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The Evaluation of Faculty Performance in the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology

I. Preamble

This statement describes criteria that will be used in evaluating faculty performance prior to making recommendations for merit salary increases, reappointment, promotion and/or tenure decisions, or commitment of departmental resources with primary benefit to individual faculty members. Excellence in any activity that supports the programs of the department, the college or the university, should be rewarded and all faculty members should strive for excellence in every activity.

This document is not to be interpreted as a rigid specification of performance criteria. Rather, it should be considered as a source of guidance to faculty and administration alike, defining expectations with respect to the research, teaching, and service responsibilities inherent in the role of a faculty member, and illustrating the types of indicators that are appropriately considered in evaluation of faculty effort in meeting those responsibilities. The ultimate goal of such evaluation should be the scholarly development of the faculty member.

Academic freedom is a vital right of all faculty members. It is not to be abridged by narrow specification of duties and responsibilities, nor by narrow interpretations of guidelines such as these. However, there is an additional factor that must be considered in an academic institution. This is the right to select, retain, and support those faculty members who make full and vigorous use of their academic freedom, who develop productive careers as scholars and teachers and accept the full responsibility that academic freedom carries with it. The university and colleges have defined procedures to be used in reappointment, promotion, or granting of tenure, and provided general criteria for evaluation of faculty performance as it relates to such decisions. The Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology has adopted a set of by-laws that define procedures to be followed in reaching reappointment, promotion, and/or tenure decisions. This document provides specific descriptions of the evaluation processes used in faculty evaluations.

II. Role of the Departmental Chairperson

It is the role of the Chairperson to work with faculty members to assist in the development of their professional careers, to assist them in working within the university structure, to interpret and evaluate their contributions to the university's programs and communicate this to the university administration, and to apportion departmental resources on the basis of that evaluation.

Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology policy prescribes that those members of the Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) holding the rank of Associate or Full Professor, acting jointly, shall annually provide the Chairperson with a written evaluation of each faculty member holding the rank of Assistant Professor or any fixed term faculty. Those members holding the rank of Professor, with addition of alternate members, if required, as provided in departmental

by-laws, shall provide the Chairperson with a written evaluation of each faculty member holding the rank of Associate Professor. Prior to presentation to the Chairperson, these evaluations will be discussed at a meeting of all tenured faculty holding rank above that of the faculty member being reviewed. Based on this evaluation, the Chairperson will prepare a letter to the faculty member, conveying the essence of the Faculty Advisory Committee's evaluation along with any additional comments deemed pertinent to the faculty member's performance. Subsequently, the Chairperson will meet with the faculty member for discussion of the evaluation and of their future teaching, research, and service responsibilities, as well as considering other matters of concern. Although formal evaluation and consultation are to be done on an annual basis, faculty are encouraged to consult with the Chairperson on a more frequent and informal basis, whenever such consultation might aid in clarification of expectations or evaluation of performance and in the scholarly development of the faculty member.

Departmental procedures do not prescribe annual evaluation of faculty at the rank of Professor by the Faculty Advisory Committee. Such evaluation is normally done by the chairperson and Associate Chairperson in the context of recommendations for merit salary increases. Although formal consultation between chairperson and professorial faculty is not required on an annual basis, this is encouraged, at the initiative of either the faculty member or the Chairperson, whenever such consultation might aid in clarification of expectations or evaluation of performance and in the scholarly development of the faculty member. The Chairperson should assist all faculty members in determining those ways in which they can best serve to meet the needs of the university.

III. Faculty Members

Each faculty member is expected to work with the departmental chairperson and other administrative officers to ensure that their academic career is developed in keeping with the tenets of academic freedom and high standards of scholarly excellence. The following portions of this document should serve as a basis for continuing discussion between faculty members and the department Chairperson. It is to be expected that an individual interpretation will be achieved with each faculty member. It is also to be expected, however, that these individual interpretations will adhere to the common theme of excellence in performance.

IV. Teaching

The Department of Biochemistry teaches courses at many levels. Those enrolled in these courses include undergraduates, both biochemistry majors and non-majors, professional students in the medical colleges, and graduate students. Teaching is done in formal, regularly scheduled courses, in seminars and in the research laboratories. Each faculty member is expected to participate in the teaching program and associated activities such as student advising. Normally, each faculty member is expected to participate in the teaching of general biochemistry courses, as well as in presentation of graduate level courses in areas in which the faculty member may have special expertise or interest.

Faculty members should aspire to excellence in teaching. The quality of teaching will be a determining factor in decisions with regard to reappointment, promotion, tenure, and salary increases. Recognizing that objective evaluation of teaching effort may be more difficult than evaluation of other activities but that it is important to reward excellence in this area, it becomes imperative that each faculty member work with the department Chairperson to develop a

mutually agreeable method for the evaluation of their teaching activities.

It is explicitly recognized that all faculty members will not be involved equally with all aspects of the teaching program. Certain faculty members may, with the concurrence of the chairperson, elect to focus their scholarly pursuits in the teaching program and the merits of their activities will be judged and rewarded by criteria similar to those applied to the evaluation of other scholarly functions. Teaching performed in formally scheduled courses is readily quantified in terms of contact hours. However, teaching that occurs in the research laboratory is no less important in a discipline such as biochemistry. Although this does not lend itself to quantification in an absolute hourly sense, some measure of the faculty effort involved can be ascertained from the numbers of undergraduates, graduate students, and postdoctoral associates supervised. The amount of time spent in preparation, development of aids to support the teaching program, in the guidance of teaching assistants and in counseling students, can only be transmitted by the faculty member reporting those activities to the department Chairperson. Related to this, efforts made in providing supplemental instruction or tutoring of students with special needs are to be encouraged and appropriately recognized.

It is expected that lectures and laboratories will be well prepared. Students have a right to expect that formal lectures will be presented in a coherent, well-organized manner, and that preparation for laboratory courses will ensure adequate availability of reagents, instrumentation, and technical advice and assistance necessary for accomplishment of the course objectives. Faculty members are encouraged to develop supplemental materials that will facilitate students' learning. Faculty members are urged to make use of the university's resources in support of teaching.

There are a number of factors that may be considered in evaluation of teaching effort. Student evaluations must be obtained as required by university policy. These evaluations are to be reviewed by the faculty member and their major thrust summarized. Both the student evaluations and the faculty member's analysis and comments are to be made available to the chairperson, who will share them with the Associate Chairperson. Materials prepared for the presentation of a course may be reviewed, as indicators of effort devoted to course preparation or innovative approaches to teaching. The department chairperson or his/her designate may attend lectures, listen to presentations on the web, or view web content of individual faculty member's teaching activities. This is important not only in assessment of teaching efforts, but also in providing the Chairperson with a realistic assessment of the level of instruction, the general tenor of the instructional program, and student response to that instruction. The above are not intended to be an exhaustive list of factors that might appropriately be considered in evaluation of teaching effort.

Faculty members are encouraged to bring to the attention of the chairperson other indicators that might aid in assessment of the quality and effectiveness of their teaching effort. There are certain administrative duties that relate to the teaching function directly. These include: office hours, record keeping, and anticipation of equipment needs.

V. Research and Scholarly Activities

The core of the university is the group of scholars who constitute the faculty. The university is founded on the principle that faculty members will continue to develop as scholars throughout their academic careers. They will constantly increase their knowledge base, both from reading and interacting with their colleagues and through their own activities in the pursuit of new knowledge. The latter is a particularly important attribute of faculty members in science

departments. Appointments, promotions, merit increases, and distribution of departmental resources will, to a significant extent, be determined by the demonstrated scholarly productivity of faculty members. Scholarship that is not demonstrated, that is not available for peer consideration and response, cannot be considered to exist.

It is expected that every faculty member will have broad knowledge of biochemistry and current in--depth knowledge of an area or areas of specialization. It is expected that faculty members will contribute regularly to the literature in the field of biochemistry or their area of specialization. Further, it is expected that faculty members will participate on a regular basis in departmental seminars and colloquia and in scholarly activities of professional societies so as to contribute to the vitality of those activities and communicate their knowledge and analytical thinking to their peers, and to enhance their own scholarly development.

Judgments of the extent and quality of scholarly activities will be made by the department chairperson who will seek advice from members of the peer group of the department or of the profession. As far as possible, these evaluations will be based upon tangible evidence. The publication of journal articles based on original research by faculty members, their students and research associates, will be regarded as the major indicator of productive scholarly activity. In general, it is expected that faculty will publish their major contributions as substantive papers in well-refereed journals. However, presentation of important findings in brief communications or non-refereed forums (e.g., at professional meetings) is also recognized as appropriate. Invited articles, chapters and books dealing with research areas will be considered as important indicators of the quality of a faculty member's activities and given full consideration in determining scholarly merit.

It is expected that faculty will secure the majority of the funds needed to support their research endeavors through grant applications to external agencies. The institution provides significant release time for the pursuit of research with the expectation of faculty securing significant external funding. External funding is a significant criterion for evaluation, second only to original peer-reviewed publications. Internal financial resources available for support of research are quite limited and designed to aid faculty in getting external funding for research. In evaluating external funding, the chairperson will take into account vagaries of funding mechanisms.

It is recognized that different kinds of research programs exist in the department. In some laboratories, faculty members carry out experimental work with their own hands, without the assistance of technicians, graduate students, or research associates. Even in these circumstances, it is expected that faculty members will make regular contributions to the scientific literature. As the number of co-workers increases, it is expected that a greater productivity will be apparent from the group. The volume and quality of published work will be evaluated over a three or four year period, recognizing that changes in focus of the research work may cause a temporary hiatus during which publications will not be forthcoming. In addition to the publication of original research findings, external funding, and publication of reviews and similar contributions to the scientific literature, faculty members can evidence their scholarly attributes, and peer recognition of this, in other ways, which include:

1. Serving as a reviewer of scientific books, articles submitted to journals, or research proposals submitted to funding agencies.
2. Serving as editor of a scientific journal or book.
3. Serving as a scientific consultant for industrial or government agencies. This would include activities that facilitate transfer of new knowledge generated in the university research laboratory to applications or commercial developments having societal benefit.
4. Being invited to speak at symposia or colloquia on subjects related to research activities.

5. Attending courses and workshops on subjects relevant to professional activities, with tangible benefit to research or teaching effectiveness being evident.
6. Attendance at scientific meetings concerned with areas of research interest. Again, participation and the demonstration of gain from such attendance is essential.
7. The pursuit of research through sabbatical and other leaves devoted to professional self-improvement can indicate a commitment to a scholarly career provided that such leaves produce demonstrable results with regard to scientific productivity or new directions in research.
8. Collaborative activities with colleagues in this and other departments can demonstrate a commitment to research and recognition of the benefits that may derive from collaborative approaches. However, it is expected that each individual faculty member will establish an independent base for research and demonstrate a clear individual contribution to cooperative activities.
9. Guiding students to the Ph.D. degree and serving on student guidance committees in an effective fashion can also serve to demonstrate a commitment to scholarly activities.
10. Demonstrating a concern for the flow of information from the sciences to the public through the presentation of talks or participation in scientific programs primarily intended for a lay audience and/or by work with continuing education or extension programs can provide evidence of commitment to the role of teacher and scholar.

All faculty members are expected to incorporate the fruits of their scholarly activities into their teaching efforts. At all levels, their teaching should evidence their interest in research, and their recognition of the role of research in the development of present knowledge and in the welfare of society.

VI. Administration and Service

Faculty participation is essential if committee decisions are to be informed and representative and for effective execution of established policies. Hence, it follows that such participation is to be encouraged and appropriately recognized.

A. Service Within the University

All faculty members are expected to accept a fair share of committee work and to execute the duties of committee membership so as to serve the needs of the university community. It is expected that faculty members will make a conscientious effort to ensure that committee functions are fulfilled, that deadlines are met, and that solutions to problems are sought. Mere membership on committees will not be construed as a meritorious contribution. As with other activities which are to be evaluated, documentation of contributions is appropriately sought. Committee reports, minutes of committee meetings and the opinion of committee chairpersons and other members may be considered in evaluating the extent to which committee members have fulfilled their obligations to service on the committee.

B. Service Outside the University

Service on committees or as officers of regional, national or international scientific bodies constitutes a contribution to the department and the university by virtue of the recognition and influence that such offices provide, as well as enhancing the faculty member's own professional development. In the event that a substantial number of such offices were to be held by a given individual, it is expected that the department chairperson will consult with that individual and with the appropriate dean to consider whether adjustments of university responsibilities should be made. Prior to acceptance of substantial outside service obligations, the faculty member should

discuss the matter with the department chairperson.

Particularly at a land grant university, the obligation for service beyond the academic community is explicitly recognized. Many aspects of this are included in comments above, related to teaching, research, and service activities with benefits extending outside the university. But beyond the land grant philosophy this department recognizes the obligation of faculty members to use their talents for the general benefit of society. Although this may be manifested in many ways, we explicitly acknowledge here the commitment of Michigan State University to broaden the representation of all segments of society in the academic enterprise. Toward that end, faculty efforts in recruitment, retention, and scholarly development of all students in science are explicitly encouraged and will be duly considered in merit evaluations.

VII. Implementation

As specified throughout this document, implementation will be the responsibility of each faculty member in collaboration with the department chairperson and other administrative officers of the institution. For the purpose of making recommendations on reappointment, promotion, or tenure, evaluations are conducted by the Faculty Advisory Committee, in consultation with senior faculty in the department and following procedures specified earlier in this document and in the departmental by-laws. Such evaluations culminate in a recommendation to the departmental chairperson, who has final responsibility for the recommendation to be forwarded to higher administrative levels. In contrast to evaluations leading to recommendations on whether or not to reappoint, promote, or grant tenure to an individual faculty member, allocation of merit salary increases requires a more quantitative approach to evaluation of *all* faculty members, leading to some comparative ranking that can guide distribution of merit salary increments. Moreover, salary increase decisions are typically made on an annual basis whereas decisions on reappointment, promotion, or tenure are obviously much less frequent. The faculty of the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology recognize these differences and chooses to adopt a different evaluation mechanism for making decisions on merit salary increments. Although such evaluations are still to be guided by the principles expressed earlier in this document, the evaluations are made by the departmental Chairperson and Associate Chairperson. These are based on student evaluation of teaching activities, updated curriculum vitae and bibliographies of each faculty member, and any additional documentation that is deemed pertinent. A point system is used for the evaluation in each of these areas as follows: up to 5 points for research, up to 5 points for teaching, up to 3 points for service, and up to 2 points for special accomplishments such as membership on editorial boards, participation in study section research review panels, elected officer status in a national society, awards, and special service to the university. Thus, the highest achievement possible will be reflected by a total of 15 points. Comparative ranking of faculty will guide allocation of merit salary increments, although it is recognized that additional factors such as recent salary history and relative salary levels within the department may also be taken into consideration. The Chairperson formulates final recommendations for salary increments.