

## BYLAWS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF BIOCHEMISTRY AND BIOPHYSICS

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## Introduction

**Preamble:** The Bylaws of the Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics (hereafter, the Department) are subject to compliance with the rules of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (COALS), Texas AgriLife Research, Texas A&M University (TAMU) and the Texas A&M University System (TAMUS). The Bylaws include **Appendices**, which have equal weight

as the main body of the Bylaws. The Bylaws and Appendices can be changed only by the amendment procedures defined within the Bylaws. These procedures are intentionally more flexible for the Appendices than the core Bylaws.

**Appendix A. Faculty Rank, Responsibilities and Procedure for Consideration**

**Appendix B. Departmental protocols for promotion, tenure, and post-tenure considerations**

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### **Statement of Departmental Academic Mission**

For its academic mission, the Department has the responsibility for offering the curricula leading to Bachelor of Science degrees in Biochemistry and in Genetics, to the Master of Science degree in Biochemistry, and to the Ph.D. in Biochemistry. In accordance with this mission, the Department serves as the primary university home department for teaching and research in biochemistry, biophysics, and molecular genetics.

The mission of the graduate program of the Department is to enable students to understand, plan, execute and communicate rigorous scientific research in biochemistry, biophysics, and molecular genetics.

## **Article I. Definitions of Faculty Membership**

### **A. Tenured or tenure-track member**

1. **Full** faculty members are tenured and tenure-track faculty members with ad loc appointments in the Department. Full faculty ranks are: **Assistant Professor**, **Associate Professor**, **Professor**, and **Distinguished Professor**. Full members have unrestricted voting rights.
2. **Joint** faculty are faculty members who are tenured and do not have an ad loc appointment in the Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics. All Joint faculty are voting members, although they may not vote for Department Head appointment, on Bylaws adoptions or amendments, or on offers of Joint membership.
3. Expectations, rights, and duties of Full and Joint faculty, and the procedures for consideration for Full or Joint faculty membership are described in **Appendix A**.
4. Procedures for attainment and retention of tenured or tenure-track faculty status, as well as promotion from one rank to another, are defined in **Appendix B**.
5. **Emeritus** faculty are faculty members who have retired after tenure. Emeritus faculty may attend and participate fully in faculty meetings, except that they are non-voting. The procedures for consideration for Emeritus faculty are defined in **Appendix A**.
6. **Senior** faculty are tenure-track academic faculty who have opted for a form of voluntary separation but are not yet retired. Senior faculty may attend and participate fully in faculty meetings and have full voting privileges corresponding to the rank at which time voluntary separation was arranged.

## B. Non-tenure track member

1. **Lecturer, Instructional, Research or Visiting** faculty are non-tenure-track faculty.
2. **Lecturer** faculty ranks are:
  - a. Lecturer
  - b. Senior Lecturer
3. **Instructional** or **Research** faculty ranks are:
  - a. **Instructional** or **Research Assistant Professor**
  - b. **Instructional** or **Research Associate Professor**
  - c. **Instructional** or **Research Professor**
4. Expectations, rights, and duties of Lecturer, Instructional, Research or Visiting faculty are described in **Appendix A**.
5. Procedures for attainment and retention of Lecturer, Instructional or Research faculty status, as well as promotion from one rank to another, are defined in **Appendix A**.
6. Non-tenure track faculty may serve on all faculty committees except the Executive Committee, Promotion and Tenure Committee, and the Post Tenure Review Committee. Non-tenure track faculty may attend and participate fully in faculty meetings, except that they are non-voting.
7. Lecturer, Instructional or Research faculty appointments or re-appointments are limited to terms defined by the relevant guidelines as published on the Office of Dean of Faculties website: <https://dof.tamu.edu/Hiring>.

## Article II. Leadership of the Department

- A. The Head of the Department is appointed by the Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (COALS). The term and conditions of office, including review, is as prescribed by the policies of COALS.
- B. The Head appoints **Associate Heads for Undergraduate Programs** and for **Graduate Programs**.

## Article III. Committees of the Department

### A. Definitions

Three types are defined: **Permanent** Committees, **Standing** Committees, and **ad hoc** committees.

1. The Permanent committees of the faculty shall be the Executive Committee, the Promotion and Tenure Committee (PATC), and the Post Tenure Review Committee (PTRC).
2. Standing committees are appointed for ongoing long-term needs of the Department and are defined in Appendix D.
3. Ad hoc committees are appointed for short-term needs of the Department.
4. Except as otherwise provided by these Bylaws and Appendices, the Head of the Department will determine the size, membership, and Chair of each Standing or

ad hoc Committee.

## **B. Permanent Committees**

### **1. The Executive Committee**

- a. The Executive Committee of the Department shall be responsible for the development and implementation of departmental policies. The Executive Committee shall specifically be responsible for advising the Head on the major substantive issues of departmental governance, including the availability and utilization of resources (human, space, and budgetary); graduate, undergraduate, and post-doctoral academic programs; as well as research activity and infrastructure. Minutes reflecting the substance of Executive Committee activities will be prepared, approved by the membership, and reported to the faculty in a timely manner.
- b. The Executive Committee shall have at least five members, consisting of the Head of Department, the Associate Heads for Graduate and Undergraduate Programs, and two tenured faculty members elected at-large. (If an Associate Head position is vacant, the Executive Committee seat will be filled by the Chair of the appropriate Graduate or Undergraduate Programs Committee). Senior Departmental Administrative Assistants shall serve as non-voting *ex-officio* members.
- c. The quorum of the Executive Committee shall consist of three voting members, one of whom must be an elected member.
- d. Election Procedures.
  - 1). Nominations for each unfilled elected position shall be solicited by mail from the faculty. Voting shall be by mail-ballot. Voting shall close one week after distribution of ballots. Nominees with the most votes in each position shall be elected.
  - 2). Terms shall be for two academic years, and the terms shall be staggered.
  - 3). Elections shall be held in May, and the election results shall be effective on September 1.

### **2. The Promotion and Tenure Committee**

- a. The Committee will evaluate candidates for promotion or tenure, according to the guidelines specified by the Department, the College, and the University. The recommendation of the Committee with regard to tenure or promotion will be made to the Head of the Department.
- b. The Committee will consider all nominees for joint appointments and make a written recommendation to the whole Faculty for a rank appropriate vote: i.e. for Joint Associate Professor, all tenured faculty may vote. For Joint Professor and Distinguished Professor, only tenured faculty members with these ranks may vote. All types of joint membership require two-thirds support of the votes cast for approval.
- c. The Committee shall consist of seven Full Professors; one member appointed by the Head of Department and six members elected by the

Faculty of Biochemistry. The Head of Department and other Members of any Faculty at Texas A&M holding administrative positions of Head or higher shall not be members of this committee. No more than one Joint faculty shall serve on the Promotion and Tenure Committee at any one time.

- d. The period of service on the Committee shall be six years. The period of service on the Committee for the appointed member shall be three years. The appointed member may be reappointed for a consecutive three-year term. The Chair of the Committee will be elected by the membership of the Committee and serve as Chair for a period of two years. An individual serving as Chair may be reelected for one consecutive two-year term as Chair as long as the reappointment does not extend the individual's period of service on the Committee beyond six years. Individual tenures on the Committee shall be staggered so that one new member is elected each year to ensure continuity. After completion of a six-year term (or two consecutive three-year terms), members will be eligible for election or appointment to a new term on the Committee after two years.
- e. Nominations for the unfilled elected position each year shall be solicited by mail from the faculty. Voting shall be by mail-ballot. Voting shall close one week after distribution of ballots. The nominee receiving a majority of the votes cast will be elected. If no one receives a majority, the two nominees receiving the most votes will stand for a runoff election. Voting in the runoff election shall be by mail ballot, and voting shall close one week after distribution of the ballots. The nominee receiving the most votes in the runoff election will be elected. The term of the appointment shall begin on January 1, following the election.
- f. In the event a member is forced to resign from the Committee before the expiration of his/her term, the position will be refilled as follows:
- g. Replacements will be selected by the same process that was used to fill the term originally. In the case of an elected member, an election should be held according to the procedures outlined above as soon as is practicable after the Department Head declares the vacancy.
- h. A replacement once elected or appointed will begin service on the Committee immediately.
- h. The replacement will serve out the original term (i.e., not start a new 6-year or 3-year term).
- i. Replacements that serve longer than 3 years will not be eligible for re-election or reappointment for 2 years after the expiration of the term.

### **3. The Post Tenure Review Committee**

- a. The Committee shall conduct periodic peer evaluation for tenured faculty. The timing of the evaluation shall be no more than 6-years since the awarding of tenure; receipt of an honor based on peer evaluation of accomplishments, such as University Distinguished Professor or Regent's Professor; or a previous Post Tenure Peer Evaluation; whichever has occurred most recently.
- b. The Committee shall consist of two elected [Full] Professors and one

[Full] Professor appointed by the Department Head, except as indicated in Article III.B.3.d, below.

- c. The period of service on the Committee shall be three years, staggered so that one new member is either elected or appointed each year.
- d. The appointed member will be a [Full] Professor except for the following circumstance: when a tenured Associate Professor is due to be evaluated by the Committee, the Department Head shall appoint an ad hoc tenured Associate Professor to serve on the evaluation committee in place of the regularly appointed member when reviewing that case.
- e. The selection process for the elected members of the Post Tenure Review Committee shall be the same as described for the Promotion and Tenure Committee, in Article III.B.2.
- f. A member of the Committee cannot serve longer than 3 consecutive years and will not be eligible for re-election or reappointment for 2 years after the expiration of the term.
- g. The appointed member shall serve as Chair except for consideration of Associate Professors, in which case the elected member with the longest time in tenure shall serve.

## **Article IV. Adoption and Amendment of the Bylaws and Appendices**

### **A. Amendments to the Bylaws**

Permanent or Standing committees, or full faculty members supported by 20 percent of the full Faculty, may propose amendments to the Bylaws and the Appendices. The proposed amendment(s) shall be submitted to the Executive Committee, and subject to the approval of that committee, shall be included on the agenda of a Faculty meeting for debate only. Unlike regular issues, all proposed amendments to the Bylaws or Appendices must be provided to the faculty at least two weeks before the meeting at which the first discussion is to be held. At the close of the debate, the proposal shall be referred to an ad hoc committee appointed by the Head for a report and recommendation. At the next regularly scheduled Faculty Meeting, the Faculty shall consider the report and recommendation of the ad hoc committee. A standard vote by secret ballot will then be conducted.

### **B. Adoption**

1. Upon final adoption, the amended Bylaws and Appendices shall become effective at the next meeting.
2. All amendments and changes in the Bylaws shall be adopted by a two-thirds majority of the full Faculty and shall take effect at the next meeting except as noted in Article V.C.
3. All amendments and changes in the Appendices shall be adopted by simple majority of the full Faculty and shall take effect at the next meeting.

- except as noted in Article V.C.
4. Amendments which have been defeated may not be reintroduced for one full academic year. The Head shall determine if a proposed amendment falls under this restriction.

## **Article V. Faculty meetings**

### **A. Rules of order**

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall govern in all cases to which they apply and in which they are not inconsistent with the Bylaws or any special rules of order the Faculty may adopt.

### **B. Meeting Agendas**

1. For inclusion on the regular meeting agenda, items must be submitted to any member of the Executive Committee at least three working days before the meeting. The proposed agenda item shall be in writing and shall contain any motions on which action is desired at the meeting. Such items shall either be placed on the agenda or sent to an appropriate committee for consideration, at the discretion of the Executive Committee.
2. The Executive Committee shall set the agenda for all faculty meetings and report to the Faculty on the status of unscheduled items.
3. The Secretary shall submit the agenda, including motions and supporting materials, to all Faculty Members at least two working days before the meeting.
4. The Head of the Department, or his or her designee, shall serve as Chair of departmental meetings.
5. Faculty members may move to include a specific item on the next meeting's agenda at any meeting.

### **C. Actions on Motions**

1. The Faculty, by majority vote, may take final action on items on the published agenda.
2. Emergency items:
  - a. The Faculty, by majority vote, may declare a motion on an item that was not on the agenda as an emergency item for immediate deliberation.
  - b. Emergency items placed on the agenda shall require a three-fourths majority of the Faculty present and voting for passage.
3. Final action may not be taken on other, non-emergency motions until the next regularly scheduled meeting. This includes all items not listed on the published agenda, including items raised by standing committee reports.
4. A single voting faculty member may demand a secret ballot for any motion.
5. Twenty-five percent of the voting faculty present may demand that a motion be determined by mail ballot. Such a motion shall be mailed to the

voting faculty the next working day by the Secretary. Voting shall close after an additional six days.

6. Motions which have been defeated may not be reintroduced for one full academic year. The Head shall determine if a motion falls under this restriction

## **D. Interpretation of Constitutionality and Related Questions**

Rulings on constitutionality and conformance to bylaws and relevant legal documents shall be made by the Chair of the meeting, or his or her designee.

## **E. Meetings**

### **1. Regular Meetings**

- a. The default schedule for regular faculty meetings is the last Monday of each month at 3:30 pm. The Chair may adjust the meeting time and date to accommodate exigencies as required.
- b. The meeting shall adjourn by 5:00 pm, but the time limit may be extended by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present.
- c. At any regular meeting, the time and/or date of any ensuing regular meeting may be changed by a two-thirds vote.
- d. A quorum shall be any number greater than 50% of full Faculty members of the Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics.

### **2. Special Meetings**

- a. Special meetings may be called:
  - 1). by the Head of the Department;
  - 2). by any two members of the Executive Committee; or
  - 3). by petition from twenty percent of the Faculty to the Head of the Department.
- b. Calls for a special meeting shall be mailed to all members of the Faculty at least five working days before the date of the special meeting..
- c. The call for a special meeting shall specify:
  - 1). the agenda;
  - 2). the time, date, place, and duration.
- d. Only those items on the agenda shall be considered.
- e. Amendments to the ByLaws or its Appendices may not be considered in special meetings