across the university and through the Provost's office, then reversed by the President of the University. Are the standards of evaluation uniform? (I don't think so).

**The percentages should inform the evaluator(s) of the agreement between the faculty member and the department chair with respect to expectations. This should alter expectations of productivity in each of the areas.**

The percentages don’t really matter as P&T is and always will be based on one dominate area at least in engineering.

Above – correlates to how time spent to produce a scholarly product.

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**What role do NTE faculty have in determining their PRSs?**

FH 5.1.1.5 explicitly states that NTE faculty should have a PRS. It is less clear about the role of the NTE faculty member in determining the nature of the initial PRS, but FH 5.4.1.2 indicates that the NTE faculty member does have a role in any change to the PRS.

Review of individuals in these positions will be based on the Position Responsibility Statement (PRS) derived from the advertised position. At each
renewal time, the Position Responsibility Statement may change, depending on the continuing and/or changing needs of the unit. The PRS will be discussed and disagreements negotiated at that time as a part of the renewal agreement. The agreed upon PRS will be signed by both parties and dated. (Excerpt from FH 5.4.1.2)

Some NTE PRSs simply name classes. Others list general statements about expectations related to teaching (e.g., providing a syllabus, being on time to class). Clinician PRSs in CVM provide detailed descriptions of activities and include percentages.

- What level/type of input into the PRS is available to NTE faculty? Should the level/type of input vary as a function of the percentage FTE and/or as a function of the number of years of the contract?

  Should be equal to tenure track. Not sure I understand this. I think we are all pretty much 100%.

**The NTE process should mirror the T/TE process.**

*Same role as faculty.*

Same mechanism – joint agreement.

Lecturers and Senior Lecturers should be treated as tenure-track faculty in regard to the development of their PRS.

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**Who has access to an individual's PRS?**

Both annual performance evaluations and Promotion and Tenure decisions must refer to the PRS, so the PRS is available to persons involved in those evaluations.

- Is the PRS available to anyone in a department or is it confidential, restricted only to those involved in evaluation?

  Available to employee, department chair and dean, and service chief as they are the ones that make up a clinic duty schedule. Maybe hospital director, too?

  I do not have a strong opinion on this question. Certainly all evaluators should be aware of the relative expectations and therefore should see the all PRSs in the evaluation period, but I do not see why this should be confidential.

  **Evaluators only.**
The PRS should be publicly available and even mentioned openly especially if an individual’s PRS differs significantly from the norm in the department.

Not sure why this matters. I don’t consider a PRS confidential. Since ours are template-based we all pretty much know what others in the department look like and most of us see them anyway as part of both P&T and Post-Tenure Reviews. I suppose it’s possible some academic departments might worry about morale issues if there were known to be major differences in PRSs across the department - - but we know there are variations in job duties that are negotiated at the time of hire and some are negotiated later on as well. If PRSs are constructed consistently it shouldn’t matter who has access to them. There is nothing “evaluative” or “personal” in the PRS.

I realize some of this may vary considerably from what is heard from other departments...but felt it important to chime in with my own thoughts/opinions since I supervise faculty. These are my own thoughts/opinions, not necessarily reflective of others within my own department or area of the university.

Not been defined. In the past, usually the chair and faculty member have access. It was the duty of the chair to be sure to meet with the sections to assure a balance in duties, aka, that all the individuals together via their PS could cover the needed duties for teaching, outreach/professional practice, research, and institutional or professional committees. In a few cases, demands to see another faculty member’s PRS were not due to helpful motives. In the past, the chair had the right to determine who had access.

The PRS is part of the individual's personnel file, and is covered by the same confidentiality as any other item in the employee's file.

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Olivia Madison the Library Dean and I reviewed the preliminary review document. Our only concerns were about two issues; the first was including teaching as a required part of the PRS since some library, extension and clinical faculty don’t have teaching in the traditional sense as a requirement of their positions. The other was Olivia thought that editorial work should stay under professional practice, and not be considered research.

I found the document very interesting and it raised some good questions

Thanks
Christine

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Sherri, I received several emails on the PRS. All of them had the same theme. We need to know the purpose of the PRS before we start changing it. Since it appears departments and colleges use it differently it would be hard to standardize it across the University.

Following is the email from Timothy Bigelow. He covers this issue well.

Hope this helps.

Paul

My reaction to the PRS questions is that the university first needs to decide whether the purpose of the PRS is to provide bureaucratic documentation of faculty accountability to some identified body of people, or whether it is to be a way for faculty to work with their chairs to maximize their productivity, or whether it is a way to document and punish failing faculty. These three goals are completely opposed to each other, and adjustments to improve one goal will worsen another aim.

In the first case, despite faculty jobs even in the same department being quite variable, there could be a need for the appearance of uniformity. Then we can all sign these forms, largely ignore them, and then try to do our jobs as best we can.

In the second case, the PRS would be much less uniform to reflect reality, and chairs and faculty could use them to discuss and establish goals.

In the third case, faculty would be required to fight over the wording of their PRS as a defensive measure. For example, the PRS could be used to deny tenure or give a poor post tenure review, or change the assignments of the person without their consent.

So I think the answer to the questions depends entirely on how the university plans to use the PRS. The PRS has no inherent meaning or significance by itself, it only has meaning in relation to who makes decisions with it and what those decisions are. (If no-one is making any decisions with it, it really does not matter.)

The CBE faculty met this morning and discussed some of the topics included in the PRS Task Force Questions, and had the following thoughts:
1. The PRS can be a useful tool for faculty evaluation and workload planning, particularly from the department chair’s perspective.

2. Each discipline is different in terms of goals/objectives/needs, so the thought of a standardized PRS document across the university or even particular colleges doesn't make a lot of sense and would be very difficult to design and implement.

3. Local control (at the departmental level) probably makes the most sense in terms of the utility and implementation of a PRS.

Our view was that the current form of our PRS works just fine. It contains the basic elements as described by the Faculty Handbook, allows for flexibility for faculty with substantially different duties (chair, associate chair, phased retirement, lecturers, etc.), and serves its intended purpose for evaluation and workload.

Before beginning, that promotion/tenure and the PRS in general can really only be interpreted in light of the typical duties and expectations of a department. Comparing PRS duties even across the same college will not work. The academic culture is based upon peer evaluation. Faculty outside of a candidates discipline, even if in the same department, are much less able to evaluate successful performance of duties then faculty in the same area. Therefore, the further the evaluation gets from the department, the less relevant and accurate it will be. Faculty and administrators at the college and provost level must therefore base the bulk of their assessment on the evaluation/recommendation of the earlier committee. Therefore, the PRS cannot and should not be used to evaluate and compare faculty across the university.

These are very profound (and controversial) questions...with answers that are likely to vary in each department because of the nature of each discipline, whether or not they have pure research positions versus research/teaching positions. The questions also gave me a golden opportunity to revisit our PRSs and rethink how/why we construct and use them.

A little background before I answer your questions:
I supervise faculty. In our department, we have changed in recent years from very specific PRSs to very general ones. In part, because as we hire new faculty with new specialties, assigned duties get shifted around a bit to fit the new hires. We were trying to avoid needing a new PRS every time we made a slight shift in job duties. Our departmental Dean’s Council created PRS templates for everyone in 2003 and they were updated in 2008 to include percentage ranges and make them a little more “general”...but each faculty member was responsible for taking the template and modifying their PRS based on their assigned duties. We also have annual workplans (that faculty create in consultation with their supervisor) to plan for where they expect to be spending their time, including both specific projects/tasks and percentages for each section of their PRS.

My comments do not address all of the questions – just the ones that I have an opinion on or that matter to me – some were not relevant (e.g., our dept. does not have NTE faculty).