TENURE AND PROMOTION EVALUATION

Department of Biological Sciences
The University of Southern Mississippi

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I. Introduction

Research, including the training of graduate students, and undergraduate education represent the core missions of the Department of Biological Sciences at The University of Southern Mississippi. The Department strives to (1) provide high quality undergraduate and graduate education that prepares students to pursue professional degrees and/or to enter the workforce with skills necessary for life-long professional achievement, (2) advance the body of scientific knowledge through the scholarship of discovery, integration and application, and (3) offer technical and educational expertise through formal and informal outreach locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

The Department of Biological Sciences expects its faculty members to contribute to its missions by fostering the intellectual growth of students through effective teaching and by advancing knowledge through productive research activity. The Department also expects its faculty to render professional service to the University, their profession, and the public. Service activities, whether compensated or not, draw on professional expertise, relate to the teaching and research missions of the University, and, typically, imply a connection to the University. Activities in which faculty engage that do not involve their professional expertise (e.g., activities centered on the family, neighborhood, church, political party, or social action group) are commendable, but are not components of the workload of a member of the faculty.

In evaluating faculty performance, the Department expects demonstrated achievement in all three areas of teaching, research, and service, while recognizing that the central criteria for tenure and promotion in rank are teaching and research productivity regardless of whether a faculty member’s appointment is on the Hattiesburg campus or on the Gulf Coast campus. The primary mission of the Department on the Gulf Coast campus is undergraduate education, including provision for undergraduate research. Consequently, evaluation of faculty on the Gulf Coast campus is weighted toward teaching excellence.

II. Criteria for Appointment to Faculty Rank

A. Professors are expected:

- To hold the doctorate or other terminal degree of the discipline
- To be accomplished teachers
- To have sustained an extramurally funded research program that involves participation of graduate and undergraduate students
- To have achieved a nationally recognized professional record of scholarship
- To have participated significantly in the professional work of the discipline, in ways other than teaching and research
- To have demonstrated clearly that they can work well with colleagues and students
- To have normally served as an associate professor for at least five years
B. Associate Professors are expected:

- To hold the doctorate or other terminal degree of the discipline
- To be good teachers
- To have established an extramurally funded research program that involves participation of graduate and undergraduate students
- To have produced a recognized professional record of scholarship
- To have participated with promise in the professional work of the discipline, in ways other than teaching and research
- To have demonstrated clearly that they can work well with colleagues and students
- To have normally served as an assistant professor for at least four years

C. Assistant Professors are expected:

- To hold the doctorate or other terminal degree of the discipline
- To show promise as teachers and scholars, and to have begun a definitive program of research (i.e., one that generates scholarly activity, extramural funding, and opportunities for undergraduate and graduate student research)
- To show evidence that they can work well with colleagues and students

D. Instructors are expected:

- To hold the Master’s degree, or equivalent training and experience as appropriate to the particular appointment
- To show a demonstrated ability in good teaching
- To show a clear interest in a program of scholarship
- To show evidence that they can work well with colleagues and students

In all of these ranks, concerned and effective student advisement and responsible service to the University are understood to be part of the normal task of a faculty member as is a collegial working relationship with colleagues and students

III. Performance Assessment Criteria

A. Annual Performance Evaluation

1. Faculty members are expected to contribute to the missions of the Department in the three areas of teaching, research, and service, while recognizing that the central criteria for tenure and promotion in rank are teaching and research productivity.

2. The basis for assignment to one of five merit categories in the three areas of teaching, research and service is described in Appendix A: Basis for Merit Category Assignment and Overall Merit Group Ranking.

3. In addition to the system described for making merit group assignments, the Chair employs a "points" system to assess performance (Appendix B). The system remains in the developmental stage since the assignment of point values for various activities is imprecise, and it would be undesirable to assign point values that are too high or too low. It is critical that a point system accurately reflect the relative importance and worth of activities. Presently, the BSC points system is applied to analysis of annual reports of faculty scholarly activities (see Appendix C), and rankings are made within each
category (teaching, research, service). These rankings are used as corroborative evidence of the validity of merit group assignments.

B. Requirements for Tenure

1. Criteria for tenure normally will be identical with those required for promotion in rank to Associate Professor.

2. The Department will formally evaluate progress toward tenure during the third year of University employment as a full-time, tenure-track faculty member.

3. See College of Science and Technology Tenure and Promotion Policies (Appendix D) and the University's Faculty Handbook.

C. Promotion to Associate Professor with Tenure

1. Teaching

- Participation in undergraduate and graduate course offerings
- Development of undergraduate and graduate courses in area of expertise
- Supervision of graduate and undergraduate research
- Evaluation of quality teaching
  - Student evaluation of lecture and laboratory courses
  - Self-Assessment: Teaching portfolio (see Appendix E)
  - Letters from former students, both undergraduate and graduate
  - Outcome of student-oriented research, including publication and presentations
  - Post-graduate achievement/placement of graduate students

2. Research/Scholarship

- Dissemination of scholarly activity
  - Publication in peer-reviewed, national/international journals
  - Presentations at national/international meetings/conferences/workshops
- Establishment of extramurally funded research program
  - Submission of proposals to funding agencies
  - Receipt of extramural funding sufficient to establish research program, including graduate student support

3. Service

- Institutional: Service on department, college and/or university committees.
- Community service/outreach: Professionally based assistance to individuals, schools, business/industry; presentations to lay audiences
- Participation in programs to advance science education
- Professional discipline: Participation in state, regional, national, international societies/organizations in area of expertise; review of journal articles and research proposals.
4. Advisement

- Familiar with university, college and departmental requirements
- Assist undergraduate and graduate students in preparing class schedules and advising students on career goals and opportunities
- Writing letters of recommendation on behalf of students

5. Collegiality: Collegiality among faculty is essential for the effective operation of the Department. Hence, colleagues must be able to interact with faculty and students in a constructive and professional manner.

- Share committee assignments
- Participate in departmental and university functions
- Provide advice in areas of research and teaching to faculty and students
- Collaborate with colleagues within/without the Department when appropriate

D. Promotion to Professor with Tenure

1. Teaching

- Participation in undergraduate and graduate course offerings
- Development of undergraduate and graduate courses in area of expertise
- Supervision of graduate and undergraduate research
- Graduation/placement of MS and PhD students
- Evaluation of quality teaching
  - Student evaluation of lecture and laboratory courses
  - Self-assessment: Teaching portfolio (see Appendix E)
  - Letters from former students, both undergraduate and graduate
  - Outcome of student-sponsored research, including publication and presentations
  - Post-graduate achievement/placement of graduate students

2. Research/Scholarship

- Dissemination of scholarly activity
  - Sustained pattern of publication in peer-reviewed, national/international journals
  - Sustained pattern of presentations at national/international meetings/conferences/workshops
- Establishment of extramurally funded research program
  - Pattern of submission of proposals to funding agencies
  - Pattern of extramural funding sufficient to sustain research program, including graduate student support
  - Evidence of collaboration with colleagues within and beyond the University
- Achievement of nationally recognized scholarly record
  - Evidence that research has made an impact on the field and influenced the thinking of others in the field
  - Peer evaluation (see external letters of evaluation, page 6 Appendix F) by nationally recognized leaders in their respective fields.
3. Service

- Institutional: Accept leadership roles on department, college and/or university committees
- Community service/outreach: Professionally based assistance to individuals, schools, business/industry; presentations to lay audiences; participation in programs to advance science education
- Professional discipline: Leadership role in state, regional, national, and/or international societies/organizations in area of expertise
- Review of journal articles and research proposals, participation on review panels for funding agencies

4. Advisement

- Familiar with university, college and departmental requirements
- Assist undergraduate and graduate students in preparing class schedules and advising students on career goals and opportunities
- Writing letters of recommendation on behalf of students

5. Collegiality: collegiality among faculty is essential for the effective operation of the Department. Hence, colleagues must be able to interact with faculty and students in a constructive and professional manner.

- Sharing committee assignments
- Participation in departmental and university functions
- Providing advice in areas of research and teaching to faculty and students
- Collaborating with colleagues within/without the Department when appropriate

E. Emeritus Rank

At the discretion of the President and upon the recommendation of the Department and Dean, faculty members who are Professors at the time of retirement may be awarded the rank of Emeritus. See Appendix G.

IV. Policy and Procedures

A. Annual Evaluation

1. Evaluation of calendar year performance is conducted annually between January 15 and March 15 of the year following the period under review.

2. Faculty on sabbatical leave or professional leave: See Faculty Handbook.

3. Department Chair: See Faculty Handbook.

4. On of before January 1, faculty members submit their Annual Report of Faculty Scholarly Activities [see Appendix C] to departmental Personnel Authority. Faculty members include in their report how their activities during the year under review met their goals and objectives.
5. Annual evaluation conferences are held between January 15 and March 1 to ascertain and discuss professional accomplishments during the period of evaluation and to discuss and establish goals and objectives to be pursued during the next period of evaluation.

6. Annual Evaluation Report: The departmental Personnel Authority prepares a written report summarizing the essential content and result of the evaluation, including recommendations arising from the evaluation of performance. See Appendix H.

7. When funds are provided for merit pay increases, the departmental Chair assigns amounts of increases according to merit group classification. The departmental Chair submits departmental recommendations to the Dean of the College of Science and Technology.

8. Departmental evaluation reports are forwarded to the Dean on or before the date specified by the University’s Academic Calendar. Copies of evaluation reports are transmitted to faculty members being evaluated and retained within departmental personnel files.

B. Promotion [See Faculty Handbook]

1. Faculty members prepare and submit promotion dossiers to the Chair of the Department on or before date specific in the College’s annual Academic Calendar. See Appendix H: Instructions for preparation of promotion dossier. Candidates for promotion may supplement their dossiers with additional relevant information, including a response to negative recommendations, at any level of the promotion process.

2. Departmental Promotion Committee: This committee consists of members of the faculty holding academic rank equal to, or higher than, that being sought by the candidate. The departmental Chair sits as a nonvoting ex officio member. The Committee is chaired by a member elected by a simple majority vote of other members.

3. External Referees: Evaluation for promotion to the rank of Professor includes the assessment of the candidate’s credentials by at least three external referees deemed qualified by the Promotion Committee (i.e., nationally recognized leaders in their respective fields). The candidate may assist the Committee in their selection of external referees by suggesting a list of potential referees. The Chair of the Promotion Committee solicits and receives letters from external referees selected by the Committee [see Appendix F].

4. The Promotion Committee prepares and submits to the departmental Chair a written document, signed by committee members, recommending or declining to recommend promotion in rank. The written document includes (a) narrative detailing the rationale for the recommendation and the vote of the Committee prepared by the chair of the Committee and (b) the Promotion Evaluation Form (see Appendix I).

5. Duties of the Departmental Chair: See Faculty Handbook.

a) Review written reports of the Promotion Committee
b) Prepare an independent recommendation either concurring or disagreeing with the recommendation of the Promotion Committee

c) Submit both recommendations to the Dean of the College of Science & Technology

d) Retain copies of documents within departmental personnel files

e) Notify in writing candidates for promotion of the recommendations

C. Tenure [See Faculty Handbook]

1. Tenure Review Proceedings

a) Formal review of progress toward tenure is conducted during the third year of University employment as a full-time, tenure track faculty member.

b) The review is normally conducted in conjunction with annual review.

c) Faculty to be reviewed submit a tenure review dossier (see Appendix J) to the departmental Chair.

d) The departmental Chair convenes the departmental Tenure Committee and sits as a nonvoting ex officio member. The Committee, chaired by a member elected by a simple majority vote of other members, conducts the review and submits a review report, which includes the Recommendation Form for Third-Year Review (Appendix I), to the chair.

e) The departmental Chair, if tenured, prepares and submits an independent tenure review report either concurring or disagreeing with the report of the Tenure Committee. Both committee and chair reports are forwarded to the Dean and the faculty member being reviewed is notified of the results of his/her review by the departmental Chair.

2. Tenure Proceedings

a) Eligible candidates for tenure prepare and submit tenure dossiers (see Appendix J) to the departmental chair no later than the last day of the first full week of the fall semester.

b) The departmental Chair convenes the departmental Tenure Committee, provides the committee with the tenure dossier, tenure review reports and annual evaluation reports of the candidate, and sits as a nonvoting ex officio member

c) Members of the tenure Committee vote either to recommend or to decline to recommend candidates for academic tenure. The Committee, chaired by a member elected by a simple majority vote of other members, conducts the review and submits a review report, which includes the Tenure Recommendation Form (Appendix I), to the chair. The written report, signed by committee members, that provides the rationale for the recommendation and the vote count of the committee.

d) In addition, the Tenure Committee prepares and submits to the departmental Chair a written document, signed by committee members, recommending or declining to recommend tenure. The written document includes (a) narrative detailing the rationale
for the recommendation and the vote of the Committee prepared by the chair of the Committee and (b) the Tenure Evaluation Form (see Appendix I).

e) The departmental Chair reviews the written report of the Tenure Committee and, if tenured, prepares an independent report either concurring or disagreeing with the recommendation of the Tenure Committee.

f) The departmental chair submits the written report of the Committee and, if applicable, the Chair's report to the Dean, and provides written notification of the departmental recommendation(s) to the candidate.