DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES:
PROMOTION AND TENURE CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES

The purpose of this document is to provide clear expectations for candidates throughout their tenure and/or promotion process. Candidates should also refer to the Faculty Handbook, Sections 2.7 and 2.8 (https://www.plymouth.edu/office/vpaa/faculty/promotion-and-tenure/), for eligibility requirements, and for university-wide criteria and procedures as both sets of criteria must be followed. These guidelines shall be reviewed at least every five years by the members of the Department Promotion and Tenure (P&T) Committee. The last update and approval of these guidelines was October 23, 2015 by the departmental P&T Committee.

Promotion and Tenure Committee
The P&T Committee and chair will be elected by the members of the Department of Biological Sciences to serve three year terms. In order to participate in promotion decisions, committee members must hold a rank at least equal to the rank for which the candidate is applying. Should there be need for members outside the department, University guidelines will be followed.

The committee will (1) perform a review in the third year of tenure-track faculty to determine their progress towards tenure/promotion and to provide feedback and guidance prior to application for tenure, this document will be held on file by the department chair; (2) conduct classroom observations upon request (3) review and revise tenure and promotion procedures as needed to ensure procedural consistency, clarity and compliance with University policy.

TENURE

Tenure to Assistant Professor is normally applied for at the same time as for promotion to Associate Professor and the process generally begins in the spring of the candidate’s fifth year of teaching experience. Persons hired as an Associate or Full Professor should see the Faculty Handbook for eligibility rules. New faculty members are encouraged to seek out a mentor from the Department of Biological Sciences by mutual agreement among the new faculty member, the mentor and the department chair and regular meetings as needed or desired will follow. This optional mentor can serve as a resource in assessing progress.

DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES VALUES

The Department of Biological Sciences has identified a set of values as guidelines for prospective P&T candidates (see Appendix I, “Sample Plan”) so that they are aware early on about what kinds of activities and behaviors will most likely result in a positive recommendation from their colleagues and the department chair. The values are not exclusive and the candidate should feel free to discuss with the department chair additional appropriate activities during the period leading up to candidacy. The values are divided into the three following categories: Teaching, Scholarship, and Service.

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TEACHING:

Quality undergraduate teaching has been and will continue to be the focal point at PSU. For the promotion to Associate Professor, effective teaching will be of foremost importance. The judgment of teaching performance will center upon the Effective Teaching Criteria described below over the 5 year period. Classroom results should be reflected in student evaluations of the courses taught and teaching effectiveness. Standardized university-wide electronic evaluation forms are used by all faculty in the department. Additional ancillary evaluations of the courses taught will also be accepted if desired by the candidate.

Examples of evidence of quality teaching

- Student evaluations, both standardized and customized
- Course syllabi and assignments that demonstrate the integration of the development of scientific skills and content
- Development of curriculum
- Performance assessment on annual workplan by Chair
- Classroom Observations
- Evidence of student success: for example outcomes of mentored research such as manuscripts, presentations, examples of writing development and improvement such as good scientific proposals, posters, scientific papers, etc.
- Involvement in student-oriented research
- Other: Candidates for promotion are encouraged to describe areas of effective teaching that may not fall under a discrete category (See section 2.8G8A in Handbook)

See appendix for suggested additional activities that might improve teaching.

SCHOLARSHIP:

Continued scholarly activity is considered an intrinsic trait of professionals in biology. The heart of science is driven by a curiosity about the world. In biology this encompasses an enormous spectrum of topics ranging from molecular and cellular biology to environmental issues of global proportion. All members of the Department of Biological Sciences should have active interests in biology beyond the scope of the classroom. Given the emphasis on teaching at PSU, scholarship expectations are aligned accordingly. Individual work plans will reflect expectations for performance in scholarship based on teaching load.

Examples of evidence of active scholarship:

- Research resulting in publication in peer-reviewed journals within the candidate’s area of scientific expertise or in college-level science pedagogy.
- Continued research over a period of years resulting in recognition of expertise in the given field of research.
- Collaborative research efforts
- Research with undergraduate and graduate students
- Grant submissions and grant awards
- Contractual applied research

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- Presentations at national and regional scientific meetings
- Invited presentations
- Publication of non-peer reviewed technical reports
- Other: Candidates for promotion are encouraged to describe areas of scholarly activity that may not fall under a discrete category

By the fourth or fifth year at PSU a faculty member should be establishing their own emerging research program. By the time of the initiation of the promotion process, two manuscripts should be submitted to peer-reviewed journals or in press and may be from prior work (if significant time was invested after coming to PSU) and/or from work initiated at PSU. Grant submissions, collaborative efforts, student-centered research, etc. can be taken into account to offset a lack of publications at this point in the candidate’s career. For promotion to full professor, and in line with University guidelines, candidates should demonstrate a well-developed and sustained body of research that demonstrates maturity in their field. Research accomplishment will take a larger role with additional publications expected.

**SERVICE:**

Service is a more subjective area than Teaching and Scholarship and there are many endeavors which would be appropriate. These include the major areas of service to the department, to PSU in general and to the local and state community. As with scholarship, individual work plans will reflect expectations for performance in service based on teaching load.

Examples of evidence of meaningful service:

- Departmental committees (e.g. P&T committee, national searches, etc.)
- PSU committees (a multitude of possibilities and weighted according to work load, e.g., policy-making committees that meet regularly and have large work loads would be weighted more heavily than non-policy-making committees which meet infrequently)
- Various community activities potentially weighted according to amount of work required (e.g., service on a town committee that meets regularly with additional tasks between meetings may be weighted more than involvement in one-time events)
- Peer-review for journals within the field of expertise
- Giving talks on campus or guest-lecturing in a colleague’s class
- Other: Candidates for promotion are encouraged to describe areas of service that may not fall under a discrete category

It is also taken into consideration that individuals vary greatly in their involvement of research and service and an exceptional contribution in one area will offset a lesser role in the other. The combination of effort in research and service will be reflected in individual work plans and candidates must still meet University criteria for “quality scholarship and meaningful service.”
Process and Procedures

1) Mentoring: Mentoring is optional in the Department of Biological Sciences but is encouraged. If they should choose to select a mentor, new faculty members are encouraged to choose a mentor in their first semester of work at PSU if possible. A suggested meeting schedule between the mentor and mentee might be semi-annual, perhaps before and after work plan submission.

2) Three-year review: The candidate will submit P&T materials to the Departmental Chair in March of the Spring semester of year three of a tenure-track assistant professor’s position. The chair will then circulate these materials to the Departmental P&T Committee for review. The materials will follow the guidelines for preparing the Promotion and Tenure package. After review of the materials, the tenured faculty in the department will meet with the candidate by mid-May of that year to provide written feedback on the materials. The intent of this three-year review is to provide the candidate with feedback on progress toward tenure. All potentially sensitive materials requiring the signing of a release form through Human Resources will be excluded in this three-year review.
APPENDIX I

SAMPLE PLAN

The following sample plan is not intended as either an exhaustive or prescriptive checklist. The items listed are intended as examples. Each candidate, with the assistance of his or her mentor, should develop, periodically revise, and implement their own plan, based on the candidate’s interests and opportunities. The mentor will assist the candidate in setting, assessing progress towards, and achieving the goals set forth in the plan.

YEAR ONE

Teaching
- Organize and teach assigned courses
- Revise current courses based on student and faculty feedback for year two
- Plan for year two
- Collaborative teaching within and outside the department
- Teaching awards
- Effort in institutional curriculum development/change
- Involvement in the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL)
- Participate in First Year Seminar or First Class or Reflective Practice groups
- Demonstrate innovation in pedagogy or other aspects of course delivery

Service
- Participate in Departmental work
- Become available for campus committees
- Seek election for campus committees
- Get involved with local schools or organizations

Scholarship
- Develop research plan
- Participate in professional organizations
- Attend conferences
  - Local, regional or national

YEAR TWO

Teaching
- Improve courses – general education or majors – this might include:
  - Reorganization of a course for new general education standards,
  - Adding “real time” data collection to a lab vs. “canned” lab manual data.
  - Adding new “best practice” pedagogies or assessment techniques as defined by the professional organization of the discipline

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• Develop courses – general education or majors (within department)

Service
• Participate in Departmental committees
• Become Available for campus committees
• Seek election for campus committees
• Participate in PSU campus initiatives
• Participate in PSU clubs or chapters
• Get involved with local schools or organizations
• Scholarship: Get involved in grant proposals (departmental, campus, local)
• Participate in professional organizations
• Attend conferences (local, regional and national)
• Assist in undergraduate and/or graduate research
• Begin Implementation of research plan

YEAR THREE

At this point the teaching aspect of the faculty member should be stabilized. The Department of Biological Sciences encourages and expects its faculty members to continually evaluate and improve their teaching.

Teaching
• Improve Courses
  o Gen ed or majors
• Develop Courses
  o Gen ed or majors (within department)

Service
• Participate in Departmental committees,
• Participate in Campus committees
• Participate in PSU campus initiatives
• Participate in PSU club or chapter participation
• Become involved with local and regional schools or organizations

Scholarship
• Be successfully involved with grant proposals (departmental, campus, local)
• Be active and have a leadership role in professional organizations
  o Committee work
• Present talks (campus, local, regional)
• Attend and/or present workshops (campus, local, regional)
• Attend conferences
• Participate in conferences (local or regional)
  o Presentations
  o Poster sessions
Planning and implementation

- Assist in undergraduate and/or graduate research
- Document research progress

YEAR FOUR

Teaching

- Improve courses.
  - Gen ed or majors
- Develop courses
  - Gen ed or majors (within department)

Service

- Assume a leadership role on
  - Departmental committees
  - Campus committees
  - Election for campus committees
  - PSU campus initiatives
  - PSU club or chapter participation
  - Local and regional schools or organizations

Scholarship

- Be successfully involved with grant proposals
  - Departmental, campus, Local, regional
- Be active and have a leadership role in professional organizations
  - Committee work
- Present talks (campus, local, regional, national)
- Have a publication in the submission/review process
- Attend and/or present workshops (campus, local, regional)
- Attend conferences
- Participate in conferences (local or regional)
  - Presentations
  - Poster sessions
  - Planning and implementation
- Assist in undergraduate and/or graduate research
- Document research progress

YEAR FIVE

Teaching

- Improve courses
  - Gen ed or majors
- Develop courses
  - Gen ed or majors (within department)
Service

- Assume a leadership role on
  - Departmental committees
  - Campus committees
  - Election for campus committees
  - PSU campus initiatives
  - PSU club or chapter participation
  - Local and regional schools or organizations
- Scholarship
  - Be Involved with grant proposals as PI or Co-PI
    - Departmental, campus, Local, regional
- Participate and assume leadership role in professional organizations
  - Committee work
  - Leadership position (regional, national)
- Present talks (campus, local, regional, national)
- Publish in peer reviewed journals
- Attend and present workshops (campus, local, regional, national)
- Attend conferences
- Participate in conferences (local, regional, national)
  - Presentations
  - Poster sessions
  - Planning and implementation
- Assist in undergraduate and/or graduate research
- Document research progress

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