

Task Force on Extension Faculty

**A Report created by the Faculty Council Task Force to explore establishing
Standing Committee on Extension Faculty**

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Task Force Charge

This task force will consider establishing a new Faculty Council Standing Committee on Extension Faculty. Such a standing committee could provide a means by which Faculty Council can explore ways in which Extension faculty can be represented on Faculty Council.

Introduction

Colorado State University (CSU) currently employs 195 Extension Faculty members, whose appointments originate solely from the Office of Engagement and Extension (OEE), with no joint or partial appointments in academic departments. While some campus-based faculty have joint appointments with OEE, no Extension Faculty have joint or partial appointments in academic departments. Despite their significant contributions to the University's mission, Extension Faculty do not presently have representation on the Faculty Council or its standing committees. This is notable considering that the Administrative Professional and Academic Faculty Manual outlines policies and procedures relevant to their roles within the University. Over the past several years, Extension Faculty have taken meaningful steps to develop processes for faculty governance, promotion, and representation within the Office of Engagement and Extension (OEE). During the same period, they have expressed a clear interest in participating in shared governance through formal representation on the Faculty Council and Faculty Council Standing Committees.

In response, a task force was convened comprised of broad representation across CSU's eight Colleges and the Libraries, including members from multiple colleges and the OEE, to explore pathways for integrating Extension Faculty into the Faculty Council governance structure. The task force met four times over three months to discuss the structural challenges arising from the current lack of representation, and to identify actionable strategies for strengthening shared governance in alignment with CSU's values and land-grant mission.

Executive Summary

This report presents the findings and recommendations of a task force charged with exploring how Extension Faculty at Colorado State University (CSU) can become more fully integrated into the institution's shared governance structure through representation on the Faculty Council. Despite the critical statewide role the Extension Faculty play in advancing CSU's land-grant mission, they currently are not represented on the Faculty Council, or Faculty Council Standing Committees. Extension Faculty have affiliations with academic departments, but without formal appointments they remain unrepresented in the Faculty Council, leaving a gap in OEE's shared governance

The report proposes a phased strategy to establish a Faculty Council Standing Committee on Extension Faculty. This approach aims to build stronger institutional ties, improve policy relevance, and ensure that the unique perspectives and contributions of the Extension Faculty are reflected in university governance. The recommendations presented here affirm CSU's commitment to inclusive, collaborative decision-making that honors its land-grant heritage.

Phased Strategy for Integrating Extension Faculty into CSU Faculty Council

To ensure meaningful and sustainable representation of Extension Faculty within CSU's shared governance structure, the task force recommends a three-phase approach. This phased strategy allows for progressive integration, capacity-building, and alignment with existing governance frameworks.

Phase 1: Including on Existing Standing Committees

Recommendation: Invite Extension Faculty to serve on existing Faculty Council Standing Committees, where relevant.

Process:

- Recommend Standing Committees whose work aligns with the responsibilities and expertise of Extension Faculty (see Table 1)
- Propose updates to the Administrative Professional and Academic Faculty Manual to formally recognize Extension Faculty as eligible members on selected committees.

This phase represents a short-term, practical way to embed Extension perspectives into Faculty Council's ongoing work without altering overall governance structures. By adding Extension Faculty to existing Standing Committees in which their expertise is directly relevant, CSU strengthens cross-campus collaboration, ensures more informed decision-making and begins to integrate Extension participation in shared governance. This step builds credibility and experience for Extension Faculty within Faculty Council processes, laying important groundwork for later phases of integration.

Phase 2: Establish Voting Representation

Recommendation: Elect two Extension Faculty as full voting members of Faculty Council.

This step ensures that Extension Faculty perspectives are formally included in university-wide governance discussion and that their voices are represented in decisions that directly affect them. It reflects CSU's commitment to inclusive faculty engagement and provides a foundation for further integration into shared governance.

We recognize that Faculty Council representation from each of the eight Colleges and the Libraries is currently one representative per approximately 21 faculty members in the unit. In the case of Extension Faculty (195 members), this would correspond to about nine (9) elected representatives. Adding so many new representatives at one time would create an imbalance in the current governance structure. Instead, the task force recommends only two new elected representatives as a proportional and practical solution that acknowledges the size and statewide role of the Extension Faculty while maintaining balance within Faculty Council.

It is important to note the precedent of the contract and continuing faculty (CCAF) representation. CCAF faculty were already embedded in academic departments that had representation through their colleges, and therefore their perspectives were included in Faculty Council deliberations by making them eligible to run for existing Faculty Council representative positions. Extension Faculty differ in that they are appointed solely through OEE, a department that currently has no voting representation.

Additionally, Extension Faculty are uniquely charged with serving all 64 counties across Colorado, advancing CSU's land-grant mission through statewide outreach, applied research, and community-based education. The scope and geographic reach of this work are distinct from campus-based faculty roles. Having two voting members ensures that the breadth of Extension's statewide perspectives, spanning rural, urban and regional needs, can be adequately represented.

This recommendation establishes a meaningful step toward equitable representation without disproportionately altering the Council composition. The number of seats should be re-evaluated within the next five years to ensure it continues to reflect both the needs of Extension Faculty and the integrity of Faculty Council governance.

Phase 3: Creating a Task Force for a Standing Committee on Engagement and Extension

Recommendation:

The creation of this task force provides a deliberate and collaborative step toward establishing a permanent Standing Committee on Engagement and Extension within Faculty Council. This will build the long-term governance structure needed to fully integrate Extension into the University's shared governance system. Forming the task force allows for strengthened relationships between CSU Extension and campus-based academic units, facilitate shared governance, and promote scholarship, teaching, and service that advances the university's land-grant mission.

This phased approach ensures that the Standing Committee on Engagement and Extension is thoughtfully designed, has broad support and can serve as a sustainable structure for representing Extension Faculty within Faculty Council.

Table 1: Standing Committee Extension Relevance Matrix

Standing Committee Name	Include Extension Faculty?	Rationale
Committee on Faculty Governance	✔ Yes	While Extension Faculty are part of CSU's broader mission, their involvement in governance structures may be limited due to their unique appointments.
Committee on Information Technology	✔ Yes	Technology access and integration are crucial to Extension's statewide educational delivery and remote collaboration needs.
Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics	✘ No	Extension Faculty typically do not engage in athletics governance or related activities.
Committee on Libraries	⚠ Optional	Extension Faculty utilize library resources for research dissemination and community education.
Committee on Non-Tenure Track Faculty	⚠ Optional	Addresses concerns of non-tenure track faculty, including Extension Faculty who serve in long-term but non-tenure positions.
Committee on Responsibilities & Standing of Academic Faculty	✔ Yes	Relevant for establishing or revising Extension-specific faculty policies.
Committee on Scholarship, Research, and Graduate Education	✔ Yes	Extension Faculty contribute to applied research and engage in scholarship that supports CSU's land-grant mission.
Committee on Scholastic Standards	✘ No	Primarily focused on student academic standards and awards, not aligned with Extension Faculty responsibilities.
Committee on Strategic & Financial Planning	⚠ Optional	Extension input may be valuable in university-wide planning, but direct involvement may be limited due to appointment and funding distinctions.
Committee on Teaching & Learning	⚠ Optional	Focused on credit-bearing instruction and student life, which are not part of Extension Faculty duties.
University Curriculum Committee	✘ No	Credit-bearing curriculum development is not a core responsibility of Extension Faculty.
Committee on University Programs	✔ Yes	University-wide program development can benefit from Extension perspectives, especially for outreach and engagement.