Dear Bumpers College Faculty, Staff and Administration:

I greatly appreciated the opportunity to meet with the Bumpers College Faculty Council recently to discuss the needs of the College and the funding challenges we are facing. The meeting was very productive, and I appreciate the candor of the Faculty Council in discussing the concerns of the Bumpers College faculty.

As we discussed, decisions regarding tenure or non-tenure track of initial faculty appointments, as well as promotion and tenure of current faculty must consider current funding availability and future projections. Currently, we have two distinct sources of funding for agriculture teaching, research and service/extension in Arkansas. The first source is the Division of Agriculture which receives state and federal appropriations, commodity support and several smaller funding streams. Division expenditures are generally restricted to agricultural research and extension services in Arkansas. The second source of funding comes from UAF state appropriations and tuition revenue allocated to the Bumpers College for undergraduate and graduate teaching activities.

The on-campus expenditures that support Bumpers College faculty total $18,375,449, which includes 59 percent from state appropriations to the Division of Agriculture, 20 percent from federal appropriations to the Division, 2 percent from other support to the Division and 19 percent from UAF state appropriations and tuition revenue. An additional $13 million is expended to support Graduate Assistantships and support staff, most of which comes from the Division. Of the total $31 million support for on-campus agriculture, 86 percent is funded by the Division and 14 percent is provided by UAF.

While most colleges at UAF are funded almost equally by state appropriations and student tuition and fees, Bumpers College funding presents a unique situation. The majority of Bumpers College funding comes from state and federal appropriations directly to the Division of Agriculture and very little comes from tuition and fees. When funding slowly increases or remains level from year to year, there is little cause for concern. However, when there are significant changes in funding patterns as we have seen recently in Arkansas, Division of Agriculture funding is significantly affected. Because of recent cuts in state revenue projections, appropriations for the coming year were reduced. Most of the campuses in the UA System were able to offset the reductions to some extent through modest tuition increases previously approved by the Board of Trustees. But because of its unique funding makeup, the Division has no independent source of revenue and cannot absorb the budget cuts except through program/service reductions or use of reserves set aside for other purposes. While the 14 percent of the Bumpers College that is funded through UAF can receive some relief from state budget cuts, the remaining 86 percent of the College supported by the Division of Agriculture cannot generate additional funds.
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I am hopeful that these state budget cuts are temporary and that some funding may be restored sometime during the next academic year. Nevertheless, the future of higher education funding is unclear, and funding patterns for nonformula entities like the Division of Agriculture could face significant challenges. As I mentioned, the Division does have additional sources of revenue such as federal grants, commodity contributions from the Arkansas farming industry and other smaller funding streams. Unfortunately, these sources have seen level or even decreasing funding during the last few years, and future increases or possible decreases are unpredictable. Some have argued that the federal formula funds could someday become competitive grants, which would further cloud the future of these sources for Arkansas.

Because of these funding concerns, decisions regarding tenure or non-tenure track for initial Bumpers College faculty appointments, as well as promotion and tenure determinations for current faculty will now involve the Associate Vice President and the Vice President for Agriculture, along with the Bumpers College Dean and the Chancellor of UAF. Procedural outlines for this new process are attached to this letter. The first attachment is an approval procedure for faculty positions which has been reviewed by all those involved. Dr. Dick Oliver, Chair of the Faculty Council, has also reviewed the document and made suggestions for changes which have been incorporated. The second attachment is the approval process for Bumpers College promotion and tenure, which includes the Division of Agriculture in the UAF review process. Under both of these procedures, I will resolve any differences that might occur.

These new procedures will allow appropriate review and input into the hiring, promotion and tenure decisions of the Bumpers College by all parties involved in providing the financial support for faculty teaching, research and extension. I’m confident that this new process will provide fairness to all parties involved, and I will continue to monitor its effectiveness as we move forward.

The Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences is a very important entity of the University of Arkansas. The College has a proud and productive past and we need to work together to make sure that the College will be able to fulfill its critical mission for future generations of students and for our state. I sincerely thank the faculty, the staff and the administration of the Bumpers College for your dedication and hard work.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

B. Alan Sugg  
President

Attachments:  
Approval Procedures for Faculty Positions  
Approval Processes for Promotion and Tenure

cc:  John A. White  
G. David Gearhart  
Milo J. Shult
APPROVAL PROCEDURE FOR FACULTY POSITIONS
THE DALE BUMPERS COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL, FOOD AND LIFE SCIENCES AT UA-FAYETTEVILLE AND THE DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE.

Step 1

Department head, in conjunction with faculty, submits a position request with justification. The justification should include the area of emphasis for the position, the desired expertise, the proposed appointment split (teaching, research and/or extension), the importance of the position to the university and state and reasons on whether or not the position should be tenure track or non-tenure track. The request is submitted to the Dean of the Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences and to the appropriate Associate Vice President(s) for Agriculture (research and/or extension).

Step 2

The Dean and Associate Vice President(s) review the request in light of other requests and budget capabilities. They will decide on whether or not to recommend approval of the position and whether or not it should be tenure track. Their written recommendations are forwarded to the offices of the Provost/Chancellor and the Vice President for Agriculture.

Step 3

The Chancellor and Vice President for Agriculture determine the final written approvals for the position. The President will resolve any differences.
Approval Processes for Division of Agriculture Administration
for Promotion and Tenure in Tenure-track Positions

1. Division of Agriculture Administration (Vice President and appropriate Associate Vice President(s)) should be fully involved in the recommendation process for the awarding of tenure and promotion of faculty in tenure-track positions when the Division is providing part of the funding for the position. This means they will have the opportunity to review the candidate’s promotion/tenure documents and to recommend approval or denial. The signature line for recommendation for the Associate Vice President(s) should be at the same level as the Dean. The signature line for recommendation for the Vice President for Agriculture should be at the same level as the Chancellor. The signature document should indicate the percent of appointment (teaching, research, and/or extension) for the candidate.

2. Division of Agriculture Administration (Vice President and appropriate Associate Vice President(s)) should be fully involved in any post-tenure review which might be initiated for a tenured faculty member. The signature line for recommendation of any action for the Associate Vice President(s) should be at the same level as the Dean. The signature line for the Vice President for Agriculture should be at the same level as the Chancellor. The signature document should indicate the percent of appointment (teaching, research and/or extension) for the candidate.

3. Division of Agriculture Administration (Vice President and appropriate Associate Vice President(s)) should be fully involved in the approval of requests for Off Campus Duty Assignments for tenured faculty in cases where the Division pays a portion of their salary.