

## **Biology Department Expectations for Tenure and Promotion**

### **The Mission Statement of the college:**

Augustana College, rooted in the liberal arts and sciences and a Lutheran expression of the Christian faith, is committed to offering a challenging education that develops qualities of mind, spirit and body necessary for a rewarding life of leadership and service in a diverse and changing world.

### **The Mission statement of the department:**

The Biology Department at Augustana College challenges students to learn biological content, as well as to learn what it means to inquire, communicate, and reason as a biologist. We strive to help our students become life-long learners and informed citizens who explore and reflect on their vocation and who they want to become.

The purpose of this document is to clarify the Biology department's interpretation of the college's mission in terms of expectations and standards for tenure track and promotion eligible colleagues. All colleagues should read the relevant section of the faculty handbook (Chapters 3 & 4) on faculty advancement. All faculty are expected to present evidence that they are "professionally active teaching scholars who contribute to the well-being of the institution in a number of ways: through their teaching, professional activity, campus service, and public service" (Faculty Handbook Ch. 3). Please note that in all cases, the faculty handbook is the official policy of the college. Faculty are encouraged to use the Faculty Review Committee's or Academic Affairs preparation documents and website.

Although departments may vary in terms of their interpretation of specific types of activities and availability of resources, departments are not free to establish criteria that conflict with the letter or spirit of the handbook. What follows, therefore, is not so much a discussion of policy, but rather of departmental culture and emphasis. This document addresses departmental expectations for tenure and promotion, and is intended to serve as a guide for the evaluation of candidates for tenure and promotion in the Biology department.

### **Teaching and Advising**

The Biology department holds the achievement of excellent teaching to be the highest and best expression of our institutional values. The work of developing qualities of mind, spirit, and body in our students is by far the most important work of the college. This work is the core of both the college's and the department's mission. We seek, therefore, to hire and retain faculty who value teaching above all other professional aspirations.

The handbook discusses guidelines for the evaluation of teaching in terms of instructional delivery, instructional design, content expertise, and course administration (Faculty Handbook Ch. 3). The evaluation of teaching, as laid out in the handbook, is based on the evidence of classroom performance drawn from various sources (e.g., colleague observations, colleague evaluations of syllabi, assignments, exams, labs, course assessment data, and other course material, interviews with students, and IDEA reports).

The biology department places a high priority on the development of scholarly teaching, a practice that we see as two-fold. First, scholarly teaching is connected to and uses the literature on teaching and learning to inform practice. Note that scholarly teaching, by itself, does not require faculty to contribute professionally to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), but rather that faculty become intelligent consumers of that literature. Second, scholarly teaching is evidence based. Faculty should be able to provide significant evidence of student learning in their classes. What are your goals and objectives for each class? What are your students learning about biology in your classes? What are they learning about themselves as learners or potential practitioners of a vocation? How do you know they are learning these things? The department does not mandate that this assessment be done in a particular way. Different courses will certainly benefit from different kinds of assessment. Both qualitative and quantitative measures can be useful. Faculty members are responsible for constructing their own strong, evidence-based, case for student learning in the context of specific course goals and objectives for their classes. The department recognizes that this is a large and time-consuming task. We expect faculty to apportion their energies towards professional activities, campus service, and public service in a way that does not conflict with (or better still augments) the central goal of scholarly teaching.

The Biology Department plays a strong role in guiding tenure-track faculty in their development as teachers. The department chair and an assigned departmental mentor provide written feedback based on in-class observations at least once each academic year (more optimally once a term, but time constraints do not always permit this). By the time a colleague is up for tenure, all or nearly all of the tenured colleagues in the department should have observed and evaluated his/her teaching. A colleague's yearly departmental mentor will be happy to discuss problems or issues that arise in teaching and the mentor should be considered a good first source for information about the department's teaching expectations.

In the months before the tenure (or pre-tenure) review, probationary faculty will be asked to share a statement of teaching philosophy, syllabi, exams, summary IDEA reports, and assignments with tenured department colleagues for review. College policy does not require that the summary IDEA data be shared with tenured departmental colleagues, but it is the long-standing practice of the department that this information be shared. This information is critical, as it allows tenured department members to put favorable or unfavorable anecdotal comments they may have heard from students into a context of a more complete assessment of student responses. As a final form of assessment, the chair, in consultation with the candidate, will interview selected students about the candidate's teaching at least before the tenure review. It is the obligation of the department chair to make any departmental concerns about a tenure candidate's teaching known to that colleague as soon as practically possible.

Candidates for promotion should demonstrate their strengths in the classroom in the same manner as a tenure-track person. The department expects that candidates for promotion or merit reviews will demonstrate continued growth and investment in teaching. However, tenured faculty are expected to be able to "chart their own course" with respect to the development of

excellent scholarly teaching as the department does not provide mentoring or annual reviews for tenured faculty. Tenured colleagues are encouraged to make full use of the college's resources available for faculty development in teaching.

The department recognizes that good teaching means more than just good student evaluations. We value colleagues who are willing to investigate, develop, and assess new pedagogical models and styles of instruction, while keeping student welfare and learning as the ultimate goal. We also recognize that students can be resistant to new and unfamiliar pedagogies. We support faculty engaged in the assessment of new pedagogies, even those that may be initially unpopular with students, so long as faculty members remain centered on student welfare and learning and continue to take student concerns seriously.

The department requires that all faculty (tenured and tenure-track) construct their courses in a way that supports our shared curricular goals. This is especially important in our core classes (Molecules to Cells, Ecosystems to Organisms, Genetics, and Senior Inquiry (SI)), but is significant throughout the curriculum. Faculty should have a solid working knowledge of the Biology learning outcomes and demonstrate how their classes support student development of those outcomes.

The department stresses that it is the responsibility of each faculty member to build a portfolio of evidence that documents their development as a reflective and scholarly teacher who catalyzes real learning in their courses. While other faculty can provide guidance and advice to their peers, the motivation to innovate, assess, and reflect upon classroom practice must come from each colleague. Within the broad guidelines above, faculty members are free to develop, assess, and justify their own teaching styles and methods that are consistent with the overall curricular goals of the department.

The Biology Department has always stressed excellence in student-centered advising and mentoring as an important criterion for tenure and promotion. Faculty in the biology department are expected to lead a student-centered career. We recognize the deep relationship between classroom activities and a student's interactions with faculty outside the classroom. Our future as a college rests on our ability to provide student-centered advising and mentoring. Knowing how to read the college catalog and navigate through the general education requirements isn't enough. Excellent advising is far more than just assisting students with scheduling issues. Excellent advising involves a working knowledge of a student's (ever changing) goals and values, as well as serving as a catalyst for vocational and sometimes even personal reflection.

This task goes well beyond the list of assigned advisees. Often our most important mentoring work occurs with students in our classes or with students who choose to meet with us informally. This is a deeply rewarding task greatly valued by our students. We recognize that mentoring relationships include heavy investments of time whose product cannot easily be quantified; however, we conform to the College's ethos that one-on-one relationships built between faculty and students are often the most cherished product of an Augustana education. Because our department has among the highest major student to faculty ratios on campus,

faculty must specifically allocate considerable time and energy to student-centered advising and mentoring. The department expects that a candidate for tenure or promotion will demonstrate excellence as an advisor and mentor, and that they continue to develop their advising and mentoring skills over time. It is the long-standing practice of the department to support faculty who make significant investments in student-centered advising and mentoring. We understand that this investment may necessitate the navigation of trade-offs in how faculty apportion their time and energy. The department expects faculty to manage investment in other forms of campus service, public service, and scholarship, in a way congruent with attaining the goal of a student centered career.

### **Professional Activity**

The faculty handbook stipulates that professional activity is evaluated in two domains: Professional Expression and Professional Development. The biology department seeks to foster an atmosphere where all faculty can engage in continual professional expression and development. Further, the department appreciates the potential synergy between professional expression and our core value of teaching excellence. We feel that faculty should directly involve undergraduates in the research process other than SI coursework (and that such involvement is part and parcel of both teaching and professional expression). We therefore expect tenure track faculty to develop a record of professional activity.

The faculty handbook (Chapter 3) recognizes a wide range of activities as evidence of professional expression including:

- Publishing a book (or book chapter), a monograph, an article in a scholarly journal. Publishing a review of an article or book.
- Presentation of a paper or poster at a professional meeting.
- Presentation of an invited lecture at another college or a museum or area school audience. Consulting work within the academic discipline.
- Election to a learned society or the earning of an honor or prize for academic distinction.

Further, the handbook clearly stipulates that professional expression involving the scholarship of teaching and learning (meeting the same criteria as above) fully counts as professional expression. In addition to the above, the biology department considers serving as a peer reviewer for a professional journal or granting agency professional expression. Since such reviews are necessarily anonymous, colleagues preparing for pre-tenure or tenure review should obtain a letter from the relevant editor/program officer confirming that the reviews took place and, if the candidate wishes, commenting on the quality of the reviews.

We expect each faculty member to document evidence of their own achievement in these areas. The department will see as especially meritorious faculty members who develop a strong track record of mentoring students who present research at regional or national meetings. The difficult work of mentoring student research sits on the border between teaching and research. The department considers mentoring which results in a public presentation at local, regional, or national meetings by students to be significant evidence of professional expression. We

recognize that such an investment in student research is likely to slow the rate of faculty publication.

All faculty members are expected to develop a portfolio that demonstrates commitment to professional expression. The department recognizes peer-reviewed scholarship as being an important objective measure of professional expression. In this context, peer review would include traditional journal articles, but is not limited to them. We also include:

- Manuscripts, articles, or books approved by a single editor for a professional audience.
- Workshop proceedings or articles that are reviewed by participants as they are (collaboratively) written and are subsequently made available to a community of scholars.
- Submissions to electronic journals or communities that are open for criticism by a relevant community of scholars. Candidates must take care to demonstrate the rigor and scholarly nature of the review process.
- Presentations or posters at professional meetings if such presentation requires pre-presentation editorial review (i.e. some presentations are rejected because of limited quality).
- A submitted external grant proposal to a granting agency or foundation.
- Pedagogical materials such as original lab exercises, case studies, problem sets, or assessment tools if these materials are professionally reviewed (either pre-publication or by professional end-users, such as teachers).

This definition excludes:

Letters to the editor of newspapers or popular magazines (where publication may not be assessed by scholars).

- Electronic communities where professional review may be haphazard or the credentials of reviewers are unknown. These may include ListServes, open-access/open-source eJournals.
- Presentations at public or professional meetings except as stipulated above.
- Pedagogical materials that have only been assessed “in house”.
- Any venue where the primary form of review is public rather than by a community of scholars.

Biology department faculty members are free to craft their own portfolio of professional expression consistent with the faculty handbook. While the department does not mandate peer-reviewed publication, we stress that peer-reviewed publication, regardless of the impact value of the journal or venue (regional or national), constitutes objective, tangible evidence of professional expression. The department recognizes as evidence of professional expression publications at any stage of development that were completed while employed at Augustana. While this of course includes the publication of work initiated while employed by Augustana, it is not limited to this. We include publications for which all or part of the manuscript preparation, or data analysis, or response to reviewers was performed while employed at Augustana. We recognize that other factors may make the achievement of a pre-tenure publication impossible, such as limited infrastructure and internal funding, exceptional commitments to departmental,

campus, or public service, or the catastrophic loss of samples in a laboratory accident. In any event, each faculty member must present significant evidence of professional expression to achieve tenure.

One potentially useful way of documenting significant professional expression is by submitting your portfolio of work to outside peer reviewers prior to tenure. The benefit of this is that faculty welfare can receive guidance from recognized experts in your field. Because biology is such a specialized discipline, it is possible that no one else in the department, including the department chair, may be able to fully explain and evaluate the significance of your work. Reviewers should be chosen from a list assembled by the candidate (which should not include family, personal friends, collaborators, or mentors). External reviewers will be directed to frame their evaluation in the context of the teaching emphasis and high teaching and service loads and limited infrastructure and funding of the biology faculty at our college.

Incoming faculty are eligible for resources from the dean of the college to assist in getting research programs up and running. Newly hired tenure-track faculty may be offered a pre-tenure leave (see handbook Ch. 7). The handbook stresses that the purpose of such leave is to work on significant scholarly endeavors. It should be emphasized that the pre-tenure leave is only for research-related activities as detailed in the leave proposal submitted by junior faculty and approved by Faculty Review Committee and the dean. Junior faculty are in no way obligated, and should be discouraged from, work related to teaching and service, including department meetings during their leave. Faculty are expected to produce peer-reviewed professional expression based on the work proposed and completed during the leave.

As with teaching, junior faculty are obligated to keep the department and department chair informed of research agendas and progress. Written documentation of this should be included in portfolios submitted for pre-tenure reviews and the tenure hearing. Junior colleagues should provide annual updates to the department as part of the annual review process.

Professional development is critical to the success of every colleague. The handbook defines (Chapter 3) professional development to include:

- Service on a committee or board or elective office of a professional organization.
- Attending, organizing, or presiding at a professional meeting.
- Pursuit of additional course work, or a program of reading and study in the discipline.
- Preparation of a grant proposal. A highly rated, but non-funded proposal should be considered significant evidence of professional development and professional expression.
- Attendance of teaching related conferences.
- Participation in on-campus activities such as Teaching Observation Groups, Faculty Development Academy, Center for Faculty Enrichment Programming, Friday Conversations, etc.

We note that the handbook stipulates that development that contributes to either disciplinary or teaching expertise is considered valid professional development. The biology department supports and encourages both disciplinary and teaching based professional development.

The Biology department holds candidates for promotion to the same standards for professional development and expression as tenure-track candidates. That is, associate professors are expected to continue to develop a scholarly portfolio and mentor research students. However, the department acknowledges that associate professors are often called upon to shoulder heavy service loads such as department chair, division chair, and/or heavy involvement in campus wide committees, etc. Since associate professors are often expected to take on extraordinary campus leadership (i.e., Department, Program, or Division Chair, Associate Dean) roles at this point in their career, they may not be able to invest as much time and energy in scholarship as they did as an assistant professor. Publication expectations for promotion candidates must be tempered by an understanding of individual candidate's service commitments.

### **Campus Service**

The college policies on the evaluation of campus service are in Chapters 3 & 4 of the faculty handbook. Campus service includes, but is not limited to:

- Serving as a Departmental mentor
- Service on Department and campus committees.
- Service on Faculty Council.
- Serving in student recruitment activities.
- Serving as a peer-reviewer of faculty.
- Participation in FYI, honors, or off-campus/study away programs.
- Advisor or guest speaker for a student groups.
- Outside-of-Department representative on faculty searches
- Involvement in assessment planning or procedure.

Beyond mentoring and active engagement with student welfare, all faculty members are expected to invest in the life and work of the department. Faculty members are strongly encouraged to share pedagogy, advising/mentoring, and research ideas with their colleagues. Engagement in the life of the department includes regular meeting attendance, participation in curricular discussions, other departmental subcommittees, interviewing job candidates, as well as full participation in assessment activities and the advising of student clubs. Associate professors may be called upon to perform service such as department chair, division chair, or other heavy service commitments. The department sees such commitments, if performed well, as constituting strong evidence of campus service.

### **Community Service**

Standards for evaluating community service are laid out in chapter 3 of the faculty handbook. Community service includes all uncompensated activities where disciplinary or teaching expertise is used to benefit the public. Recent examples from our department include:

- Board membership for other schools and colleges.
- Invited programs for community groups, schools, churches, or civic organizations.
- Unpaid consulting/assessment/environmental management.
- Community service for non-profit organizations.
- Participation in state and local science fairs

The biology department recognizes the value of this work but it is the least critical for tenure or promotion. In addition, our departmental demands for excellence in teaching and service, as well as the need to participate in documentable professional expression, may make a significant record of public service difficult to obtain.

### **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Efforts**

Augustana College is committed to maintaining and enhancing an inclusive community that strives for equity and equal opportunity. Our institution deeply values activities and achievements aligned with diversity, equity, and inclusion. All faculty members are responsible for helping to ensure that these goals are achieved. Contributions to equity, inclusion, and diversity should be clearly identified in the faculty member's tenure and promotion narrative so that they can be evaluated in promotion and tenure decisions. Such contributions can be part of teaching, advising, scholarship and/or service.

Please visit [this link](#) to find Examples of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Academic Work (Teaching, Research, Advising, Service)