

## **Department of Molecular Biosciences Governance Document**

### **Purpose**

This document details the organization, operating procedures, and policies of the Department of Molecular Biosciences. 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 and in the Faculty Handbook and Chairs Handbook:

<https://cns.utexas.edu/faculty-affairs>

[https://cns.utexas.edu/images/CNS/Deans Office/Faculty Affairs/FacultyHandbook.pdf](https://cns.utexas.edu/images/CNS/Deans%20Office/Faculty%20Affairs/FacultyHandbook.pdf)

[https://cns.utexas.edu/images/CNS/Deans Office/Faculty Affairs/Chairs Handbook/ Chair Index.pdf](https://cns.utexas.edu/images/CNS/Deans%20Office/Faculty%20Affairs/Chairs%20Handbook/Chair%20Index.pdf)

### **Departmental Overview**

The Department of Molecular Biosciences (MBS) oversees scientific research and education in many areas, including: Biochemistry, Microbiology and Infectious Disease, Immunology, Genetics and Genomics, Developmental Biology and Birth Defects, Stem Cells and Regenerative Biology, Systems and Synthetic Biology, Molecular Biology, Plant Biology, Cell Biology, and Cancer Biology. The Department functions autonomously but also interacts with other Departments and research units within the College of Natural Sciences and across the University.

### **Departmental Organization**

Departmental leadership consists of:

- Department Chairperson
- Associate Chair for Undergraduate Education\*
- Associate Chair for Graduate Education\*
- A 7-member Advisory Council
- Budget Council (all Full Professors)
- Extended Budget Council (all Associate and Full Professors)

\*Associate Chairs are appointed by the Dean of the College of Natural Sciences. The Chair will nominate candidates following consultation with the outgoing Associate Chair and the Advisory Council.

Standing Committees:

- Faculty Affairs Committees
  - Advisory Council
  - Faculty Workload Committee
- Diversity and Inclusion Committee\*
- Teaching Committees
  - Course and Curriculum Committee
  - Peer Teaching Observation Committee

\*The Diversity and Inclusion Committee is a standing committee in terms of mission and vision, but members will be appointed since this committee includes non-faculty members.

Ad-Hoc Committees:

- Junior Faculty Search Committee
- Outreach Committee
- Research Award Committee (replacing Honors and Awards Committee)
- Research Infrastructure Committee
- Seminar Committee
- Senior Faculty Search Committee
- Student Travel Awards Committee
- Teaching Award Committee (replacing Honors and Awards Committee)

**Leadership and Committee Responsibilities**

**Department Chair Responsibilities**

- Develops and implements a strategic plan for the Department in consultation with the Advisory Council and the Department faculty. The plan will articulate the mission, goals, and strategies of the Department, as well as measures of progress and success.
- Ensures the quality and diversity of Department faculty and staff through the process of recruiting, selecting, evaluating, and retaining faculty members and staff.
- Coordinates with Associate Chairs to ensure diverse students are recruited and welcomed in the department and associated entities.
- Prepares and administers the Department's annual budget in alignment with Departmental, College and University goals, and ensuring effective management of Departmental resources.
- Presents budget to the full faculty on an annual basis.
- Has the primary responsibility along with Advisory Council and Budget Council, for allocation of Departmental resources, including Maintenance and Operations (M&O) funds, Indirect Cost Returns (IDC), and endowment income.
- Provides faculty salary and faculty teaching workload recommendations to the Dean based on annual performance and workload reviews provided by the Faculty Workload Committee.
- Determines teaching assignments based on recommendations by the Associate Chair for Undergraduate Education.
- Calls regular Department faculty meetings and attends College and University committee meetings as needed.
- Coordinates faculty hiring and negotiates with the candidate and Dean on behalf of the Department.
- Helps define development activities and goals for the Department.
- Assigns mentoring committees for junior faculty
- Consult with the Advisory Council and with all faculty on policies, plans, and procedures that affect the Department.

### **Associate Chair for Undergraduate Education**

- Serves as primary liaison for the Department with the Biology Instructional Office (BIO).
- Coordinates teaching priorities and faculty teaching assignments.
- Helps assign appropriate lectures and TAs to upper-division courses.
- Represents the Department on the Biology Instructional Office Budget Council.
- Convenes and chairs the Departmental Course and Curriculum Committee and subcommittees.
- Represents the Department on the College Course & Curriculum committees.
- Represents the Department on the College's Faculty Advisory Council.
- Arranges for yearly peer teaching evaluations of Assistant Professors and NTT faculty.

### **Associate Chair for Graduate Education**

- Oversees the Department's Graduate Program with a commitment to providing a highly interactive, supportive environment with excellent opportunities to participate in cutting edge biological and biomedical research.
- Oversees the executive committee in management of the program's:
  - Curriculum, admissions, graduate student handbook, branding, communication, and budget.
- Works with the CNS Dean's Office, Graduate School, and other colleges campus wide to continue a broad-based program mission and vision.
- Oversees the graduate program administrative staff and students.

### **Budget Council**

- Consists of all tenured Full Professors in the Department.

### **Extended Budget Council**

- Consists of all tenured Associate and Full Professors in the Department.

### **Tenured-Track Faculty**

- All Assistant, Associate, and Full Professors in the Department.

### **Non-Tenured-Track Faculty**

- MBS lecturers, Research-track faculty, and Clinical Research Professors are eligible to serve on the Course and Curriculum committee and will be invited to faculty meetings where they may vote on all issues except those related to promotion decisions. Evaluation and promotion of lecturers will be done in coordination with the Biology Instructional Office, however promotion recommendations will be made by the BIO Budget Council (not the MBS Budget Council). Associate and Full Professors of Instruction are eligible to serve on the evaluation committees of Instructional faculty as appropriate for their ranks.

Non-tenure track (NTT) faculty who teach courses affiliated courses with MBS whether upper division BIO or BCH courses that MBS is responsible for staffing or lower division

biology courses or genetics (BIO325) and wish to affiliate with MBS are welcome but should submit a CV and a brief biographical summary to the department chair. The Advisory Council will review the requests and make a recommendation to the faculty; appointment will be by vote of the entire faculty.

### **Overall Committee Responsibilities**

All standing committees will be governed by their committee policy document. Standing committees will consist of a minimum of three members serving at least three-year terms. Standing committee members will be voted upon by the extended budget council, with the option to have one or two spots available to be appointed by the chair. Elected members will serve three-year terms with optional years to aid in transition as needed. Candidates for standing committees will be nominated by all MBS Faculty members. All nominees who are willing to serve will then be placed on the ballot. Each MBS faculty member will rank order their selections from among the nominees. Points will be tallied based on the rankings (as described above for the Advisory Council).

### **Faculty Affairs Committees**

- **Advisory Council**

The Advisory Council provides a mechanism by which the Chair and Associate Chairs can receive input from a group of elected and/or appointed faculty members that are broadly representative of the Department. The chair is expected to solicit input from the Advisory Council on matters such as the composition of standing committees (e.g. Workload, Course and Curriculum, Diversity and Inclusion Committee), strategic planning, use of endowed funds, and negotiations for retention and recruitment.

The Advisory Council will consist of seven individuals, and membership will be restricted to the Extended Budget Council. The committee will consist of:

- Five at-large members to be elected by a vote of the MBS Tenure Track faculty.
- Two members to be appointed by the Chair to ensure diversity and broad representation of research areas.

Candidates for at-large slots will be nominated by MBS faculty members. All nominees who are willing to serve will then be placed on the ballot. Each MBS faculty member will rank order their top five choices from among the nominees (5 points for their top choice, 1 point for their 5<sup>th</sup> choice). Points will be tallied, and at-large slots filled by the candidates with the highest point totals. Advisory Council members will serve 3-year terms.

- **Faculty Workload Committee**

The faculty workload committee will be governed by the Department workload policy document. The workload committee is responsible for the annual review of all Tenure Track faculty, which are expected to inform the Chair's merit raise recommendations, and also recommends teaching assignments according to the Departmental workload policy document.

### **Diversity and Inclusion Committee**

This committee will oversee the mission and vision for the Department's diversity and inclusion initiatives. This committee will consist of faculty members (tenure-track and non-tenure-track), administrative staff, research personnel, and students appointed by the Chair. The Diversity and Inclusion Committee will then appoint Student, Research Staff, and other representatives as necessarily to accomplish appropriate diversity and inclusiveness in member representation. Responsibilities include defining the department's Diversity and Inclusion strategic plan, mission, vision, goals, and objectives. They will also assess the impact of D&I initiatives.

### **Teaching Committees**

- **Course and Curriculum Committee**

The Department Course and Curriculum Committee will oversee the course offerings and curriculum structure and degree requirements of majors that are the responsibility of the Department. The committee will be convened and chaired by the Associate Chair for Undergraduate Education, and will normally include the Undergraduate Advisors who will be appointed by the Chair in consultation with the Associate Chair. The Associate Chair may form sub-committees as appropriate for the degree plans that are the responsibility of the Department. The Course and Curriculum committee will not make faculty teaching assignments, but may advise the Chair on this matter. The primary responsibilities of the Course and Curriculum committee are:

- Approval of proposed courses and review of existing courses.
- Maintenance of degree plans offered by the Department.

- **Peer Teaching Observation Committee**

The Teaching observation committee performs formal teaching observations of MBS tenure and non-tenure track faculty associated with the department that are used for periodic evaluations, including promotion and CPR. The committee receives training on performing college-wide standardized teaching observations and then provides formal written feedback to colleagues on teaching practices. Tenure track assistant professors are evaluated every year while most others are evaluated every three years. The committee also provides informal verbal feedback on teaching practices and seeks to foster discussions of teaching practices between colleagues. The standard term of service is for three years.

### **Ad-Hoc Committees**

All ad-hoc committee members will be appointed by the chair. Committee members will serve three-year terms with optional years to aid in transition, if needed. All ad-hoc committees will be allowed to draft and revise a policy document each fiscal year. The policy document must be approved by the chair.

- **Junior Faculty Search Committee**

Each year the Chair will inform the faculty of hiring plans for the following academic year when authorized by the Dean; the Chair may form a committee or committees that will formulate initiatives and goals.

During the summer, the faculty will meet to discuss and vote to determine search areas to be emphasized, and positions will be advertised broadly in the press and electronic media. Faculty are encouraged to solicit names of outstanding candidates from colleagues at other universities and invite them to apply. The Chair or designate(s) will review all complete applications for assignment to the appropriate search area category. The Chair will appoint an overall faculty recruiting committee. The committee will be charged with evaluating applications and establishing a "preferred applicant pool". This pool will be presented to the overall recruiting committee which will identify the list of potential candidates to present to the general faculty; the number will vary depending upon circumstances but this process should normally be completed by the end of October. Depending upon the primary research area of the candidate, the Chair will assign an individual or group of individuals the responsibilities of inviting the candidate and setting up the interview schedule, including a research seminar to the entire department and a separate "chalk talk" that is open to faculty. Meetings with department faculty and the Dean's office will also be scheduled. This process will normally be completed no later than February of the following year. Once candidates have been interviewed, the recruiting committee will solicit comments from all MBS faculty, students, and postdoctoral fellows. The committee will also arrange for a time when faculty who would like to give responses separate from the larger group can meet with the committee in a small group format. Following this input period, all of the faculty will meet to discuss and vote on possible offers.

- **Outreach Committee**

This committee will consist of three Extended Budget Council members, appointed by the Chair. Responsibilities are:

- Interact with CNS Development staff to identify areas of need or opportunity for development
- Oversee the departmental webpage content with particular focus on achievements by the faculty and students (awards, high profile publications, etc.)
- Oversee the departments social media in conjunction with the CNS Development office and CNS Communications team
- Coordinate the Department's participation in UT Explore, UT Family weekend and other outreach activities

- **Research Award Committee**

This committee will promote and coordinate nominations for departmental, college, and university-wide research awards. The committee will manage nominations for faculty and postdoc

- **Research Infrastructure Committee**

This committee will oversee the planning, budget, and communication to the faculty for the department's general research needs that are broadly categorized as departmental infrastructure. This includes the oversight of research and support needs and upkeep within each of the various buildings that house our faculty, taking into consideration the variety of research and infrastructure requirements of all of our members within the department. Examples of research infrastructure include support of shared and departmental research instrumentation, faculty allowances and expenses, and expenditures for basic research needs within lab (hood certifications, gases, liquid nitrogen, etc.). This committee will be composed of at least one member from each building that houses MBS research faculty.

- **Seminar Committee**

This committee will plan and coordinate MBS Departmental seminars according to Departmental guidelines and in consultation with the Departmental Chair.

- **Senior Faculty Search Committee**

Each year the Chair will inform the faculty of hiring plans for the following academic year when authorized by the Dean; the Chair may form a committee or committees that will formulate initiatives and goals.

During the summer, the faculty will meet to discuss and vote to determine any areas of emphasis for the search. Positions will be advertised broadly in the press and electronic media. Faculty are encouraged to solicit names of outstanding candidates from colleagues at other universities and invite them to apply. The Chair or designate(s) will review all complete applications for assignment to the appropriate search area category. The Chair will appoint an overall faculty recruiting committee. The committee will be charged with evaluating applications and establishing a "preferred applicant pool". This pool will be presented to the overall recruiting committee which will identify the list of potential candidates to present to the general faculty; the number will vary depending upon circumstances but this process should normally be completed by the end of October. The slate of potential candidates, which may vary year to year, will be presented to the faculty at a meeting, and faculty will determine by vote which candidates to interview. Depending upon the primary research area of the candidate, the Chair will assign an individual or group of individuals the responsibilities of inviting the candidate and setting up the interview schedule, including a research seminar to the entire department and a separate "chalk talk" that is open to faculty only. Meetings with department faculty and the Dean's office will also be scheduled. Once candidates have been interviewed, the recruiting committee will solicit comments from all MBS faculty, students, and postdoctoral fellows. The committee will also arrange for a time when faculty who would like to give responses separate from the larger group can meet with the committee in a small group format. Following this input period, all of the faculty will meet to discuss and vote on possible offers.

- **Student/Postdoc Travel Awards Committee**

This committee will promote and coordinate nominations for departmental students presenting research at a conference.

- **Teaching Awards Committee**

This committee will promote and coordinate nominations for departmental, college, and university-wide teaching awards.

## **Departmental Procedures and Policies**

### Faculty Meetings

Faculty meetings will be held monthly during the long semesters, with additional meetings as needed. For voting purposes, 50% of the tenure-track faculty will constitute a quorum and proxies will count toward the quorum. If circumstances preclude faculty meeting or voting in person, meetings and voting may occur electronically by appropriately safeguarded means.

### Promotion and Tenure

A three-person promotion and tenure sub-committee draw from the Budget Council will be assembled for each faculty member up for promotion and tenure. This subcommittee will be assembled by the Chair in consultation with the Advisory Council and with faculty in the candidate's research area. Faculty being considered for promotion/tenure will give an open seminar to the Department. The Promotion and Tenure sub-committee will evaluate the final dossier and make a recommendation to the Budget Council. The Budget Council (for all tenure/promotion decisions) or Extended Budget Council (for tenure/promotion decisions from Assistant to Associate Professor, only) will meet and discuss the candidate before it votes on the promotion decision. Promotion and Tenure votes will be secret and will be performed at a meeting with at least 50% of eligible faculty in attendance; proxy votes will be allowed. The vote recorded in the candidates file will include the number of Budget Council or Extended Budget Council members present, absent, voting for, against, or abstaining.

### Periodic Review of Faculty

The Department Chair, in consultation with the Associate Chairs and the Advisory Council, will designate an individual ad-hoc committee for the 3<sup>rd</sup>-year review of each Assistant Professors and for Comprehensive Periodic Review (CPR; formerly post-tenure review of each tenured faculty member who is to be reviewed). These reviews are separate and distinct from annual reviews performed by the Workload Committee. The 3<sup>rd</sup>-year review of each Assistant Professor will include a seminar to the department, evaluation of research progress (grant submissions/awards, papers in preparation/published) and review of yearly teaching observations and Course Instructor Surveys (CIS). The CPR includes evaluation of research, service and teaching (peer observations and CIS) from the prior 6 years.



#### Merit Raises

Merit raises will be recommended to the Dean by the Chair after consideration of the faculty annual reviews provided by the Workload Committee. The Chair's recommendations must be discussed with and approved by the Advisory Council.

#### Endowments

Should faculty Endowments not required for recruiting become available, the Chair will consult with a diverse group of Senior Endowed Faculty Holders to determine if any existing faculty members merit appointment to a Chair or Professorship. The Chair will then work with the Dean to make any recommended appointments. Endowment funds will be administered according to donor intent and language and guided by College and University policies.

#### Faculty Hiring

All Departmental hiring will be focused upon recruiting the best possible candidate into MBS. Faculty hiring is one of the most important activities of the Department and broad participation of faculty in this process is expected. Following approval from the Dean, the Chair will inform the faculty of hiring plans for the following academic year. The faculty will discuss possible search areas and criteria to emphasize with the ultimate decision made by a vote of the tenure-track faculty. Faculty search committees will be determined by the Chair in consultation with the Advisory Council. Positions will be advertised broadly in the press and electronic media. Faculty are encouraged to seek out outstanding candidates and encourage them to apply. Faculty search committees will meet with representatives from the Office of Faculty Affairs prior to the review of applicants to discuss strategies for ensuring that a broad and diverse pool of applicants is considered. All tenure-track faculty members from the Department will have access to all applicant files and may make recommendations to the search committee. The search committee will select a group of one or more finalists to be interviewed by the Department. Candidates to receive offers will be chosen in a meeting of MBS tenure-track faculty. Details of offers will be negotiated by the Department Chair.

#### Faculty retention

A faculty member entertaining a formal outside offer from another institution is expected to notify the Department Chair. The Chair, after consulting with the Advisory Council, may negotiate an initial counteroffer with the Dean. It is recognized that in order to retain outstanding faculty, pre-emptive action and negotiations with the Dean may be required and these do not necessarily require a Budget Council or faculty vote.

#### Mentoring of Junior Faculty

The Department Chair, in consultation with the new junior faculty members, will assign a three-person mentorship committee for each new junior faculty member within the first three months of their start date. The committee members should be knowledgeable about the junior faculty's research area and standards for

accomplishment a scholarship. Mentors will meet with junior faculty periodically and prepare an annual summary of the junior faculty member's progress, highlighting strengths and weaknesses in their development. Mentors are expected to provide feedback about grant applications and attend junior faculty's classes to provide feedback on teaching (this is in addition to teaching observations assigned by the Associate Chair).

#### Diversity and Inclusion

The Department is committed to promoting diversity and inclusion at all stages, starting with faculty recruiting, where we will monitor procedures to ensure that outstanding candidates selected for interviews reflect a broad and diverse base that will enhance the diversity of the Department. The Chair and Advisory Council will also strive to ensure that the composition of Departmental committees, including the Advisory Council itself, represents the level of diversity that the Department aspires to achieve in its ranks. The Chair will have the discretion to modify composition of elected committees by appointment if diversity is needed. The Chair will also address any inequities in salary among faculty and ensure that over time no disparities arise with regard to nominations for awards, limited competitions, etc.