

Department of Wildlife Ecology

Promotion and Tenure Guidelines

January 27, 2006

Peer evaluation is central to the recommendation to grant tenure or promotion to faculty in the Department of Wildlife Ecology. The tenure track is intended to allow faculty to demonstrate to their peers that they are capable of academic teaching, research, and service of a quality deserving of the protections afforded by tenure. Promotion in rank is similarly dependent on demonstrating to colleagues that performance in one's present rank has been consistently of the quality appropriate to the higher rank. The diversity of teaching, research, and service means that decisions as to the quality of academic work are inherently subjective and therefore best evaluated by peer judgment. In the Department of Wildlife Ecology this evaluation is provided by the Peer Review Committee, which consists of the tenured faculty of the Department as voting members, with the Chair as a non-voting member.

In the event that there are less than three tenured faculty (excluding the Chair) in the Department, the Committee will be augmented by the addition of an additional tenured faculty member from a Department in a related discipline. This member is to be elected with the approval of a majority of all Wildlife Ecology faculty, to serve a non-renewable term of four years.

Peer evaluation is to consider the contributions of the candidate in three areas—teaching, research, and service. Criteria for evaluation and standards of performance are presented for each area below, followed by comprehensive standards for tenure and promotion.

Untenured faculty and non-tenure track faculty will be evaluated for reappointment on the basis of the same criteria used for tenure decisions. The Peer Review Committee is expected to provide untenured faculty with a forthright indication of their progress, explain where improvement is required, and offer suggestions on how performance can be improved.

TEACHING

Teaching includes developing and delivering undergraduate and graduate courses, guest lectures, academic advising and mentoring of undergraduate and graduate students, and related instructional activities. Professional development in pedagogy and contributions to development of department and university teaching programs also are considered teaching activity. The expectation for teaching load is prorated based on the teaching appointment. Members of the Maine Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit (MCFWRU) with faculty appointments have graduate teaching assignments defined by a Cooperative

Agreement. All faculty except MCFWRU faculty are normally expected to teach both at undergraduate and at graduate levels.

The Peer Committee and Chairperson will review the following areas in evaluations of teaching: 1) teaching load, 2) instructional planning, 3) teaching level appropriate for the department and university, 4) the ability to stimulate students to pursue and achieve course goals, 5) academic advising of undergraduate and graduate students, 6) mentoring of graduate students, 7) level of involvement in field courses, laboratory instruction, and recitation periods, and 8) other evidence of teaching activity. Evaluation will seek clear evidence of performance. Evaluation will be made based on the following materials or information:

- course syllabi
- data on courses taught, enrollments, and credit hours
- data on student evaluations of courses
- peer evaluation
- number of undergraduate and graduate students advised and indicators of advising performance as described in the 2nd and 3rd paragraphs below.
- numbers of graduate students graduated
- graduate committees served on
- student contact hours
- number of students advised
- number of graduates advised
- student success in meeting graduation requirements in a timely manner as an indicator of advising performance
- other documentation of teaching effort including, but not limited to, guest lectures, written student opinions of courses, development of web-based or other tangible course components, and attendance at faculty instruction or development courses.

Course syllabi will be used to evaluate instructional planning, course content, course updating, and communication of course goals and student expectations. When evaluating teaching loads, the Peer Committee will consider not merely the credit hours and number of students enrolled in courses, but whether a laboratory or recitation component was present, any duplication of sessions used to accommodate class size, student contact hours involved, and the availability of teaching assistants in conducting and grading the class. Student evaluations can vary among course types, subjects, and student populations and the Peer Committee may therefore consider evidence that anomalous evaluations reflect this. However, a consistent pattern of generally excellent or generally poor evaluations is considered a reliable indicator of performance. Written comments on courses or faculty from course evaluations must be verifiable with student signatures.

Advising is a critical element in the academic effort. The administrative record of advisee actions should be one of timely and appropriate actions by faculty. Faculty should, however, be able to document their availability to students via posted office hours or open door policies, and may offer other evidence, e.g., “thank you“ letters from graduating

advisees. Evidence of other actions assisting students, such as advising student extramural groups or activities, may be offered.

The advising activities of Wildlife Ecology faculty will typically include graduate advising. In addition to data on numbers of graduate students advised and numbers of graduate committees served on, candidates may provide a variety of evidence of their activities in this area including evidence of being consulted by students other than those they serve as major advisor, papers co-authored with students, acknowledgment lines within student-authored papers, and scientific and professional contributions of the student.

Teaching Standards

Successful performance for the evaluation period must show evidence for:

- Clear and helpful syllabi.
- Course content that is at the appropriate level and evidence of updating content to reflect advances in the field, particularly in advanced courses
- Course evaluations, student written comments or other evidence of teaching performance that indicates successful teaching of course material and the ability to stimulate students to pursue and achieve course goals.
- Course loads commensurate with teaching assignment based on a typical load of one 3-credit undergraduate course each academic year, one 2-credit graduate course in alternate years, plus one additional course at either level in alternate years for a 50% teaching appointment. The load is commensurate with the faculty member's assignment time if it is at or above the level computed from the College's current formula for such loads.
- Successful academic advising of undergraduates
- Successful advising and mentoring of graduate students. For tenure decisions, applicants should normally have advised 3 or more graduate students through to graduation.

Other teaching activities, such as guest lectures, attendance at faculty instructional courses, web-based courses, can be used as supporting evidence of teaching performance in the above criteria as appropriate.

To be rated excellent, the candidate must be rated at least successful in all the above criteria, have high quality course content and evidence of superior teaching performance that indicates the ability to stimulate students to pursue and achieve course goals, exhibit superior performance in graduate student advising and mentoring, and receive departmental, college or university recognition of teaching excellence.

RESEARCH

Research primarily refers to effort to discover new knowledge, but also includes other forms of scholarship that increase scientific knowledge and understanding. Candidates for tenure or promotion must provide evidence of success in scientific research or related scholarly activity. Faculty are expected to accommodate graduate students in their research. The research expectation depends on the research appointment of the faculty member.

Research and scholarly activity includes formulating research proposals, obtaining funding for proposals, conducting research satisfactorily, publishing in the scientific literature, and other related activities. The nature of wildlife ecology research can vary considerably on a continuum from laboratory to field-oriented research. However in all cases it is typical for individual research projects to take a number of years from inception to initial publication. This timeline includes initial project development with agencies, 2-4 years of field and/or laboratory work by graduate students, 1-2 years of data analyses and thesis/dissertation writing, and completion of the publication process in the scientific literature. Field work typically involves considerable logistical coordination of multiple employees, management of vehicles (including trucks, boats, or planes), arranging off-campus housing, and safety planning. Laboratory work has similar or parallel demands.

Evaluation will seek clear evidence of performance. The Peer Committee and Chairperson will make their evaluations based on the following materials or information:

- peer-reviewed publications
- research (especially invited) presentations at seminars and conferences
- technical publications (not peer-reviewed), subject to the Peer Committee being satisfied as to their quality
- proposals submitted, proposal success rate, and total grant funding obtained
- graduate student involvement in research
- fostering productive interdisciplinary collaborations
- evidence of regional, national or international recognition
- other documentation of scientific productivity including, but not limited to, development of computer models, databases or technical manuals, the development of new techniques, and the application or practical use of research results

Publication of peer-reviewed publications in scientific journals is required, but technical publications (not peer-reviewed) in other outlets add to overall research productivity. The Peer Committee and Chairperson recognize that both the availability of grants and the size of grants differ markedly across research areas. Regional, national or international recognition may be indicated by a variety of evidence including, but not limited to, invited presentations, research and publication awards, publications in high quality or prestigious journals, statements from external or internal reviewers made in letters of support, and editorships.

Research Standards

Successful performance for the evaluation period must show evidence for:

- regional or national recognition in research and scholarly activity.
- expectations for numbers of publications will be dependent on publication quality as judged by the Peer Committee, but the typical expectation is an average of 2-4 peer-reviewed journal articles per year over the review period for a full-time research appointment, and *pro rata* otherwise, i.e., 1-2 articles for a 50% appointment.
- regular presentation of research at regional and national conferences
- demonstrated effort and success at obtaining sufficient external funding to maintain research activity
- evidence that graduate students have a central role in research

Other documentation of scientific productivity can be used as supporting evidence of research and scholarly performance in the above criteria as appropriate. In particular, book chapters will be evaluated based on their apparent significance, as judged by the Peer Review Committee.

To be rated excellent, the candidate must be rated at least successful in all the above criteria, publish and present high-quality research at an above average rate, and be nationally or internationally recognized.

SERVICE

Service includes all work based in the faculty member's professional expertise and knowledge and designed to promote social and infrastructure components of science and academe. Faculty are expected to contribute to the activities of the Department, College, and University, as well as to the larger scientific community. Presently, all faculty members of the Department, regardless of rank, participate in faculty meetings, but there are a number of external committees on which the Department must be represented. In general the Department discourages extensive participation by tenure-track faculty in such representation because teaching and research are the primary criteria by which tenure candidates are judged. Tenured candidates for promotion, however, are expected to have a track record of active participation in extra-Departmental committees and by serving the College and University by their individual memberships on appropriate committees and working groups. Candidates should provide details of such service as part of their evaluation package, together with any documentation available as to the quality or content of their service.

Professional service is expected of candidates for promotion and may include such activities as service on Councils or Boards or Committees of professional societies, on editorial boards of professional journals, on statutory and review boards for Federal and State agencies, and as peer reviewers for grant proposals and manuscripts. Evidence of these

activities testifies to the standing of the candidate within the profession. Talks and articles for the general public are also evidence of service activity.

Service Standards

Successful performance for tenure-track candidates during their evaluation period must show evidence for:

- appropriate participation in Department, College, or University service, but acknowledging the limits to such service inherent in an untenured position
- evidence of some professional service outside the University e.g., as a peer reviewer for grant proposals or manuscripts, service on national committees, etc.
- other measures of service e.g., on regional or national committees - may be offered here if they do not duplicate items being offered elsewhere as evidence of standing as a researcher

Excellent performance would include, but not be limited to, such additional service as active involvement or leadership in professional societies and service on editorial or public boards.

STANDARDS FOR REAPPOINTMENT, TENURE, AND PROMOTION

The standards set out below apply to reappointment and the granting of tenure to faculty originally hired as Associate or Full Professor without tenure, to promotion from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor with tenure, and to promotion from Associate Professor to Professor. The ratings of “successful” and “excellent” as used below are specifically defined above in the sections on Teaching Standards, Research Standards, and Service Standards

Reappointment

For reappointment, a faculty member must have successful performance or be making progress toward meeting requirements for tenure or promotion to Associate Professor.

Tenure as and/or Promotion to Associate Professor

A candidate must receive a rating of successful in teaching and research together with a successful service record for the evaluation period. A candidate’s overall evaluation will be made relative to their teaching: research appointment.

Tenure as and/or Promotion to Professor

A candidate must receive an excellent rating in teaching or research for the evaluation period together with a successful service record that includes extramural service. A candidate’s overall evaluation will be made relative to their teaching: research appointment.

Early Promotion

Faculty may be considered for early promotion if they clearly exceed the standards for promotion.