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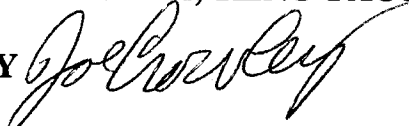
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**MEMORANDUM**

**TO: UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, RENO FACULTY**

**FROM: JOE CROWLEY**



**SUBJECT: ROLE STATEMENTS**

**DATE: FEBRUARY 8, 1995**

Beginning with the 1995 evaluation period, role statements are to be implemented for all University of Nevada, Reno faculty. They will be used as the basis for the evaluations that are to be prepared during the first part of 1996. The purpose of the role statement is not to establish a new layer of red tape, but to cause a dialogue between the faculty member and the department chair as to the expectation of that faculty member in the context of the department's action plan. In many respects, the use of role statements will not be a significant shift in the normal mode of operation. Again, the major objective is to make certain that every faculty member is aware of how she or he fits into the mission of the respective department, college, and the university as a whole. The result will be a stronger university with a clearer sense of where we are going and how we will get there.

The role statement was a topic of the University Department Chairs' Workshop on January 18. Your chair and dean are now involved in implementing the role statement process. That process will vary somewhat from college to college, but the attached document provides general information about the function and process of the role statement. Each role statement will be developed between the individual faculty member and department chair. It will be approved by the dean of the college. A copy of each role statement will be maintained in both the department and the college offices.

Thank you for your support.

Attachment

## FACULTY ROLE STATEMENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, RENO

As the university advances toward meeting established goals, it is essential that all faculty recognize the importance of planning and focusing on these goals. The purpose of role statements is to ensure that every faculty member participates in achieving the goals of their department and their university.

The use of faculty role statements is a component of the Academic Master Plan and has existed as a requirement in the University of Nevada, Reno Bylaws for many years, albeit under the name of specified job responsibilities. Considerable discussion has occurred and departments are at various stages of implementing and using role statements to establish agreement on what faculty should be doing to advance themselves and their departments at Nevada. Because of the diversity of the university, we should expect a diversity of opinions about the concept of a role statement. However, the overall objectives to be achieved with role statements have been accepted as essential for the advancement of the university.

Even in those departments that have not previously had formal role statements, at some stage, every faculty member has been judged against some form of role statement. Promotion, tenure, and merit decisions are made based on a consideration of what the person has done relative to some standard of performance: written or imagined, precise or obscure. These standards have generally not been called role statements and frequently were not written any more explicitly than the language that appears in departmental or university bylaws. The process of applying standards and ranking people is not one with which everyone is comfortable; thus, it is not surprising that formal role statements have been viewed by some as an objectionable device to accomplish an onerous task. Those who have used them, however, recognize their value and strongly support their use.

Discussions that led to the decision to implement formal role statements started with the faculty groups that originally requested that the concept be included in the 1992 Academic Master Plan. Workshops were held. The Faculty Senate, the Council of Deans, and the central administration were consulted. However, the concept and the characteristics of role statements will continue to need careful attention to ensure their use leads to the desired results.

### What are role statements?

An excellent description of role statements at Nevada is contained in **Approaching the 21st Century: An Academic Master Plan for the University of Nevada, Reno:**

Essential to the university's Land Grant Mission for the 21st Century is a reconsideration of the traditional faculty roles of teaching, research, and service. This reconsideration must include vigorous support and evaluation of teaching, a broadened concept of scholarship, and a definition of outreach that surpasses "service." To achieve this, we will create a system of merit, promotion, and tenure that recognizes both the unique talents of each faculty member and the specific expectations of the academic unit for that person. Such a system will be

built around a "role statement," specifying expected levels and types of teaching, research and service activities for the person. This role statement will be developed by the faculty member in consultation with department chair, dean and program director, and will be the basis of evaluation. As appropriate, the role statement for faculty and administrators will include activities directed at achievement of the (goals contained in the Master Plan.)

A less specific reference to role statements is contained in the UNR Bylaws Title 5, Chapter 7, Page 10, Section 40 where it is stated that "All personnel evaluations shall be made on the basis of specified professional responsibilities and performance expectations mutually agreed upon by the individual faculty member and the responsible agent within the department as specified by the department bylaws."

The development of a role statement is the process whereby the faculty member and the department come to a clear understanding as to how the faculty member is to contribute to the overall mission and goals of the department. It is expected that the sum of all of the role statements will support the full range of objectives of the department. However, it is not expected that every faculty member will have an identical role statement.

#### Why are role statements necessary?

Role statements are the end result of a process which involves discussion, planning, and consensus among faculty as to how each faculty member is to contribute to the achievement of the mission, goals, and action plans of the department. Achievement of departmental mission, goals, and action plans is the primary purpose of the role statement.

Deans and departments must also agree that departmental missions, goals, and action plans are being advanced by each faculty member as described in their role statements.

Also, it should be recognized that faculty are protected by role statements because it means they have support for their activities prior to the evaluation of those activities. The role statement process is particularly valuable for faculty who are involved in work that may not be thought of as being in the mainstream of traditional activities in their department.

Using role statements enables the department chair to address in an organized way the variety of tasks that are to be accomplished by a department in a land grant institution and to accomplish those tasks in the most effective manner consistent with the strengths of the faculty.

While role statements address the "specific job responsibilities" referred to in the Nevada, Reno Bylaws, the role statement process is more inclusive because of the emphasis on departmental planning and on using the strengths of each individual faculty member to implement the mission, goals, and action plans of their department.

The role statement is not a method for legitimatizing substandard performance nor is it a method to replace the collegial process within a department.

### Are role statements mandatory?

Yes. All faculty members are expected to have formal, written role statements which should be reviewed at least annually and changed when necessary. For example, as a faculty member's career evolves, typically the contributions and therefore the role statements of the faculty member change.

Role statements will be the basis for evaluations of faculty members.

### How specific must the role statements be?

A faculty member's role statement must be sufficiently specific so that any other faculty member or chair or dean can read it and determine whether the faculty member's activities are consistent with the mission and goals of the department.

Role statements should stress the quality of the faculty member's contributions. Appropriate faculty activities, including relative time distributions and minimum expectations, should be in the role statements. Evaluation methods should be included as well as indicators of quality. For example, the role statement might indicate that a peer review of publications will be conducted. Indicators of quality might include the prestige of journals, the number of articles, etc.

It is not the purpose of the role statement process to restrict the flexibility of the individual faculty member or the department. On the contrary, role statements should be used to promote achievement and high standards of faculty within a department. Role statements can be used to stimulate and protect faculty who have innovative or long-term projects that are consistent with the established mission, as well as faculty who have more traditional roles.

### What is the relationship between the role statement and the evaluation processes?

The annual evaluation process is a retrospective examination of the quality of the activities of a faculty member. The role statement process consists of the planning and coordination of future activities of faculty members in a department. The annual evaluation must be done in the context of what was agreed upon as the responsibilities of the faculty member and the indicators of quality for those responsibilities. The Annual Evaluation/Merit Review form has been revised to incorporate the role statement into the process.

The use of role statements does not make the evaluation process any simpler, but it does prompt a discussion in advance of what and how much a faculty member is expected to do as well as how it is to be evaluated. It is expected that departmental discussions about role statements will lead to careful consideration in advance of how activities are to be evaluated. It is also expected that many valuable faculty activities cannot be assessed by simple counting or survey methods; however, these activities should not be discounted in the planning and methods of evaluation should be agreed to in advance.

The fundamental values and visions of a department are to be found in the mission, goals, and

action plan. The role statement process will enable each faculty member to contribute to the support of the department and to be rewarded when the contribution is of high quality. Also, not every faculty member will be expected to contribute in the same way, but they should have equal access to the reward system.

Who is responsible for which aspects of role statements?

Role statements are to be tied to departmental mission, goals, and action plans. It is the responsibility of departmental faculty to develop mission statements and action plans that all faculty understand. Deans and the Vice President for Academic Affairs must approve the mission, goals, and action plans.

Department chairs have the responsibility to work with individual faculty members and department personnel committee when appropriate to develop individual role statements that support the mission, goals, and action plans of the department and the university.

Deans must verify that faculty and the chairs are collectively supporting the departmental missions and to confirm with the Vice President for Academic Affairs that the departments are attending to their missions and goals.

Faculty and chairs who fail to negotiate a role statement must recognize that they are at risk in the evaluation process.

A critical interface in this process is between the faculty member and the chair, for it is here that the faculty member's contributions are designed and evaluated. The ultimate success of the university depends on the effectiveness of faculty contributions to the university's mission; thus, well-designed role statements are important.