

**Department of Biology
Guidelines for
Faculty Mentoring
and for
Departmental Review for Promotion and Tenure**

I. Principles.

The Department of Biology has a broad conception of biology, the study of life. We teach about life, about the process of discovery, about the social impacts of biology, and about the teaching of biology. We value scholarship and scholarly sharing of our insights. We value outreach to people beyond campus through the public schools and other educational institutions. We value civility and respect toward our students and colleagues, and we strive to make our department accessible to all without discrimination. We value service to our department, to our campus, and to our profession. We recognize that teaching, scholarship, and service take many forms, and we commit to evaluating each other on the *quality of contribution* to our students, to advancing the field, to the public, to the university, and to the profession.

II. Responsibility.

A. Each faculty member is responsible for being familiar with the AAUP-CSU contract, with the CCSU promotion and tenure policies, and with departmental policies.

B. Each faculty member, especially those with tenure, is responsible for sharing with junior faculty members departmental expectations, the history and practices of the department, and, to the extent known, current practices of the University Administration and Promotion and Tenure Committee.

C. The Department Chair, in addition to contractual and CCSU policy mandates, is responsible for being available for confidential conversations with junior faculty members.

D. The Departmental Evaluation Committee (DEC), in addition to its contractual and CCSU policy mandates, is responsible for communicating expectations to faculty members and for communicating any perceived problems relevant to eventual evaluation for promotion and/or tenure as soon as such problems are manifest. The DEC is further responsible for writing evaluative letters that place the record of Biology faculty in a context accessible to non-biologists.

E. Each non-tenured faculty member, and each faculty member considering applying for promotion is responsible for being familiar with relevant policy, for communicating with other faculty members (including but not only the Chair and DEC), for sharing information with the Department about teaching and scholarship, for preparing an informative file in accord with University policy, and for asking about any points of confusion or uncertainty regarding policy and expectations.

III. Formal mentoring policy.

At the time of hire of a new tenure-track faculty member, the Chair shall appoint two members of the Department to serve as mentors to the new faculty member. The chair shall also consult with the new faculty member and consider asking one or more faculty or staff members outside the Department also to serve as mentors, depending on expressed interests and/or needs of the new individual. In the second semester of a new faculty member's service, the Chair shall ask whether that individual would like any additional formal mentoring relationships. Mentors shall make every effort to be useful to new faculty members, but the formal mentoring program does not relieve the entire department of its responsibilities as outlined in the previous section.

The Chair shall make sure that each new tenure-track faculty member has a copy of the AAUP-CSU contract, the CCSU promotion and tenure policy, department bylaws, and this departmental policy.

IV. Evaluation.

As stated above, we recognize that teaching, scholarship, and service take many forms, and **we commit to evaluating each other on the *quality of contribution*** to our students, to advancing the field, to the public, to the university, and to the profession. We recognize that not all of us will contribute equally in all areas. We expect each of us to have some contribution in the four contractually mandated areas, and we agree with the terms of the contract that load credit activity, especially teaching, is the most important thing that we do and the most important area of evaluation. We recognize the contractual ranking of importance of the other three areas, and we further assert our view that strength in one or more of these areas may be seen to compensate, at least partially, for weakness in another area.

The goals of evaluation are first to identify our strengths and weaknesses in a collegial and supportive way, second to gather data to provide a basis for DEC recommendations regarding promotion and/or tenure, and third to provide a basis for DEC letters that place the record of individuals in context accessible to the Dean of Arts and Sciences, the Promotion and Tenure Committee, the Provost, and any other relevant parties.

Normally the expectations for promotion to associate professor and for tenure are the same in this department. The Department of Biology expects someone recommended for promotion to Professor to show contribution well beyond minimal levels in at least one, preferably more, of the categories of evaluation.

Lists of types of contributions in the categories below are meant to be illustrative of the kinds of contributions valued by the Department. They are neither exhaustive nor prescriptive lists.

V. Evaluation of load credit.

As stated above, we recognize that teaching and other forms of load credit activity take many forms, and **we commit to evaluating each other on the *quality of contribution*.**

This department teaches at many levels, including general education courses (including interdisciplinary courses that might be taught out of the department, e.g., in the Honors Program), General Biology courses for Biology majors, service courses for programs such as elementary education and nursing, upper-level undergraduate and graduate specialty courses, the graduate anesthetist program, off-campus field courses including international courses, and various independent studies. We expect faculty to contribute at more than one of these levels of teaching in both classroom and laboratory/field formats.

We expect all faculty in the department to show good to excellent teaching. There is no one measure of the quality of teaching contribution. The DEC considers breadth of contribution, student surveys (using, for now, the departmental survey, pending discussions at CCSU and CSU levels about a standardized form), DEC members' experience working with individuals (especially in the three semesters of General Biology and any co-taught courses), conversations with advisees and other students, formal peer evaluations, informal peer evaluations (when available), and an individual's own discussion of teaching philosophy and practice in her or his file.

The DEC shall provide statistical summaries of student survey data; the format of such summaries shall be consistent within a year and shall include answers to all questions. Candidates for promotion or tenure may provide additional analyses of the data. All written comments offered in student surveys from the four previous semesters prior to submission must be included as supporting materials.

One peer evaluation is required during the first semester of all new hires. One additional peer evaluation will be required within two years prior to application for any promotion. Sexennial evaluations will not require a peer evaluation. The DEC will conduct all peer evaluations which will only occur during regular semesters, not winter or summer sessions. The scheduling of all peer reviews will be the responsibility of the faculty member being evaluated. The evaluations will be written in letter form, not a rubric, and may be prepared as a stand-alone item or it may be incorporated into the DEC letter.

Student opinion surveys will be administered according to existing department policy (attached) pending passage of campus- or system-wide policies.

The Biology Department values research with students, including conference presentations and publications, and other independent studies (e.g., internships), and considers such work as part of its evaluation of load credit.

The Biology Department welcomes all students. In the evaluation of teaching, the Department will take seriously evidence of discrimination.

Load hours, including research reassigned time and sabbatical time, devoted to scholarly creative activity will be evaluated according to criteria discussed under that heading.

Load hours, including chairing the department and other administrative reassigned time, devoted to service to the department and university will be evaluated according to criteria discussed under that heading.

VI. Evaluation of creative activity.

The Biology Department expects faculty members to have ongoing programs that productively advance the field of biology, and the Department recognizes that advancement of biology occurs in many ways with many different forms of output. As stated above, creative activity and its output will be judged according to the **quality of contribution to biology**, not by any quantitative measure of total output or continuity of output. The Department of Biology recognizes that biology is a very broad field that ranges from molecules to ecosystems and that, in a department that exists in a liberal arts setting and that trains biology teachers, contributions to biology can include areas such as the history of biology and biology education.

Ways of advancing biology include, but are not limited to, original discovery by description and/or experiment, synthesis and explication whether in professional review publications or "popular" publications, and advancing biology education at all levels.

Appropriate output that communicates in ways that advance biology includes, but is not necessarily limited to, these kinds of publications:

- peer-reviewed research publication in journals that are included in databases such as Medline, Biosis, the Web of Science, etc.;
- review articles and book chapters;
- professional books and monographs;
- textbooks, including lab manuals;
- "practice" articles for biology teachers (K-12 and/or college);
- manuals, practice articles, etc., for technicians in various biological fields;
- significant "popular" writing in wide-circulation magazines and/or books;
- etc.

Either a candidate for promotion or the DEC may choose to run a citation analysis as one, but not the only, method of evaluating quality of contribution. The Biology Department recognizes that not all subfields within biology have the same patterns and rates of citation, and that very valuable contributions (e.g., taxonomic revisions) may have low citation rates.

Presentations at professional meetings are valued by the department, although they are less important than are publications. Candidates for promotion or tenure who have presentations that are especially prestigious (for example because they are invited talks or because a meeting limits talks to a small percentage of submissions) should inform the DEC of such distinction. The Biology Department recognizes that valuable professional

communication happens in many different settings, from local workshops to international society meetings, and encourages candidates for promotion or tenure to inform the DEC of the nature of the meetings at which they give presentations.

The Biology Department has no requirement for external funding, but recognizes that grants can provide evidence of external recognition of the quality of contribution to biology. Honors can also provide such evidence of external recognition of the quality of contribution.

VII. Evaluation of productive service to the department and university.

Each member of the Biology Department is expected to contribute to the functioning of the department, the School of Arts and Sciences, and the university. The Biology Department recognizes that different individuals will fill different roles in the department and the university and that the level of contribution may vary over the course of an individual's career.

The department expects all members of the department at a minimum to attend department meetings routinely, to participate in one or more departmental committees, and to fulfill routine requests from the department chair and committee chairs for assistance in providing information, writing reports, etc.

Pre-tenure faculty are expected to fulfill the minimum requirements described above and to start to show leadership in one or more areas of departmental activity. Such leadership may be formally recognized by chairing a committee or may manifest itself by leadership in taking on tasks, taking a leading and constructive role in discussing an issue, etc. Furthermore, pre-tenure faculty members will normally start to participate in the wider university by activities such as serving on one or more committees outside the department, including service as a departmental representative to committees (e.g., Curriculum Committee, Graduate Studies Committee), or taking on assigned tasks from a dean or other administrator.

In addition to the expectations outlined above, candidates for promotion to Professor are normally expected to demonstrate more productive service and leadership outside the department.

Under CCSU promotion and tenure policy, outreach activities that use professional expertise in the community and that help to publicize CCSU are considered service to the university. Such activities appropriate to biologists include, but are not limited to, giving presentations on biological topics to groups such as K-12 schools, libraries, nature centers, hospitals, museums, etc., serving on boards or advisory boards of such groups, consulting with non-profit organizations, town boards, state boards, etc. The Biology Department values such activities but also recognizes that not all faculty will participate in them.

VIII. Evaluation of professional activity.

Biology as a field of inquiry depends on institutional structures such as professional societies, journals, and meetings. The Biology Department recognizes that professional activity is an important part of being a biologist and that such activity can take many forms.

A minimal level of professional activity includes membership in one or more professional societies and attendance at professional meetings. The department values service that goes beyond that minimum and includes activities such as, but not limited to, peer reviewing for journals, journal editorship, hosting meetings, chairing sessions at meetings, serving as a board member or officer of a society, etc.

IX. Disclaimer. All applicable laws, state policy, CSU policy, CCSU policy, and the AAUP-CSU Collective Bargaining Agreement take precedence over any statement in this departmental policy.