

Setting SMART Goals

As part of the Faculty Evaluation process at Bakersfield College, all full-time faculty must include goals for professional growth in their evaluation portfolio. As you craft your professional growth goals, keep in mind a common tool for assessing effective goal setting: your goals for professional growth should pass the SMART goals test.

SMART Goals are:

Specific: Do not make your goals for professional growth too general. “Get more involved on campus” sounds positive, but this very general goal could mean very different things to different people. A more specific goal, like “Volunteer to be a student mentor” gives you a clear direction to head in order to reach your goal.

Measurable: Make sure you can determine when you have reached a particular goal for professional growth, or that you can measure how close you have come to reaching that goal. Otherwise, the goal has very little practical value. “Attend at least one professional conference a year” is an example of a professional growth goal that you can measure.

Attainable: You want to have elevating goals that will stretch you to grow professionally, but do not set unrealistic goals that you may not be able to attain. On the one hand, do not aim too low and write down “goals for professional growth” that are really just part of your Article Four professional expectations (e.g., attend department meetings, serve on campus committees, hold regular office hours, etc.). On the other hand, do not aim too high and set a goal that is not realistically attainable (e.g., win both the Shirley Trembley Distinguished Teaching award and the Margaret Levinson Faculty Leadership award next year).

Relevant: Set professional growth goals that tie into your key roles and responsibilities and that align with your personal life goals. You are more likely to reach “live” goals that directly impact who you are and what you do. Do not set goals that you think will impress your evaluation committee members: set professional growth goals that are important to you.

Time-bound: If you do not set time limits for your goals, they can always be “out there on the horizon.” However, when you set time limits for your professional growth goals, your motivation to reach them can actually increase as the time limits approach. Make sure that you set reasonable time limits that give you adequate time to reach your professional growth goals.

Professional growth goals are more than a perfunctory requirement of your faculty evaluation portfolio: they are cognitive tools you can use to become the academic professional you want to be: “What the mind can conceive and believe, it can achieve.”