Brad Bartel 3/16/16
Provost

President

DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY SUPPLEMENT TO THE MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR PROMOTION OF TENURED AND TENURABLE FACULTY AND POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR TENURE (revision 26 Feb. 2016)

PREAMBLE:
The Biology Department holds paramount the openness, fairness and objectivity of its evaluations of faculty members for promotion and tenure. No evidence regarding a candidate's performance or character, positive or negative, which is not documented in the dossier or other university records will be considered in deliberations and recommendations for tenure or promotion. Anonymous accounts and hearsay are thus inadmissible.

I: Biology Department policy for formation and procedures of the Promotion and Tenure Review Committee

The Biology Department has developed the following modifications, clarifications and additions to the University Policies and Procedures for Promotion of Tenured and Tenurable Faculty (MTSU Policy II:01:05A, Section III:B:1:b:2 and MTSU Policy II:01:05B, Section III:B:1:b:2).

a) In the Biology Department one committee, designated as the Promotion and Tenure Committee ("the committee"), will review and make recommendations on all applications for promotion and/or tenure, as well as conduct third-year pre-tenure reviews and annual progress reports for untenured tenure track faculty whose academic appointment is in the Biology Department.

b) Neither candidates applying for tenure and/or promotion, the department chairperson, nor faculty members holding administrative appointments at the college level or above may be members of the committee.

c) The committee will be made-up of ten tenured Associate Professors and Professors, who will serve a one-year term, except for the vice-Chair (see below). Given that there approximately three times more Professors than Associate Professors, and in order to reduce the burden of service on the latter, representation on the committee will be proportional to the numbers at each rank who are eligible to serve on the committee (as per Ib) (As of August 2015, there are 20 Professors and 6 tenured Associate professors. Proportional representation means that 3 of the 10 committee members will be associate professors).

d) The P&T Chair will call for nominations from the faculty for the committee prior to the first fall Biology faculty meeting.

e) All tenured faculty are eligible to serve on the P&T committee.

I approve – Bud Fischer

f) Candidates for the P&T committee must be willing to participate in all activities of the committee, including attendance at all meetings and voting on all candidates, to participate in peer teaching evaluation, and also to participate in annual and third-year reviews of untenured faculty. Habitual unexcused absenteeism (more than two meetings in a row or five total) will result in removal from the committee.

g) Election of committee members will take place at the first faculty meeting of the academic year (August). The P&T chair will compose a ballot of all nominees and distribute it to all tenure-track and tenured faculty in the department. Each faculty member will vote for 9 committee members in the proportions indicated in (c). The committee will be composed of the top vote earners as long as the committee composition represents all departmental domains (Biology Education; Cellular Biology and Molecular Genetics; Ecology and Evolutionary Biology; Microbiology; Toxicology and Physiology). If a specific subdiscipline is unrepresented, then the representative candidate with the most votes will replace the lowest vote earner while keeping the proportional representation of Associate vs. Full Professors.

h) A committee chairperson for the subsequent academic year will be elected by the members of the committee at the final committee meeting of the year (usually January).

i) All candidates' dossiers will be available in the Chair's office for review by P&T committee members and other tenured faculty members.

j) All committee members will review and vote for candidates applying for tenure and for promotion to Associate Professor and for renewal of tenure-track faculty.

k) Only Full Professors will review and vote for candidates applying for promotion to Full Professor. During P&T committee discussions and voting on individuals applying for Full Professor, Associate Professors should not be present.

l) For purposes of deliberation and voting seven committee members will constitute a quorum for votes on tenure and/or promotion to Associate professor, and four for votes on promotion to Full Professor. Committee members submitting a proxy (see l) and those abstaining from votes count towards the quorum, but abstentions do not count as either positive or negative votes.

m) When committee members are unable to attend a meeting, proxy votes will be allowed, but must be provided in writing to the committee chair prior to the meeting.

n) Prior to voting on tenure or promotion for a candidate, the committee will meet with the tenured faculty to discuss candidates under evaluation and obtain feedback that may inform the committee's vote. Feedback from the faculty should be limited to discussion of the candidate's P&T dossier and other information recorded in university documents.

o) The committee chair will prepare a letter of evaluation and/or recommendation for tenure and/or promotion, for each dossier reviewed, addressing strengths and weaknesses in the areas of teaching, research and service. Drafts of the letters will be circulated to the committee members eligible to vote on the case for comment and revision. A final version of the letter will be approved by majority vote of eligible members of the committee before submission to the administration.

p) The vote tallies supporting a candidate for tenure and/or promotion and approving the resultant evaluation letter will be reported in the recommendation letter.

q) In the event of a non-unanimous decision, the minority may prepare a dissenting letter that will be in included in the P&T packet as it goes forward. If no letter is written, the minority's choice not to write one will be noted in the committee chair's letter.

II: Biology Department Definition of National Recognition (MTSU Policy II:01:05B, Section III:B:4:e)

The Biology Department considers the dissemination of knowledge through high quality, peer-reviewed publications to be the primary criterion by which research/scholarship activity of its faculty will be judged. Metrics are available from organizations/companies such as Thompson-Reuters, Scopus and GoogleScholar which provide independent, objective and commensurable evidence of research quantity and quality. A document outlining best practices ("What is a quality publication?") is available to candidates for promotion/tenure. The Biology Department respects academic freedom and does not consider the subject matter of a publication as long as it is pertinent to science, although evidence of a coherent, progressing research program is desirable. Because there is no single factor that indicates whether a candidate's research/scholarship has garnered "national recognition," the Biology Department will consider the following different sources of evidence:

a) Research publications in high quality, peer-reviewed journals. Numbers of citations and the Impact Factor of the journal should be reported in the OFD. If a candidate does not feel that these metrics fairly reflect the merit of his/her published work, then this should be explained in the OFD.

b) Publication of peer-reviewed book chapters or books by recognized academic or trade presses. Numbers of citations should be reported in the OFD. If book reviews are available, those could be included in the supporting documents.

c) Invited or plenary presentations before one's professional peers at national or international meetings/conferences/symposia. Evidence that a presentation meets these requirements must be provided in the supporting documents.

d) Funded external research grants from public or private sources.

e) External letters of evaluation from the candidate's scientific peers (See IV, below).

Note that for a – d, the committee will consider the candidate's role in the reported work. For example, sole or senior authorship on a publication counts more than coauthorship. The OFD should clearly indicate the candidate's role in multi-authored publications, presentations and grants.

If necessary to fully document the scope and impact of a candidate's scholarly endeavors, alternative metrics that document the utility of a publication or other work product may be cited as supplementary evidence of its quality.

Items contributing to a candidate's national reputation but more related to service than scholarship (see MTSU Policy II:01:05B, Section IV:E:1:c) include:

a) Funded external grants whose primary purpose is not research.

b) Service as editor, associate editor or editorial board member for a national/international journal.

c) Service as an invited reviewer for journals or funding agencies.

d) Presentation of invited lectures or seminars to peers.

III: Biology Department policy for peer evaluation of teaching

As required by MTSU promotion/tenure policies II:01:05A, section IV:C:3:a and II:01:05B section IV:C:3:a, the promotion/tenure dossier must include evidence of evaluation of teaching by faculty peers.

Each course taught by untenured, tenure-track faculty will be evaluated annually by two members of the Biology Promotion and Tenure Committee. The evaluation will consist of a review of the course materials, including the syllabus and whatever lecture outlines, powerpoint files, or other visual aids are available. In addition, the reviewers will attend at least one lecture session to evaluate presentation effectiveness. The date of this lecture visit will be arranged in advance with the faculty member being evaluated.

A standardized evaluation report, including a rubric (to be developed) of quality of content, organization and presentation effectiveness, and recommendations for improvement, will be completed and both given to the faculty member being evaluated and placed in the his/her personnel file for inclusion in the P&T supplementary documents, along with student teaching evaluations, at the time of application for tenure/promotion. The faculty member will have an opportunity to include a response to the evaluation, including details of how reported deficiencies will be addressed.

After the initial review of a course, the reviewers will have available to them reports from prior semesters so that improvement and innovation may be recognized.

At the time of annual, third-year and promotion/tenure reviews, available reports will be examined by the P&T committee, and evidence of both observed quality, as well as efforts to improve deficient areas, will be considered in the evaluation of teaching.

Once faculty have been awarded tenure the Biology P&T committee will provide peer review of teaching by request.

IV: Biology Department policy for external peer review of scholarship

Candidates for tenure and/or promotion to Associate or Professor rank will be evaluated by external peer reviewers, and these evaluation letters will be included in the promotion/tenure dossier.

Procedure and Timeline for solicitation of external review letters:
Because the letters must be included in the dossier before review by the Biology Promotion and Tenure Committee, they must be solicited by the Chair several months prior to the beginning of the departmental review process.

The Biology Chair will solicit names of three potential reviewers from the candidate, and also a list of non-preferred reviewers (people the candidate believes might not provide a fair and objective review of the candidate's scholarship). The suggested external reviewers may be colleagues familiar with the candidate's research, but not former advisors or recent coauthors/collaborators (from the previous five years). The Chair will identify three additional potential reviewers who are likely to be knowledgeable about the candidate's area of research.

The Chair will solicit letters from three reviewers. The reviewers will be provided with a copy of the candidate's OFD, research statement, and copies of recent papers, and asked to evaluate the candidate's research efforts relative to peers in the same research area and career stage, in light of MTSU teaching loads and other responsibilities indicated in the OFD. If identified reviewers are unavailable or fail to perform the review in a timely manner, additional reviewers will be identified per the previous section and letters will be solicited. At least three external reviews must be returned.

V: MTSU Biology Department Guidelines for Tenure – differences from MTSU Policy II:01:05A

Tenure in the Biology Department is awarded primarily based on high quality professional productivity in research. "Creative activity" is not considered a relevant component of the job performance of Biology faculty with regard to promotion. In all cases, reference to creative activity and the criteria for evaluating it in MTSU Policy II:01:05A will be disregarded.

Candidates for tenure in the Biology Department must demonstrate high quality performance in research, manifested by consistent progress toward establishing an

active research program in their area of specialization as evidenced by a record of quality peer-reviewed publications. Research progress beyond that achieved during graduate school/postdoctoral training is expected. New faculty with a strong publication record will be credited with their prior publications, but will be expected to establish an active program of research and publication at MTSU to be considered for tenure. In all cases the quality of the research will be more important than the quantity, regardless of the absolute number of publications.

VI: MTSU Biology Department Guidelines for Promotion – differences from MTSU Policy II:01:05B

Promotion in the Biology Department is based primarily on high quality professional productivity in research. "Creative activity" is not considered a relevant component of the job performance with regard to promotion. In all cases, reference to creative activity and the criteria for evaluating it in MTSU Policy II:01:05B will be disregarded.

Candidates for Associate Professor must demonstrate consistent progress toward establishing an active research program in their area of specialization beyond that achieved during graduate school/postdoctoral training, as evidenced by a record of quality peer-reviewed publications. New faculty with a strong publication record will be credited with their prior publications, but will be expected to establish an active program of research and publication at MTSU to be considered for promotion. In all cases the quality of the research will be more important than the quantity, regardless of the absolute number of publications.

Candidates for Full Professor must demonstrate evidence of sustained high quality professional productivity in research, as well as ongoing excellence in teaching and service. The candidate will demonstrate a record of high quality peer-reviewed publications in his/her area of research specialization that is recognized at the national level (see Section II). Faculty hired at the Associate Professor level with a strong publication record will be credited with their prior publications, but will be expected to maintain an active program of research and publication at MTSU to be considered for promotion. In all cases the quality of the research will be more important than the quantity, regardless of the absolute number of publications.

VII: Procedures to ensure fairness and continuity of the review process leading to evaluation for promotion and tenure

Progress of untenured faculty towards tenure and promotion is evaluated annually by both the Biology Chair and the P&T committee. In order to insure consistent feedback to junior faculty as they proceed towards the final evaluation for promotion and/or tenure, an annually-updated dossier of prior annual reviews by the Chair and the Committee, peer teaching evaluations, and any other pertinent documents will be available to the P&T Committee in each subsequent year, so that annual evaluations may be made in light of prior reviews. The reviewed faculty member may make notes in the OFD of efforts to address deficiencies (if any) noted on prior reviews. The ultimate aim of these

reviews is transparency and consistency, so that there are no surprises when the final evaluation for promotion and tenure takes place.