



College of Fine  
& Applied Arts

# Public Engagement Research Option (PERO)

FAA Implementation, Unit-level

Fall 2024

# What is PERO? *Why PERO?*

PERO is the Public Engagement Research Option at the University of Illinois – Urbana Champaign

**Reflects the mission of our land grant university** to “enhance the lives of citizens in Illinois. Across the nation, and around the world through leadership in learning, discovery, engagement, and economic development”

**Reflects the University’s strategic plan**, Goal 3 “Make a Significant Visible Impact,” to identify societal challenges and address these through a variety of channels

## **Faculty Public Engagement is Critical to this Mission and Goal**

Increasingly faculty are placing importance on engaging with publics, co-productive research  
We need to better facilitate this and to recognize this impact in our promotion processes



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# What is PERO?

PERO is the Public Engagement Research Option at the University of Illinois – Urbana Champaign

**Alternative Path** through the promotion and tenure process at the University of Illinois, in which:

- Publicly engaged research with public partners, organizations, and/or communities will benefit from an alternative approach to review its impact for tenure.
- Such research, while still producing traditional products (e.g. articles, books, performances, artworks, grants), produces "alternative products" (e.g. public policy reports, websites, public exhibitions, community design plans) that are not often well evaluated by traditional metrics.
- PERO provides a path for faculty whose research and products should be evaluated by alternative metrics for societal impact.

*See PERO Guide AY 2024-2025*



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# What is Publicly Engaged Research?

- Research that addresses societal problems, contributes to the public good
- Conducted in collaboration with public organizations, partners, or communities
- Creates mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources
- Generates outcomes for all partners, with a focus on societal outcomes
- Methods and processes will vary across disciplines

*See PERO Guide AY 2024-2025*



# Public Engagement Research



# Landscape Architecture Faculty Member



## Research

Works with partner organizations to advance green infrastructure and urban agriculture in disadvantaged communities

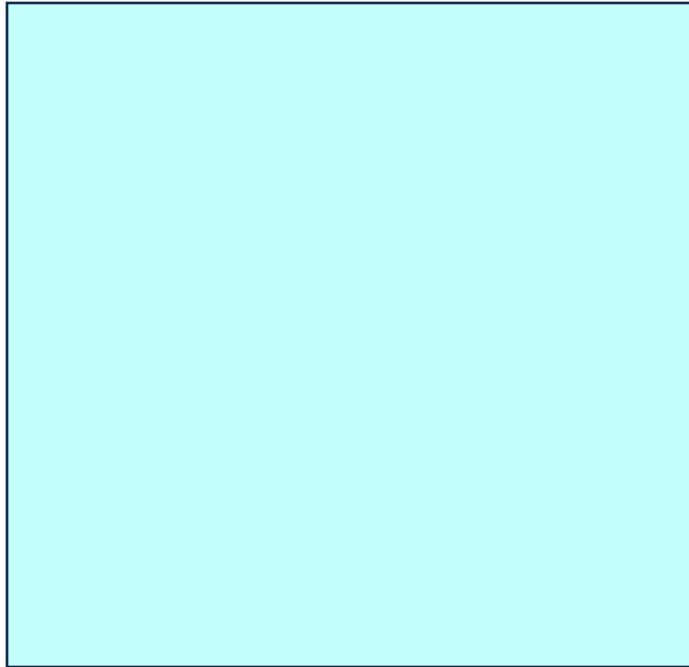
## Public Products

- Generates public guidelines documents and community plans for design and implementation
- Creates public reports and workshops on key environmental factors present in communities
- Co-creates curriculum modules for youth and young adults to participate in site analysis and design decision-making

**Kelley Lemon, Assistant Professor**



# Hypothetical FAA Example



**Name, School**

## **Research**

Scholarship in Black arts traditions and collaborates with school districts and communities to integrate Black arts into K-12 curriculum and community arts programs

## **Public Products**

- Co-produces public exhibitions with communities centered on key topics in Black arts
- Collaborates with teachers and administrators in the development of curricular changes, with X # of school districts/schools adopting new curriculum
- Develops teacher training modules in Black arts, attended by XX # of teachers, with survey of enhanced learning outcomes



# PERO : Faculty Selection Process





# How does PERO Work?



Complete this Process at Least  
Two Academic Years Before  
P&T Review



Decide if  
PERO  
good fit  
with EO

Tenure Code 1-3



Develop  
PERO MOU  
with EO

Tenure Code 2-3



PERO  
Advisory  
Committee  
reviews

No Later than Fall of  
Tenure Code 3

By End of Year 3



Fully-signed  
MOU with  
EO & Dean

End of Spring of  
Tenure Code 3

Before Candidate  
Submits List of  
Evaluators (Year 5)



Reconsider  
if PERO  
good fit

Spring of Tenure Code 5

# Decide if PERO a Good Fit, sample questions



Does the research draw on the candidate's expertise?



Does the research meaningfully address a community or societal problem, need, concern, issues, or interest?



Does the work have a significant measurable, direct impact on the public at the local, state, national, or international level?



Is the research a collaboration with community or other public partners – for example, the partner identified the need for the research or is involved in the development of the methods?



Are the discipline's traditional review mechanisms insufficient to evaluate the impact of the work?



Is review of the work's impact by stakeholders outside academia critical to the evaluation of its success?

# Structure of PERO MOU



## I. Background.

## II. General Terms.

- A. Description and Instructions for Candidate.
- B. Timing of the PERO Decision
- C. *PERO External Letter Options*
- D. *PERO Alternative Products and Means of Evaluating Impact*
- E. PERO Advisory Committee Feedback

## III. Acknowledgement of Agreement.

Signatures: Candidate, EO, Dean

### PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT RESEARCH OPTION (PERO)

#### Memorandum of Understanding

##### Purpose

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to establish that:

- (1) **Insert Faculty Candidate's Name**, referred to as the "candidate" from this point, has selected the Public Engagement Research Option (PERO) in the promotion and tenure [process](#);
- (2) the candidate's Unit Executive Officer (EO) and Dean's office are aware of and approve this decision; and
- (3) all parties understand and will follow the PERO guidelines.

If after signing this MOU, the candidate decides to opt out of PERO, that decision must be made before the deadline for the candidate to submit their list of external evaluators and be documented in an addendum to the candidate's MOU. The MOU and all addendums must be included in the candidate's dossier (see attachments to Provost Communication 9).

##### I. Background

The paramount consideration in the evaluation of publicly engaged research is the degree to which it has societal impact—as evident, for example, in changes in policies, practices, or community capacity. However, gauging such impact can be a challenge in the promotion and tenure process. Publicly engaged research may generate scholarly and/or creative products (e.g., policy reports, manuals, and/or museum exhibits) whose impact may not be adequately or accurately captured by traditional means of evaluation. PERO addresses this issue by permitting the addition of alternative means of evaluation that gauge societal impact.

As highlighted in [Provost Communication 9](#) (see section II.A.1), publicly engaged research draws on a faculty member's expertise to define and address societal problems, concerns, issues, or interests to contribute to the public good. Such research occurs in **collaboration** with communities and/or organizations at the local, state, national, or international level.

##### II. General Terms

###### A. PERO IS FOR PUBLICLY ENGAGED RESEARCH

PERO is designed to support the evaluation of publicly engaged **research**. Thus, PERO is only for faculty whose research program is largely publicly engaged and the discipline's traditional review mechanisms are insufficient to evaluate the impact of the research. Beyond these considerations, PERO is likely an appropriate option for faculty answering in the affirmative to the majority of questions provided in the [PERO Guide](#) in the attachments to [Provost Communication 9](#).

**Instructions for candidate:** Provide a three-page research statement in which you describe the goal(s) of your research program. Describe the process and methods of publicly engaged research undertaken in your work. Indicate what you are trying to accomplish in the next three to five years, particularly in terms of societal impact. Link your research program goal(s) to the types of alternative products and means of evaluation you specify in the table in Section E of this MOU. In addition, discuss how these products combine with your planned traditional products (e.g., peer reviewed journal articles, books, and/or grants) to achieve your goals. This statement will likely be a draft for the research statement you include in your promotion and tenure dossier. Include this research statement as a pdf attachment to this MOU. Label the file with your first initial, last name, and "RS"—for example, LSmithRS.pdf.

MOU Template Updated: 8/25/2024

# 3 Key Components of PERO MOU – “To-do”s



## Research Statement (3 pages)

- Specify research program goal(s)
- Describe process and methods
- Indicate intentions for societal impact
- Link goal(s) to alternative products and means of evaluation
- Discuss how alternative products combine with traditional products

## Alternative Products and Means of Evaluation

- Specify alternative products
- Describe means of evaluation and evidence of impact
- Give rationale for each product and means of evaluation
- Provide rationale and goal statement for each product

## External Evaluators

- Specify type of evaluator
- Provide rationale

# Alternative Products and Evaluation - example

1. **Product.** Detail the entities and/or documents that will be created as a result of your research.
2. **Means of evaluation.** Indicate how the societal value and/or impact of the product will be evaluated and/or measured. Articulate what evidence will indicate value and/or impact. When evidence is quantitative and/or numerical, give a range rather than a single target.
3. **Rationale for product and means of evaluation.** Provide an explanation for why the product and means of evaluation demonstrate societal value and/or impact.
4. **Rationale and goal statement.** Briefly explain how the product and means of evaluation contribute to the goal of your research program, particularly in terms of the public good; give attention to how the product is engaging the public in its creation and/or use. The rationale should be short and can refer to the research statement.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT RESEARCH OPTION (PERO) Memorandum of Understanding			
ALTERNATIVE PRODUCTS AND MEANS OF EVALUATION			
PRODUCT (25-word limit per cell)	MEANS OF EVALUATION (75-word limit per cell)	RATIONALE FOR PRODUCT AND MEANS OF EVALUATION (75-word limit per cell)	RATIONALE AND GOAL STATEMENT (75-word limit per cell)

MOU Template Updated: 8/25/2024

# Alternative Products and Evaluation - example I

PRODUCT	MEANS OF EVALUATION	RATIONALE FOR PRODUCT AND MEANS OF EVALUATION	RATIONALE AND GOAL STATEMENT
<b>Public presentation and workshop on soils-evaluation and recommendations</b> for phased remediation, planting, and agriculture implementation in East St. Louis	Presentations and workshops of soils-based planting and stormwater design guidelines for approximately X-Y# community organizations within ZZ# months in conjunction with CC2AR completion.	Community engagement research often notes that accessibility/location, number, and timing of workshops related to neighborhood and community issues affects participation, due to scheduling conflicts with work, childcare, and health needs. Having public forums through presentations and workshops are opportunities for people to engage in ways that are more comfortable and accessible within their daily schedules.	As part of my research agenda to support programs that directly benefit under-resourced communities, I regularly seek opportunities to share this research publicly. Public dissemination and distribution of the work is an opportunity to test proposed methods of community participatory engagement, such as participatory mapping, drawing, and ethnography. This product is derived from research from the Chancellor's Call to Action to Research for Societal Impact program

# External Evaluators – criteria for selection



1. *Two out of five external letters* will come from outside of academia, from individuals who can objectively evaluate the candidate's societal impact.
  1. Highly qualified in expertise and/or experience
  2. Objective, they do not benefit from the candidate's promotion and tenure
2. *Determine types of evaluators with EO and/or PERO Advisory Committee.* Review and assess appropriateness of the evaluator type.
3. *List the type of evaluator, not names in the MOU.* Later, in year 5, a list of external evaluators will include specific names, a practice similar to the traditional academic list, with enough names to provide anonymity.

TYPE OF EVALUATOR (25-word limit per cell)	RATIONALE FOR TYPE OF EVALUATOR (75-word limit per cell)

# External Evaluators - example



TYPE OF EVALUATOR	RATIONALE FOR TYPE OF EVALUATOR
<b>Leader (director, executive director, operations manager) of a community agriculture and youth nutrition organization</b>	The evaluator should be able to assess the faculty member's research and recommendations concerning site identification and implementation of community-based agricultural initiatives linked to educational programs, job training, and access to healthy food sources within that community.
<b>Director for a University extension program that engages with both urban and rural communities to address statistical inequity within their respective county</b>	The evaluator should be able to assess how the faculty member's research adds critical value to community collaborations and leverages Extension data and statistical analysis into shared projects that integrate landscape performance while addressing community needs.



# PERO Advisory Committee Reviews



- Committee focuses on two key questions
  - Is it public engagement research?
  - Are proposals for alternative evaluation appropriate and reasonable?
- Candidate must respond to committee feedback
- **Not** a contract or guarantee of promotion and tenure
- Addendums with rationale permitted

Draft MOU to PERO Advisory Committee	PERO Advisory Committee Review Period	Feedback by PERO Advisory Committee to Candidate
September 15	October 1-15	November 16
October 15	November 1-15	December 16
February 15	March 1-15	April 16
April 15	May 1-15	June 16

# How does PERO Work?



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# PERO & FAA – Readiness for this Option

## **FAA Draft Policy on Evaluating Community-Engaged Scholarly and Creative Activity**

This report looked at how community engaged research, teaching, and service should be defined and recognized in the hiring, mentoring, and promotion processes of the college and its units.

In many ways, engaged research is built into our culture and each of our disciplines may already have metrics to evaluate its value and impact.

## **FAA Strategic Goals & Priorities 2023-2028:** Under Research and Creative for the Benefit of all:

Goal #4: Strengthen faculty, staff, and student capacity for working in reciprocal scholarly and creative partnerships with the communities we serve.

## **"Guidance on Rewarding and Recognizing Community-Engaged Scholarship in the Arts"** (Korner, O'Connor, Marks, Hamilton; Big Ten Arts Administrators, 2020).

This white paper provides guidance to administrators for including and recognizing engaged scholarship in the arts through its promotion and tenure processes.



# Resources

- Public Engagement Research Option (PERO) Guide Ay 2024-2025  
<https://provost.illinois.edu/policies/provosts-communications/communication-9-promotion-and-tenure/pero-guide/>
  - Overview, External Letters, Preparing the MOU, Guidance for Faculty Members, FAQs
- FAA Promotion and Tenure Policies & Procedures Guidelines, updated May 2024  
<https://my.faa.illinois.edu/iframe.asp?url=https://faa.illinois.edu/promotion-and-tenure?content-only=1>
- Articles and reports on public engaged research, Box folder available



# Questions

- Process
- Critical deadlines
- P&T review discussions
- Literature and references
- Other

