

**BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT  
CRITERIA, STANDARDS, AND PROCEDURES  
FOR FACULTY EVALUATION**

**FACULTY EVALUATION**

We recognize the need for diversity in our faculty and the existence of individual strengths that each member of the department brings to our collective effort. Our evaluation system is intended to develop the strengths, applaud individual professional efforts in teaching and scholarly development, and to provide constructive criticism for colleagues so that the interests of students, the department, the university, and the individual faculty member are best served.

The evaluation process serves as the formal vehicle to assess each faculty member's performance. For this process, we have established our departmental criteria, aligned with institutional criteria, and we state clearly the standards and procedures for evaluation in the Biology Department. Categories of faculty in the Biology Department include tenure-line and non-tenure-line faculty. Non-tenure line faculty include on-going visiting professors (>3 years), short-term visiting professors (<3 years), and adjunct faculty.

**EVALUATION PROCEDURES**

All Biology Department evaluations follow the procedures, timelines, and requirements specified in Faculty Code Chapter III. The following sections detail Biology-specific interpretations, enhanced expectations, and procedural clarifications that supplement Faculty Code requirements.

Evaluation of faculty members provides the department with an opportunity to assess individual performance, course content and organization. We value the range of opinions and different perspectives that faculty members in the various sub-disciplines of biology bring to the evaluation process. We seek a full and open discussion of issues that have a bearing on the evaluation of the individual. For those reasons, we encourage all members of the department to participate in the departmental process. Full-time members of the department, including tenure-line and on-going visiting professors<sup>1</sup> are expected to participate in the evaluation of their colleagues by writing letters of evaluation and making recommendations on tenure and promotion decisions. There are two common exceptions: 1) Tenure-line faculty on leave may choose not to participate or may review the file and submit a letter to the chair. 2) Tenure-line faculty members in their first year will review the file, observe classes, and attend the department deliberation meeting, but are free to submit brief letters indicating that they do not feel sufficiently qualified to evaluate their colleague. Department members may request exemptions from participating in evaluations due to a variety of reasons by writing to the department chair or head officer; those reasons include sabbatical, conflict of interest,

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<sup>1</sup> **Note on Long-term Visiting Faculty:** The Faculty Code interpretation regarding "colleagues" in evaluation (PSC minutes 28 March 2012) does not address long-term visiting faculty who are themselves evaluated by the full department. Since our on-going visiting faculty are evaluated by departmental colleagues, they meet the definition of "colleagues" for evaluation purposes and participate in reviews as described above.

or other legitimate extenuating circumstances that impact their ability to fully and fairly contribute to an evaluation. Only those faculty members who write letters shall attend the discussion of the evaluatee.

#### **A. Who Will Be Evaluated**

1. Tenure-line faculty are evaluated at times specified in the Faculty Code Chapter III, section 2.
2. On-going visiting faculty will be evaluated in their third year (except in cases where there is no prospect for future appointment) and every three years thereafter until they become eligible for the streamlined review process, at which point they will be evaluated every five years.
3. Visiting faculty members with one- or two-year appointments will be evaluated at the end of the first year of the appointment, and, if applicable, at the end of the second year of the appointment.
4. Adjunct faculty with less than a 1-year appointment are typically evaluated at the end of their semester.

Evaluation of short-term visiting faculty and adjunct faculty may be conducted solely by the chair or, at the discretion of the chair or at the request of the evaluatee, by a committee. This committee will consist of the chair and at least two other faculty members chosen by the chair; at least one member of the evaluation committee should teach in the same area as the evaluatee. The evaluation committee for a faculty member whose teaching and research centers on cellular and molecular biology and genetics would include at least one departmental colleague with a similar focus; the evaluation committee for a faculty member whose teaching and research center on ecology, natural history, and evolution would include at least one colleague with that focus. Members of the biology faculty not formally placed on the evaluation committee may choose to participate in the evaluation. If the evaluatee is involved in interdisciplinary teaching, one member of the committee may come from outside the department.

#### **B. Responsibilities of the Department Chair**

For standard head officer responsibilities, see Faculty Code Chapter III, Section 4. The department has adopted the following letter summary process:

In the case of a closed file, develop a thorough, representative, informative and summative **report of the letters**. The head officer will prepare a summary of the departmental discussion after the discussion and provide colleagues with a copy of the **summary of the discussion** for revision. In the case of a closed file, the head officer will also share the **report of the letters** at this point. The chair will then revise the **summary of the discussion** and **report of the letters** to reflect suggestions. When all revisions have been made and accepted, colleagues participating in the evaluation will sign the summary of the discussion and report of the letters. Although individuals may not agree with all points made in these documents, they will be asked to sign as an acknowledgment of their participation in the process. After these documents have been signed, the head officer will give a copy of each to the evaluatee, and send the summary of the discussion, report of the letters (if applicable), individual letters, and the evaluatee's complete file to the Faculty Advancement Committee. The head officer should discuss with the evaluatee the observations and recommendations of the department after the evaluatee has reviewed the departmental summary letter(s) of evaluation.

### C. Responsibilities of the Evaluee

The evaluee is responsible for preparing a file in accordance with the schedule established and containing the following materials:

1. A personal statement discussing their short-term and long-term professional achievements and objectives for teaching and professional growth, their contributions to departmental and university service, and perceived past and future roles in the department. Evaluees should describe their approach in the context of inclusive practices throughout their statement. If going up for promotion, the personal statement should also discuss their approach to academic advising. The statement should not exceed the page length guidelines provided in the Faculty Evaluation Procedures and Criteria document.
2. A current curriculum vitae.
3. Syllabi, examinations, representative assignments, and laboratory materials for courses taught during the evaluation period.
4. Demonstrated commitment to accessible and inclusive teaching: A description of which pedagogy, communication, assessment, and other structural choices are used to enhance accessibility of courses to students and how pedagogy and course structure approaches are consistent with current inclusive pedagogy scholarship. For example, an evaluee should cite the peer-reviewed papers that inform their syllabus structure, attendance policies, assessment techniques, and classroom management approach similarly to (though in greater depth than) the following example:

"I structure my courses to maximize student participation and retention: I design syllabi to emphasize student agency (Citation 1), attendance policies to allow for disabled students to care for their health (Citation 2), and use a variety of assessment techniques (Citation 3). I also solicit midterm student feedback because increasing students' sense of agency and belonging is critical to retention and participation in STEM courses (Citation 4)."

5. Student feedback, as required by the Faculty Code, and any other additional student feedback that the evaluee may wish to provide.
6. Evidence of sustained professional and scholarly activity.
7. Other material the evaluee considers significant and useful in the evaluation process (e.g., access to the Canvas course pages, additional student feedback, outside letters from colleagues, professional societies, or community partners).

### D. Enhanced Expectations for Departmental Colleagues

For standard colleague responsibilities in evaluation, see Faculty Code Chapter III, Section 4.a.(1)(b) and (c).

Biology Department enhanced requirements:

1. **Number of classroom observations:** Because the department values peer review as a reliable indicator of teaching excellence, each member who is participating in the evaluation should aim to complete at least 2 classroom or lab visits in the year prior to the evaluation. In preparation for evaluations in which a tenure recommendation is to be made, observations by departmental colleagues in all courses that the evaluee teaches are encouraged during the four-semester

period preceding the tenure evaluation.

2. Whenever possible, the evaluation should include a comparison between one's direct observations of classroom and/or laboratory performance with their teaching philosophy and course materials included in the evaluation file (*i.e.*, assignments, in-class and lab exercises, exams, quizzes, student evaluations).

## **EVALUATION CRITERIA**

According to the Faculty Code and instructions from the Professional Standards Committee, the Biology Department must evaluate tenure-line faculty members for promotion (P) and tenure (T) on the basis of the faculty member's performance in the following areas:

1. Teaching (P, T)
2. Professional growth (P, T)
3. Department/university service (P, T)
4. Academic advising (P)
5. Community service (P)
6. Needs of the Department and University (T)

Ongoing visiting faculty are employed primarily as teachers and are evaluated on teaching, professional development, department service, and advising and mentoring.

1. Teaching
2. Professional development
3. Advising students
4. Department service

Visiting faculty with 1- or 2- year appointments and adjunct faculty are evaluated solely on teaching.

A faculty member's activities may span multiple evaluation areas. For example, supervision of undergraduate research may involve aspects of teaching, professional growth, service and/or advising. Similarly, a commitment to inclusive practices might be discussed under professional growth, service, and/or advising in addition to under teaching. In such cases, the evaluatee should highlight these distinct aspects in the appropriate sections, and colleagues are encouraged to draw from these distinct aspects in their evaluation.

### **A. TEACHING**

The Biology Department has formalized our collective learning objectives. The department is dedicated to providing students with a strong foundation in biology as well as reaching particular learning objectives. Students graduating from our department should:

1. Acquire introductory and in-depth learning in the field of biology through classroom and laboratory exercises;
2. Develop intellectually through the practice of the following skills:
  - a. Learning from oral presentations and reading;

- b. Communicating clearly and well both orally and in writing;
  - c. Locating and analyzing scientific literature;
  - d. Analyzing and solving problems;
  - e. Engaging in scientific observation and experimentation;
  - f. Engaging in quantitative analysis, graphing of data, and the use of statistics in data evaluation;
3. Work comfortably, safely, and in an environmentally responsible manner with an extensive array of techniques and instrumentation used in biological research;
4. Collect, interpret, and present scientific data in written reports;
5. Understand the relevance of biology to contemporary issues and problems in society;
6. Acquire a broad background in biology to provide a basis for sustained professional development.

While some of these values may not be applicable to all courses, evaluatees should demonstrate teaching excellence by showing an awareness of and documenting competency in the relevant learning objectives. As part of their personal statement, the evaluatee should also include a critical self-reflection on teaching and design of courses and labs based on:

1. Awareness of one's own strengths in teaching
2. Feedback from conversations with colleagues
3. Feedback from students
4. Previous professional evaluations

The methods for judging teaching effectiveness include direct observations by colleagues visiting classes and labs, and the review of teaching course materials (e.g., syllabi, assignments, assessments, lab handouts, etc.) and student feedback materials.

The following criteria shall be considered when evaluating a colleague's teaching. Order does not imply relative importance.

1. Professional preparation and competency to teach the subject matter.
2. Course content and structure, including: rigor appropriate to student preparation; syllabus is clear with respect to course objectives, requirements, and grading practices; laboratory is consistent with course objectives; development of logical and analytical thinking, independent learning, written and oral scientific communication skills.
3. Course presentation, including clarity of organization and communication of lectures and laboratory activities; availability to students outside of scheduled class hours; assessments consistent with subject coverage.
4. Demonstrated commitment to accessible and inclusive teaching. Tenure-line faculty members are expected to involve students in their research or to mentor students doing research in an area related to their field of expertise. Evaluatees are expected to address this component of their teaching in their statement. [*May also appear under professional growth and advising.*]

## B. PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

There are many ways in which individuals can grow professionally and contribute to their disciplines. At each evaluation, evaluatees should provide an explanation for how they are fulfilling the expectations for sustained growth that includes a reflection on goals they set at the last evaluation. The following will be considered in evaluating a department member's sustained professional growth. Other activities that contribute to professional growth may also be considered.

- *Developing an active research program with undergraduates.* Tenure-line faculty members are required to establish an active research program and are expected to involve students in their research program, including in publication and presentation activities in their disciplines. The department expects that faculty will supervise research students during most summers and/or academic years. An active research program includes the evaluatee devising accessible and appropriately-sized projects for undergraduate research, and the necessary guidance through these projects (e.g., assisting students with summer research proposals, being appropriately available to students during research, analyzing data, creating posters, giving research presentations, and writing senior theses).
- *Engaging with the scientific community.* The evaluatee must engage with the wider scientific community, which brings recognition and distinction to the individual, the department, and the university. Engagement can come in many forms.
  - a. Publication of research in peer-reviewed journals or the publication of research in books. We believe this best demonstrates professional growth. Publications and presentations in biology often include many co-authors. It is the responsibility of the evaluatee to explain the significance of their role in each documented example.
    - i. Tenure-line faculty members are required to publish in peer-reviewed journals and/or in books before tenure and between tenure and promotion to full professor. Following promotion to full professor, faculty are expected to publish and/or disseminate their research via presentations at regional, national, or international meetings.
    - ii. Non-tenure line faculty are not required to engage in scholarly research and writing; however, the department may encourage them to do those things that will add to their repertoire of professional awareness and abilities.
  - b. Participation in professional societies and attendance at meetings. These experiences serve to enhance one's research program and teaching by enabling formative feedback from peers about current and planned research, providing new insight or directions about methods or approaches, staying current in one's discipline, and disseminating research to the broader scientific community.
    - i. Tenure-line faculty members are expected to present their research results to professional colleagues.
    - ii. Non-tenure line faculty are expected to remain current in the relevant parts of the discipline and to keep abreast of those developments in the discipline that bear upon their teaching duties.
  - c. Submission of grant proposals to national or regional granting agencies. While

success in getting an award approved is not an expectation, the department recognizes that the preparation of a grant proposal is a professional activity that requires the faculty member to take critical stock of their research program and provides valuable feed-back from its peer review.

- i. All faculty who receive grants through collaborations should indicate the amount received for their own research as well as explain their role and contribution to the grant.
- d. Participation in coursework or activities that increase one's capacity to perform professional duties as a biologist and teacher. Both tenure- and non-tenure line faculty should explain how these activities enhance their research or teaching.
  - i. Examples of such activities include, but are not limited to: leading or attending a workshop related to one's research or teaching; serving as a reviewer for journals, books, or funding agencies; serving as an external reviewer for tenure reviews at other institutions; scientific consulting work; public scientific speaking or writing; informal teaching opportunities.

### C. ACADEMIC AND CAREER ADVISING

Each member of the department must contribute to university efforts to provide good academic and career advising by participating in departmental efforts to advise first-year students, continuing students, and transfer students. Tenure-line faculty members are expected to take on a new group of formal advisees on a regular basis. On-going visiting faculty may also participate in formal academic and career advising after consultation with the chair and in light of the needs of the department. Short-term visiting faculty and adjunct faculty are not expected to serve as advisors.

Formal advising includes individual pre-registration appointments. The goals of these appointments will depend on the year the student is in and whether they have declared a major in our department. In general, these appointments help each student:

- Understand degree requirements, policies, and procedures.
- Find their preferred academic department for major declaration and advisor selection (faculty are not expected to serve as an advisor for a student who declares a major outside of Biology).
- Select courses and create an educational plan that fits their goals, interests, and abilities.
- Succeed in college by connecting them with campus resources and opportunities.
- Discuss high-impact practices, such as study abroad opportunities (generally in sophomore year), research opportunities, as well as career and personal goals.
- Explore post-graduate opportunities and other aspects of advising appropriate to their level.

Advising may not be limited to the formal academic advisor-advisee relationship, but may also include interactions with non-advisee students in which the faculty member provides advice related to a student's academics, career, or life. Additionally, meaningful advising may occur naturally in a faculty mentor's role as a research advisor. This role entails conversations separate from academic advising, about topics such as post-graduate goals and career paths. Research advisors may have close, long-term interactions with their research students, which could give unique insight into their students' abilities, interests, and needs that do not always appear in academic advising.

#### D. DEPARTMENT/UNIVERSITY SERVICE

The department expects its faculty members to be active and contributing participants in its efforts to provide an outstanding program.

- Tenure-line faculty are expected to attend department meetings regularly, work on department ad-hoc committees as needed, participate in reviews/ evaluations of department members, and participate in personnel searches for both faculty and staff. Faculty may also contribute in other ways that benefit the department; examples include developing a shared curriculum for the lecture and/or laboratory of one of the core biology courses, coordinating labs with multiple sections, and writing grants for departmental equipment, for curriculum workshops (through Burlington Northern grants) or curriculum or pedagogy workshops that advance university initiatives such as the the Diversity Strategic Plan. *[Some of these activities may also appear under teaching and professional growth.]* The role of department chair is shared, on a rotational basis, by all tenured members of the department.

Tenure line faculty are also expected to actively and regularly participate in ongoing university service via standing committees or assigned governance or through other service role(s). While membership on university committees is one of the most obvious ways to contribute to the community, we recognize that an individual may choose to serve the institution in a variety of ways. We encourage faculty members to choose activities that will make the best use of their individual talents. The department encourages its members to become active in professional organizations as consultants, volunteer their time as reviewers for journals and grant proposals, or participate in other ways that reflect well upon the department and the university, and enhance the individual's enthusiasm for the discipline.

- On-going visiting faculty with three or more years at Puget Sound are expected to attend department meetings regularly. They are generally expected to also participate in evaluations/ reviews of departmental colleagues and staff, help develop shared curricula for courses, and coordinate labs with multiple sections. On-going visiting faculty may also undertake additional duties as determined by the departmental chair and the needs of the department.
- Adjunct faculty and short-term visiting professors with less than 2 years at Puget Sound are generally not expected to take on departmental service, but may choose to do so in consultation with the chair.

For all evaluations, the evaluatee's personal statement should describe the evaluatee's significant contributions and provide evidence or outcomes of the service work, where appropriate. Evaluatees are also welcome to include letters of support from others who are familiar with the evaluatee's service work, although this is not required. Since reviewers outside of the department may not be familiar with the departmental norms, it is incumbent upon the department to clearly evaluate the level of departmental service and assess whether it meets the standards described above.



#### E. COMMUNITY SERVICE

Participation in community service related to the faculty member's professional interests and expertise is encouraged but not explicitly expected. Activities that reflect well on the university or enhance one's teaching and scholarly abilities should be recognized. Examples include outreach events to local or regional schools or organizations, helping with on-campus public-facing events (e.g., developing content for Summer Academic Challenge, participating in lectures or workshops, and other community service, including service to educational, civic, and charitable groups).

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