

# **Retention, Promotion, and Evaluation Criteria and Guidelines**

Department of Biological Sciences, University of Maine

Approved by the Faculty - 19 October 2006

University requirements and procedures for appointment, evaluation, reappointment, promotion, and tenure are detailed in the current Agreement between the University of Maine and AFUM. Because members of the faculty in the Department of Biological Sciences differ in their responsibilities, each individual will be evaluated in proportion to his or her commitments to teaching, research, and service. The chairperson of the department will be responsible for providing the evaluation committee with full details regarding each individual's assignment, conditions of employment, and any MAFES commitment. Differences in job descriptions and specific responsibilities among faculty will be taken into consideration in peer evaluations.

The Peer Review Committee consists of five tenured faculty members nominated by the Chair and approved by the faculty to represent the disciplinary breadth of the department. The Peer Review Committee conducts all evaluations of faculty, and may meet with them as part of the review process. It is expected that Assistant Professors, instructors, and lecturers will meet annually with the committee to review their progress. The Promotion and Tenure Committee has the same composition as the Peer Review Committee, except for promotion to Professor, when Associate Professors on the Peer Committee are replaced by Professors elected by the department faculty.

## **Criteria for Annual Evaluations, Retention, Promotion, and Tenure**

The hallmark of a university professor is a creative and productive mind. For retention, promotion, or tenure, a faculty member must demonstrate thorough professional competence as reflected in teaching, research, and service to the University, the public, and professional organizations. The standards for evaluation are organized under the headings of teaching, research, and service. Evaluation of instructors and lecturers will focus on the areas of teaching and service as appropriate to their job descriptions.

### **Teaching**

Reappointment, promotion, and tenure in the Department of Biological Sciences require high-quality performance as a teacher. In addition, there should be a clear commitment to continuous development as a teaching professional throughout a faculty member's career. In evaluating the teaching performance of a faculty member, the Peer Review Committee will examine a number of teaching indicators to determine whether the person has met generally accepted standards of course instructional quality characterized by clear and

well-organized presentations, informative lessons and learning experiences, fair and rigorous testing, and a high level of motivation and time investment.

As a part of the application process, each faculty member being considered for promotion and/or tenure will be asked to provide a written self-appraisal of his/her teaching and mentoring performance. Faculty teaching performance will be evaluated on the basis of information and responses focused on the following questions and the self-assessment.

1. How do students rate the quality and content of the instructor's classes? [Student evaluations will be examined, with particular emphasis on overall rating of the instructor and overall rating of the course. Average and median scores will be evaluated and may be compared to those for other departmental courses at the same level in the same year. In assessing these results, the Peer Review Committee will be mindful that some factors such as the difficulty of the course material may affect scores and that outlier responses can have a large impact in small classes. Written student comments will also be perused for trends or tendencies, positive or negative].
2. How do faculty peers rate the quality and content of the instructor's classes? [Faculty observers will be asked to record their assessment of presentation quality and energy, organization, clarity, course content, rigor, creativity, and student participation. Mentors of newer faculty members will be encouraged to participate in the teaching observations and to provide comments to the Peer Review Committee. Faculty observations of classes will normally occur within the year leading up to Peer Committee review].
3. To what extent has the faculty member made efforts to develop courses or course content (including preparation of written course materials, new exercises, and new learning experiences), to improve teaching skills through participation in training sessions, or to initiate new teaching approaches, technological developments, or educational grants?
4. Has the faculty member received any teaching awards or other special recognition of teaching quality that should be considered by the Peer Review Committee?

## **Research**

*For promotion to Associate Professor with Tenure*, a faculty member will be expected to have generated a body of research and scholarly work that establishes the person as a creative and productive scientist in comparison with peers in the discipline. The number of high-quality scholarly publications judged to be acceptable for a given faculty member will be governed by the nature of the field of inquiry and the person's workload assignment. In general, it would be expected that a faculty member with a 50:50 teaching/research appointment will produce a minimum of five significant publications in peer-reviewed journals during the tenure evaluation period. It is also important that the

faculty member demonstrates efforts and success in gaining external funds in support of university research and scholarship, presents research findings at professional meetings, and contributes as a research advisor and mentor in the training of graduate students.

***For promotion to Professor***, a faculty member will be expected to have generated a body of sustained well-cited research and scholarly work that establishes the person as a creative and productive scientist in comparison nationally and internationally with peers in the discipline. In general, it would be expected that a faculty member will produce a minimum of ten (10) significant scholarly publications in peer-reviewed journals during the period following promotion to Associate Professor. Other scholarly outputs will also be considered. It is also important that the faculty member demonstrates success in gaining external funds in support of university research and scholarship, presents research findings at professional meetings, and contributes as a research advisor and mentor in the training of graduate students. It is generally expected that faculty members appointed at the level of Professor will be recognized nationally and internationally for their research expertise and scholarship.

In preparing the application for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor or for promotion to Professor, the faculty member will include a written self-assessment that summarizes his/her research and scholarly activity and its significance. This self-assessment will complement the letters of external peer reviewers, who will be asked to evaluate how the candidate's research and scholarly work compare to that of peers in the discipline. Both the candidate and each external peer reviewer will be asked to respond to the following questions, while keeping in mind the nature of the person's faculty appointment.

1. What is your assessment of the candidate's scholarly contributions to the discipline, and his or her regional, national, and/or international reputation among professional peers? How has the candidate's research helped to advance the field?
2. What is the quality, creativity, and significance of the published work?
3. To what extent has the candidate been successful in funding a research program?
4. Has the candidate contributed effectively to the training of graduate students?

## **Service**

Faculty members are expected to contribute productively to the service activities and outreach mission of the university, to share their expertise with the public, and to serve their profession. It is understood, however, that some faculty MAFES appointments

carry a larger expectation of public service and outreach. Evaluation of service activities will be based on information provided by the individual, departmental colleagues, administrators, and, where appropriate, outside reviewers or colleagues.

### *Service to the University of Maine*

Each faculty member shares with other colleagues the responsibility for participating on a regular basis in committee assignments or coordination activities within the department, college, and university. These contributions may include organizing seminars, conducting peer reviews, serving on standing committees or governance boards, working on search committees, coordinating academic programs, and otherwise helping to ensure the day-to-day functioning of the institution.

### *Service to the Public*

Public service activities of departmental faculty vary depending on the appointment and job description of the individual. In general, faculty members are encouraged to share their knowledge and expertise with the public through participation in seminars and workshops, involvement in outreach activities, publication of scientific bulletins written for the public or technical groups, and by responding to public requests for information (e.g. phone calls and interviews by newspaper, radio, and TV reporters). In addition, public service may involve participation on local and state advisory boards, regulatory committees, and judicial proceedings as an expert witness. If an individual's research is focused on problems tied to specific commodities or industries, the faculty member is expected to ensure that his or her results reach the appropriate audience. Where a person's appointment formally involves public service (e.g., through Cooperative Extension or MAFES), the evaluation should include input from colleagues in MAFES or Cooperative Extension, appropriate commodity groups, administrators, and the like.

### *Professional Service*

As a part of normal professional activities, faculty members may be expected to serve on editorial boards of professional journals, to serve on review panels for granting agencies, to review manuscripts or proposals, to serve as officers or committee members for professional organizations, to organize or chair sessions at professional meetings, and to serve on graduate committees for students at other institutions. These activities enhance the reputation of the department, the University of Maine, and the individual, and should be recognized as an important contribution.

Faculty service will be evaluated to determine whether the individual has met the normal expectations of service described in the preceding paragraphs. The Peer Review Committee will focus on the following questions as a means of evaluating service performance, while taking into account the faculty member's appointment.

1. What is the nature and extent of the candidate's involvement in service within the department, college, and university?

2. To what extent has the candidate been involved in service to the public?
3. How has the candidate contributed to service activities in his or her profession?
4. Is the faculty member's service recognized and valued statewide, nationally, or internationally? Has the faculty member received any awards or recognition for service activities?

## **Recommendations by the Peer Review Committee or Promotion/Tenure Committee**

### *Promotion and Tenure Evaluation*

At the time of a promotion or tenure decision, the Promotion and Tenure Committee will evaluate a faculty member's application and supporting letters, and will judge whether the person's teaching, research, and public service meet or exceed department standards for promotion to Associate Professor with tenure or for promotion to Professor. If the Peer Committee is satisfied that the faculty member has achieved the performance criteria outlined in this document, the candidate will be **recommended for promotion** to Associate Professor with Tenure or for promotion to Professor, as specified in the application.

Assistant Professors are usually promoted with tenure after a six-year probationary period. However, in some cases, faculty may apply for promotion from Assistant to Associate Professor without tenure before the sixth year, and apply for tenure at a subsequent time.

### *Annual Evaluations and Reappointments*

For retention and annual reappointment of pre-tenured faculty, the faculty member will be expected to have demonstrated consistent progress in developing a strong and productive research and teaching program that meets the expectations and criteria associated with promotion to Associate Professor with tenure. Evidence of this progress may take the form of high-quality peer-reviewed journal publications, grant applications, successful grant funding, research presentations, teaching evaluations, and graduate student mentoring and training. In preparing the annual evaluation of a faculty member, the Peer Review Committee will generally comment on strengths (related to publications, grants, presentations, teaching, and collaborations), the nature of the person's research program, as well as areas that may require further attention.

For retention and annual reappointment of non-tenure-track instructors and lecturers, the faculty member will be expected to have developed a strong teaching program that meets the expectations and criteria of Department faculty as described previously in this document. Evidence of this may include peer and student evaluations, developed teaching materials, presentations, publications and other outputs consistent with the

faculty member's job description and the mission of the Department. In preparing the annual evaluation of a faculty member, the Peer Review Committee will generally comment on strengths and areas that may require further attention. If the Peer Committee is satisfied that the faculty member is making satisfactory progress, the person will be recommended for reappointment.