

Department of Biology – Texas A&M University

POLICIES ON TENURE AND PROMOTION

Approved by Biology Faculty December 17, 1999

Amended by the Faculty on May 13, 2005

Procedures for Promotion to Distinguished Professor removed on May 2, 2012

TENURE

Tenure is the assurance to a faculty member who has successfully performed during an agreed upon probationary period of service that he/she may expect to continue those services in an academic appointment unless funds are no longer available or convincing cause for dismissal is proven through the established procedures of due process.

The nature of tenure is relative and cannot be underwritten by rigid guidelines or permanent assets since Texas A&M University and consequently the Department of Biology are dependent upon legislative appropriations to continue its programs. The University and the Department are also subject to actions of the Coordinating Board of the Texas College and University System, in phasing out institutional programs.

The probationary period for a tenure-track faculty member of the Department of Biology normally shall not exceed seven years. Included within this period may be appropriate full-time service in another institution of higher learning regardless of the number of years of service there. This policy is subject to the provision that after a term of probationary service of more than three years at other institutions it may be agreed upon in writing that the appointment may include a probationary period of not more than four years even though the person's total probationary period is thereby extended beyond the normal maximum of seven years.

Faculty members who join the Department of Biology at the rank of professor may become eligible for tenure after two years of satisfactory service or immediately upon the exhibition of specialized qualifications.

All faculty appointments are made on a year-to-year probationary basis until tenure is granted.

All grants of tenure require approval by the Board of Regents and tenure notification will be made in writing under procedures developed by the Chancellor of the System.

The service of faculty members may be terminated by giving notice in writing under procedures approved by the Chancellor of the System according to the following minimum periods of notice:

1. Three months prior to the completion of the first full academic year (for those holding nine month appointments) of twelve-months of service without tenure.
2. Six months prior to the completion of the second full academic year or second twelve-months of service without tenure, as the case may be.

3. Twelve months prior to the completion of any full academic year or period of twelve-months of service without tenure beyond the second year.

Termination of faculty with tenure may occur in accordance with the procedures approved by the Chancellor of the System.

In general, a faculty member is a full-time employee of Texas A&M University and the Department of Biology who holds the rank of instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, professor or distinguished professor. Part-time or temporary members of the teaching staff such as lecturers, senior lecturers, graduate students serving as teaching assistants, postdoctoral fellows, etc. are specifically not entitled to tenure. Full-time research associates are normally considered to have term appointments and are considered to hold positions without tenure.

Administrative personnel, such as the department head, associate department head, and graduate advisor who hold academic rank in addition to their administrative title, are considered faculty members for these purposes; however administrative assignments are not subject to tenure.

Appointment of a person to a graduate student's committee or designation as a member of the Graduate Faculty does not constitute faculty status as defined above.

When a faculty appointment is extended to an individual in the Department of Biology, a tenure agreement form signed by the appropriate academic officer is forwarded to the prospective faculty member, who then signs this form to indicate acceptance of the position. The form specifies the number of years of probationary service in accordance with the provisions of the policies stated above.

During the probationary period, faculty members are employed annually with appropriate reviews. This review process requires completion of an Annual Report by the faculty member and its evaluation by the Annual Review Committee and the administrative Head of the Department. The administrative Head will then notify the faculty member of his or her progress either in writing or during a meeting between the administrative Head and the faculty member. Particularly close attention will be paid to the review of non-tenured faculty in their first three years of probationary service.

In the year preceding the last year of probationary service, a formal recommendation is made regarding tenure for each individual. Recommendations will be forwarded via College and University channels to the Board of Regents, which has the authority to confer tenure.

CRITERIA: TENURE AND PROMOTION TO ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

Tenure and promotion to Associate Professor in the Department of Biology is based on demonstrated achievement in the areas of research, teaching, and service.

Questions to be considered when evaluating an individual for the granting of tenure are:

- Is this an individual whose professional knowledge and competence and standards of professional integrity measure up to the level desired by the Department of Biology and by Texas A&M University?
- Does the individual's record provide evidence of and expectation for continuing productivity and maintenance of competency?

Determination of the answers to these questions is in large measure subjective. Factors that may enter into tenure decisions include:

1. **Professional Competence.** The faculty member may exhibit professional competence by academic degrees, experience, and performance during the probationary period. Important measures include publications in national and international peer reviewed journals and success in obtaining research funding through competitive grants.
2. **Area of Specialization.** The individual is expected to exhibit expertise in an area of specialization not otherwise represented within the tenured faculty, or to provide desired reinforcement in an area of importance. The field of specialization must be germane to the programs of the Department of Biology.
3. **Teaching.** The individual should be a good teacher in both the formal setting of the graduate and undergraduate classroom and in the individual instruction of undergraduate and graduate students in research.
4. **Professional Integrity.** The individual should be aware of the responsibilities associated with being a representative of the Department and University. The individual must demonstrate professional integrity. Respect and consideration for and by colleagues and others with whom the individual has frequent contact is important.
5. **Collegiality.** The person's professional goals must be compatible with the goals of the Department, College and University. The individual should cooperate and be a good citizen of the Department, College and University.

**DEPARTMENTAL PROCEDURE FOR CONSIDERATION
FOR TENURE AND PROMOTION TO ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR**

1. The candidate will furnish a current curriculum vitae and other cogent documentation providing evidence of personal contributions in teaching, research, and service to the Department, College, University and the larger scientific community.
2. The Annual Review Committee will serve as the Tenure and Promotion Review Committee.
3. The candidate will furnish the names, addresses and telephone numbers of up to ten scholars of notable reputation that are in a position to make a critical evaluation of the candidate's research and teaching contributions. Additional scholars will be added by the members of the Tenure and Promotion Review Committee or the Department. From this list, the Department will identify at least ten reviewers, with no less than five being from the candidate's list.
4. Each scholar will be formally requested to render a written evaluation of the candidate. A copy of all documentation will be sent to each reviewer together with a cover letter containing any information deemed pertinent by the Tenure and Promotion Review Committee.
5. A documentation folder will be compiled to include all information sent to the reviewers along with their letters.

6. Tenure and Promotion Review Committee will then meet and submit a written recommendation to the Department Head.
7. The tenured faculty will be invited to review the documentation folder prior to a given date. After this date, there will be a meeting open to all tenured faculty. This meeting represents the Departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee. The Tenure and Promotion Review Committee will present the candidate's credentials and make a motion to award tenure and promotion (or tenure only, in the case of untenured associate professors). Each tenured faculty member will submit a written vote of yes (recommending tenure) or no (recommending denial of tenure). These recommendations will be considered by the Department Head.
8. The Department Head, taking into consideration the recommendations of the tenured faculty, will submit a recommendation to the Dean of the College of Science. All votes and recommendations are advisory in nature and are not binding on the Department Head.
9. The Department Head has the right and responsibility to secure additional letters of recommendation on a candidate at any stage in the review.
10. The candidate will be advised in writing of the decision forwarded by the Department Head to the Dean.

CRITERIA FOR PROMOTION TO PROFESSOR

Promotion to the rank of Professor in the Department of Biology is based on demonstrated and continued excellence in the areas of research, teaching, and service.

Questions to be considered when evaluating an individual for promotion to the rank of Professor are:

- Is this an individual whose professional experience and abilities, and standards of professional integrity compare favorably with Professors at Texas A&M University and other nationally ranked institutions?
- Has this individual made significant contributions to the Department of Biology and to the scientific community.
- Does the individual's record provide evidence for continued scholarship and academic leadership?

Determination of the answers to these questions is largely subjective. Factors that may enter into tenure decisions include:

1. **Professional Excellence.** The faculty member shall exhibit professional excellence as recognized by peer recognition at both the national and international levels. Important measures of excellence include continued publication in top-tier peer-reviewed journals and success in maintaining research funding through competitive grants. Other indicators may include appointment to grant review panels, election to office in professional societies, research awards, invited lectures at national/international meetings and other forms of peer recognition.

2. **Teaching.** The individual should be committed to teaching in both the formal setting of the graduate and undergraduate classroom and as a mentor to undergraduate, graduate, and post-doctoral students working in the laboratory. In addition to exhibiting the intellectual maturity of a senior faculty member, the individual should be willing to develop new courses or modify existing ones in light of ongoing advances in the subject area as well as implement new teaching technologies.
3. **Professional Integrity.** The individual must demonstrate the highest level of academic honesty and professional integrity. Respect and consideration for and by staff, students, and colleagues with whom the individual has contact is important. The individual should take a leadership role within the Department, University, and the scientific community.
4. **Collegiality.** The person's professional goals must be compatible with the goals of the Department, College, and University. The individual is expected to actively participate in the academic life of the Department, College, and University.

DEPARTMENTAL PROCEDURE FOR CONSIDERATION FOR PROMOTION TO PROFESSOR

Promotion to the rank of Professor is conferred by the Board of Regents with the approval of the University administration. Unlike the process leading to tenure and promotion to Associate Professor, promotion to Professor is not circumscribed by specific time limits. Thus, there is neither a minimum nor maximum number of years required in rank for an individual to be considered for promotion from Associate Professor to Professor. A faculty member can have a meaningful career in the Department, of Biology without obtaining the rank of Professor.

In general the promotion process can be initiated in one of two ways.

- The Department Head may nominate individuals whom he/she deems worthy of promotion; or
- Individuals may place themselves under review for promotion after consultation with the Department Head.

Evaluation of a candidate for promotion will include the following elements:

1. The candidate will furnish a current curriculum vitae and other cogent documentation providing evidence of personal contributions in teaching, research, and service that benefit the Department, College, University, and the larger scientific community.
2. Professors on the Annual Review Committee will serve as the Promotion Review Committee.
3. The candidate will furnish the names, addresses, e-mail addresses, fax, and telephone numbers of at least five and up to ten Professors of notable reputation that are in a position to make a critical evaluation of the candidate's research and teaching contributions. At least five additional Professors will be added by the members of the Promotion Review Committee or the Department Head. From the combined list, the Department will solicit letters from at least ten external reviewers.

4. Each reviewer will be formally requested to render a written evaluation of the candidate. A copy of all documentation will be sent to each reviewer together with a cover letter containing any information deemed pertinent by the Promotion Review Committee.
5. A documentation folder will be compiled to include all information sent to the reviewers along with their letters.
6. After consideration of the documentation folder, the Promotion Review Committee will meet and submit a written recommendation to the Department Head.
7. The Professors within the department will be invited to review the documentation folder prior to a given date. After this date, there will be a meeting open to all Professors, chaired by the Department Head. This meeting represents the Departmental Promotion Committee for Professors. The Promotion Review Committee will present the candidate's credentials and make a motion for promotion. Each Professor will submit a written vote of yes (recommending promotion) or no (recommending denial of promotion). These recommendations will be forwarded to the Department Head.
8. The Head, taking into consideration the recommendations of the Professors, will submit a recommendation to the Dean of the College of Science. All votes and recommendations are advisory in nature and are not binding on the Department Head.
9. The Department Head has the right and responsibility to secure additional letters of evaluation on a candidate at any stage in the review.
10. The candidate will be advised in writing of the decision forwarded by the Department Head to the Dean.

Applicable University and System policies:

System Policy 12.01
Academic Freedom, Responsibility, Tenure, and Promotion
<http://sago.tamu.edu/policy/12-01.htm>

University Rule 12.01.99.M2
University Statement on Academic Freedom, Responsibility, Tenure, and Promotion
<http://rules.tamu.edu/urules/100/120199m2.htm>