

## **Biology Instructional Office: Governance Document March 2023**

### **Purpose**

This document details the organization, operating procedures, and policies of the Biology Instructional Office. All details below are intended to be consistent with University and College of Natural Sciences policies and procedures. Additional relevant information can be found at the College of Natural Sciences Faculty Affairs website: <https://cns.utexas.edu/faculty-affairs>

### **Biology Instructional Office Overview**

The Biology Instructional Office (BIO) serves three biology departments (Molecular Biosciences, Integrative Biology, and Neuroscience) in three ways:

- (1) Curriculum: BIO oversees the Biology BSA degree and houses biology non-majors courses, introductory biology and genetics courses, and introductory biology lab and genetics lab courses.
- (2) Teaching logistics: BIO office staff schedule all undergraduate and graduate biology courses, appoint all teaching assistants, appoint all Professional-track Faculty (PTF), manage the teaching budget, and supervise the staff who prepare materials for the teaching laboratories.
- (3) Professional-track faculty: BIO serves as the primary home department for all PTF who teach courses administered by the Integrative Biology (IB), Molecular Biosciences (MBS), Neuroscience (NEU), or BIO Departments. Every BIO faculty member is also affiliated with either IB, MBS, or NEU.

***This document concerns the governance of BIO as it pertains to PTF appointed through BIO.***

### **BIO organization**

BIO leadership consists of:

- BIO Director
- Advisers: Associate Chairs for Undergraduate Education in MBS, IB, and NEU
- Executive Committee A:
  - All BIO Full Professors of Instruction and Distinguished Senior Lecturers
  - Associate Chairs for Undergraduate Education in MBS, IB, and NEU who are Full Professors
  - Three MBS Full Professors (appointed by MBS Chair for 3-year terms)
  - Two IB Full Professors (appointed by IB Chair for 3-year terms)
  - One NEU Full Professor (appointed by NEU Chair for 3-year term)
- Executive Committee B
  - All members of BIO Executive Committee A
  - Associate Chairs for Undergraduate Education in MBS, IB, and NEU who are Associate Professors
  - All BIO Associate Professors of Instruction

BIO Standing Committees:

- BIO Faculty Evaluation Committee (BFEC)
- BIO Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee
- BIO Course and Curriculum Committee
- Biology BSA Student Engagement Committee
- Biology BSA Assessment Committee
- BIO Teaching Seminar Committee
- BIO Teaching Excellence Committee
- BIO Faculty Teaching Award Committee

#### BIO *Ad Hoc* Committees:

- Faculty Search Committees
- Promotion Committees
- Others for matters arising

### **Leadership and Committee Responsibilities and Procedures**

#### **Director**

- Help define activities, goals, and policies for BIO.
- Coordinate communication with Associate Chairs for Undergraduate Education in MBS, IB, and NEU.
- Help prepare faculty for promotions and facilitate promotions.
- Help facilitate teaching evaluations.
- Oversee annual reviews of PTF.
- Assign merit raises for faculty in collaboration with Associate Chairs.
- Hire new faculty (in collaboration with Associate Chairs and faculty committees).
- Hire and supervise BIO staff.
- Perform annual reviews of staff.
- Assign merit raises for staff.
- Allocate resources for faculty professional development, undergraduate activities, and events.
- Allocate teaching budget (with the Associate Chairs).
- Procure resources from the CNS Dean as needed.
- Determine BIO course teaching assignments.
- Represent BIO on the CNS Course and Curriculum Committee.
- Chair BIO Course and Curriculum Committee.
- Call regular BIO Faculty Meetings.
- Attend CNS Chairs Council Meetings and communicate relevant information.
- Ensure that SACS assessment data is obtained, and reports are completed annually.
- Attend Teaching Point of Contact meetings with CNS Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education and disseminate relevant information.
- Participate in CNS graduation ceremonies.

#### **Associate Chairs for Undergraduate Education in MBS, IB, and NEU**

- Determine teaching assignments for their departments' courses.
- Coordinate teaching assignments with BIO for faculty that teach in both entities.
- Manage their department's teaching budgets.
- Participate in BIO Course and Curriculum Committee
- Collaborate with Director to determine BIO policies.
- Serve as members of BIO Executive Committee.
- Help facilitate teaching evaluations of faculty associated with their departments.

#### **Executive Committee A**

- Votes on promotions from Assistant to Associate and Associate to Full Professor of Instruction.
- Participates in Annual Reviews and Third-Year Reviews.
- Serves on promotion committees.
- Individuals may serve on other BIO committees.

#### **Executive Committee B**

- Votes on promotions of Assistant to Associate Professors of Instruction.
- Participates in Annual Reviews of Assistant Professors of Instruction.

### **BIO Course and Curriculum Committee**

- Chaired by BIO Director.
- Members appointed by BIO Director and include Associate Chairs of biology departments, other members of the BIO Executive Committees, course coordinators for the Introductory Biology courses and Genetics, the Instructors for the Introductory Biology and Genetics Lab courses, and the faculty adviser for the Biology BSA degree.
- Oversees courses housed in BIO.
- Oversees Biology BSA degree.

### **BIO Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee**

- Consists of volunteer faculty and staff.
- Disseminates information on teaching practices that promote DEI.
- Advises Director on ensuring the quality and diversity of faculty and staff.
- Helps foster a climate conducive to DEI in BIO.

### **Biology BSA Student Engagement Committee**

- Appointed by Director.
- Organizes activities to create a sense of community among the Biology BSA students.

### **Biology BSA Assessment Committee**

- Appointed by Director.
- Creates mechanisms for assessing the effectiveness of the Biology BSA degree.
- Committee chair reports the results annually to SACS.

### **BIO Teaching Seminar Committee**

- Appointed by Director.
- Organizes monthly seminars on topics of interest to BIO faculty.

### **BIO Teaching Excellence Committee**

- Appointed by Director.
- Consists of BIO PTF.
- Organizes peer teaching reviews for BIO PTF.

### **BIO Teaching Awards Committee**

- Appointed by Director.
- Suggests BIO faculty to be nominated for departmental, college, university, and UT system teaching awards annually.

### **BIO Faculty Evaluation Committee**

- See Appendix: BIO Annual Evaluations.

### ***Ad Hoc* Committees**

- Faculty Search Committees: Appointed by Director and will include both PTF and TTF.
- Promotion Committees: Will include the tenured Full Professors from IB, MBS, or NEU who are members of BIO Executive Committee A.
- Other *ad hoc* committees will be appointed by the Director as needed.

## **BIO Procedures and Policies**

### **• Faculty Meetings**

Faculty meetings are held monthly during the long semesters, with additional meetings as needed. For voting purposes, 50% of the faculty constitutes a quorum and proxies will count toward the quorum.

### **• Annual Review**

Review of all BIO faculty is conducted each fall for the previous year. The results are reported to the Dean. The BIO Annual Review process is described in an attached Appendix and is available to all faculty on the BIO website.

### **• Third-year Review**

Third-year review occurs in the 5th, 6th, or 7th semester of employment. A three-person Review committee that includes the Full Professors in IB, MBS, or NEU who are members of Executive Committee A will be appointed by the Director. The materials reviewed will include CIS, teaching evaluations (including outside of BIO), observations, and reflections, and a teaching portfolio. More information about third-year review is here:

<https://cns.utexas.edu/faculty-affairs/faculty-evaluations/mid-probationary-review-third-year-review>

### **• Promotion**

Assistant and Associate Professors of Instruction should consult the current guidelines to determine when they are eligible to initiate promotion. <https://cns.utexas.edu/faculty-staff/faculty-affairs>

The Director will advise faculty interested in promotion, for example, in a meeting initiated by the faculty member, each spring following annual review. Faculty interested in promotion should consult with the Director annually to discuss their progress toward that goal. Initiation of the promotion process should occur through mutual agreement between the faculty member and the Director.

University and college rules and additional information about promotion is here:  
<https://cns.utexas.edu/faculty-affairs/faculty-evaluations/promotion-and-tenure>

A three-person Promotion committee that includes the Full Professors in IB or MBS who are members of Executive Committee A will be appointed by the Director. The Promotion committee will evaluate the dossier and make a recommendation to Executive Committee A (for promotions of Associate to Full) or Executive Committee B (for promotions of Assistant to Associate). Executive Committee A or B will meet and discuss the candidate's work before voting. Voting will occur by secret ballot and will be performed at a meeting with at least 50% of eligible voting faculty in attendance; proxy votes will be allowed. The vote recorded in the candidate's file will include the number of Executive Committee A or B members present, absent, voting for, or against.

### **Merit Raises**

Merit raises will be recommended to the Dean by the Director after consultation with the Associate Chairs for Undergraduate Education in MBS, IB, and NEU. Merit raises are informed by the report of the BIO Faculty Evaluation Committee (BFEC).

**Teaching Awards**

The BFEC and the BIO Faculty Teaching Awards Committee suggests nominees for BIO, CNS, and University teaching awards. The Director formally nominates faculty for these awards each year.

**Faculty Hiring**

The BIO Director or the Associate Chairs of MBS, IB, or NEU can initiate the process of hiring a new BIO faculty member to teach courses in their department(s). That person will appoint a search committee that includes tenured faculty members as well as PTF. All tenure-track faculty in that department should be made aware of the search for a new PTF member. Interviews should include a short teaching presentation by the candidate. The search committee can make the hiring decision, but the search committee should be certain to introduce the new hire to tenure-track faculty in the affiliated department. All PTF who teach biology classes are appointed through BIO.

**Mentoring of New Faculty**

The Director will hold an orientation session for new BIO faculty each August. At this session, the new faculty meet the BIO staff, and are made aware of the expectations of BIO, CNS, and the University. For multi-section classes, the course coordinators and/or other instructors serve as teaching mentors.

**Diversity and Inclusion**

BIO is committed to promoting diversity and inclusion in all endeavors, beginning with faculty hiring, where we will monitor procedures to ensure that outstanding candidates selected for interviews reflect a broad and diverse base that will enhance diversity. The Director will strive to appoint diverse committees. The Director will address any inequities in salary among faculty and ensure that, over time, no disparities arise regarding nominations for awards.

## Appendix: Biology Instructional Office Annual Evaluations

The University mandates yearly performance reviews of each faculty member. Results of these evaluations will be used for evaluating appointments, for determining merit pay increases, and for promotion decisions.

Each Fall, the performance of BIO Faculty during the previous Fall and Spring will be evaluated by the BIO Faculty Evaluation Committee (BFEC) which includes the Associate Chairs for Education of the Biology Departments and several members of BIO Executive Committee B. The BIO Director chairs the annual meeting. Information used for the evaluations will be Classroom Observation Reports, Teaching Reflections, CIS Scores, and Faculty Annual Reports (FARs), including a DEI statement.

As the committee will base their evaluations only on the documents listed above (not on other knowledge that individual committee members might have), it is of extreme importance that each BIO Faculty member reports their activities fully on their FAR. The FAR should, at the very least, contain a list of all Teaching, Professional Development, Service, and Research Activities for the preceding year. If there are details, for example, about specific teaching innovations, they should be listed in the FAR, in the Teaching Reflections, or both. **Note that faculty appointed to teach in BIO need to submit a FAR only if their total appointment as faculty is at least 50%.** Faculty whose appointments as instructors are <50% can document their relevant activities by sending a memo to the BIO office.

Faculty are not expected to have their teaching reviewed in a course the first time they teach it.

Each BIO Faculty member will be categorized as: Meets Expectations, Exceeds Expectations, Does Not Meet Expectations, or Unsatisfactory.

*Note: A rating of Meets Expectations means that the individual is doing their job very well!*

### Categories of BIO faculty

- **Full-time or part-time instructors with no other UT appointments.** These individuals should be evaluated by the criteria described in the next section.
- **Part-time instructors with faculty titles.** These individuals should be evaluated by the criteria described in the next section. On their FARs, teaching-related activities that constitute “additional contributions to the academic enterprise” as opposed to parts of their job descriptions should be delineated clearly. These individuals will be evaluated additionally by their supervisors in their non-teaching jobs, and their final rating will reflect both evaluations. These individuals may go up for promotion in BIO.
- **Part-time instructors without faculty titles.** These individuals (e.g. research associates, museum curators, etc.) will be evaluated mainly by their other employer. Our job is to ensure that their teaching is excellent. These individuals will not go up for promotion in BIO, and their salaries are not determined by BIO. We will evaluate only the teaching of these people.

### Evaluation Criteria

The following guidelines will be used for evaluations. These are only general guidelines, as individual circumstances will be considered. For example, individual peer reviewers can have different ideas about what constitutes good teaching. Importantly, the committee will consider that CIS scores are inherently flawed, and that CIS scores are useful measurements of teaching effectiveness only in the case of extremely high or extremely low scores.

In addition, the committee expects peer evaluations (and CIS scores) to improve as the faculty member becomes a more experienced instructor.

*Note: The intention is to reward individuals who experiment with teaching innovation and have appropriately high expectations of the students.*

Most instructors will receive a rating of "Meets Expectations".

• **Meets Expectations:** All BIO Faculty are expected to be excellent instructors. BIO Faculty are expected to improve and update their knowledge of the subject matter they are teaching, and to innovate their teaching methods continually. To meet expectations, BIO faculty should have positive classroom observation reports (at least one per year for Assistant Professors of Instruction); excellent CIS scores (scores above 3); when applicable, indication from the course coordinator that the appropriate curriculum is being taught; thoughtful teaching reflections written each semester documenting class improvements. In addition, full-time BIO faculty are expected to make other meaningful contributions to the academic enterprise. These contributions could include, for example, service on departmental, college, or university committees, involvements in student organizations, research, or creation of shared teaching materials.

Exceptional instructors will receive a rating of "Exceeds Expectations".

• **Exceeds Expectations:** To exceed expectations, BIO faculty should have extraordinary classroom observation reports; outstanding CIS scores (scores above 4); when applicable, indication from the course coordinator that the appropriate curriculum is being taught; teaching reflections that document outstanding class improvements written each semester. In addition, leadership in Departmental or University service, particularly in activities that promote teaching excellence and innovation, and/or evidence of a serious and ongoing commitment to research (funding and publication) should exist.

*Note: The bar is higher for Associate Professors of Instruction to obtain a rating of Exceeds Expectations than it is for Assistant Professors of Instruction or Lecturers. The reason is that Associate Professors of Instruction are expected to continue to do those activities – Service and/or Research - that enabled their first promotion. Exceeding expectations requires that an Associate Professor of Instruction demonstrate an upward trajectory (relative to their activity when in Assistant rank) of additional contributions to the academic enterprise.*

#### **Activities that could contribute to exceeding expectations**

- Innovate one's teaching methods and course materials in exciting ways.
- Find out what's happening at the Sanger Learning Center (SLC) and attend CNS Office of Education Excellence (OEE) workshops. In one's teaching, use SLC and/or OEE programs to improve undergraduates learning outcomes and/or develop a new program with the SLC to help students in one's field of expertise.
- Attend national meetings about teaching and share new skills, knowledge, and insights with colleagues.
- Obtain grant funding for a course innovation project.
- Be appointed as a Provost's Teaching Fellow.
- Do outreach activities in the Austin Community relating to science teaching.
- Volunteer with various student organizations or honors groups to be on steering/recruitment committees, mentor students, hear presentations, etc.
- Write a textbook or other teaching materials used widely within and/or outside UT.
- Author compelling course materials that colleagues teaching the same course use.
- Obtain research funding / publish original research.

- **Does Not Meet Expectations:** Faculty will not meet expectations if one or more of the following occurs: weak classroom observation reports; a pattern of student comments indicating poor practices; poor CIS scores (scores below 3); when applicable, indication from the course coordinator that the appropriate curriculum is *not* being taught; failure to document course improvements. Faculty members who receive this rating may not have their contracts renewed. Alternatively, a remediation plan for anyone receiving an evaluation of “Does Not Meet Expectations” will be devised and in place by February.

- **Unsatisfactory:** This rating is for those who fail to meet expectations in a way that reflects disregard of previous advice or other efforts to provide correction or assistance, or involves professional misconduct, dereliction of duty, or incompetence. Faculty members who receive this rating will not have their contracts renewed.

Each BIO faculty member will be notified of their evaluation results by email in January. During the Spring semester, each BIO Faculty member will have the opportunity to meet with the BIO Director and the Associate Chair of their affiliated Department to discuss their review and future.

### **Evaluation Process**

Evaluations are performed each November by the BFEC. The BFEC will consist of the Associate Chairs for Undergraduate Education of MBS, IB, and NEU, and at leave five additional members of Executive Committee B, recruited by the Director each year. The BIO Director chairs the meeting but does not perform evaluations. Faculty review only those equal to or beneath themselves in rank.

The BIO Director will organize a meeting of the BFEC in November. Prior to the meeting, all the materials of each BIO faculty member (FARs, CIS, Classroom Observations, Teaching Reflections) will be made available for review by each member of the BFEC. Each BIO Faculty file will be reviewed thoroughly by at least three members of the BFEC, each of whom will assign a category to the individual before the meeting. In cases where all three assessments are not the same (or if another committee member questions the category assigned to an individual), that individual’s case will be discussed during the meeting.

By the end of the meeting, each BIO Faculty member will have been assigned one of the four ratings. (The files of the Senior BIO Faculty on the BFEC will be reviewed by the Associate Chairs at the end of the meeting.)

During Annual Review, the BFEC also makes recommendations for BIO, CNS, and University teaching awards.