EXPECTATIONS OF A PROFESSORIAL FACULTY MEMBER
DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY AND BIOCHEMISTRY

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The Brigham Young University Rank and Status Policy, http://policy.byu.edu/view/index.php?p=103, provides an outline of the expectations of a professorial faculty member in the broad context of the university. As faculty in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, we fully support the expectations outlined in the university policy. The purpose of this document is to elaborate on those expectations in the context of a science department with four active undergraduate major programs, a large service teaching responsibility, and a well-established graduate program. This document will serve as a general template for the evaluation of rank and status files in the department.

Efforts in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry are directed toward the achievement of three broad goals: (1) To build a world-class educational program for our undergraduate majors, incorporating excellent classroom instruction and meaningful research experiences. (2) To provide state-of-the-art, rigorous, and effective instruction in our service courses to non-majors. (3) To create and maintain an environment conducive both to outstanding scholarly work and to excellent teaching. The department’s graduate program plays a pivotal role in providing an environment that fosters outstanding scholarly work and in providing meaningful research experiences for undergraduate students.

For the department to reach its goals it must recruit, develop, and retain faculty who are committed to a balance of teaching and scholarship, and who are willing to shoulder a fair share of the administrative and service functions that are an essential and inevitable part of a large academic department. The large majority of the faculty will be in the professorial ranks, where they will be expected to make meaningful contributions as teachers, scholars, and citizens.

In discussing the three areas of faculty activity, we recognize that the division of effort into three distinct areas is artificial. In particular, no clear boundary exists between scholarship and teaching in the department. Good scholarship keeps a faculty member current in the discipline, and ensures that classroom teaching is fresh and well-informed. Furthermore, some of the most effective teaching that we do in the department is with individuals or small groups of students in the research laboratories.

Although faculty are evaluated on an annual basis, two milestone reviews are critical: the review for continuing faculty status (CFS), typically linked with promotion to associate professor, and the review for advancement to full professor. In the following sections we outline general expectations of a faculty member in the years leading to each of the milestone reviews. In doing so, we recognize that differences in research norms exist among the chemistry subdisciplines. Each area (analytical, inorganic, organic, physical,
and biochemistry) will provide leadership in establishing specific research benchmarks appropriate for that area.

**Continuing Faculty Status, Associate Professor**

The evaluation for CFS and advancement to the rank of associate professor is a critical one for the department. Successful candidates are likely to stay at BYU and will affect the climate in the department for decades to come. During their time as assistant professors, faculty members should demonstrate an ability to contribute to the department and university in all three areas of faculty activity, as summarized below.

**Teaching.** Good teaching is central to the mission of the department. Few assistant professors are hired with extensive teaching experience. Rather, they are hired on the basis of promise in the form of good communication skills, letters of reference, and limited experience as graduate teaching assistants. The expectation for an assistant professor, then, is not immediate performance as a master teacher, but rather a demonstration of progress toward becoming one. Some indicators of that progress are as follows:

- A clearly demonstrated enthusiasm for classroom instruction
- A steady improvement indicated by both student evaluations and peer reviews
- Accessibility to students
- Consistent, thorough preparation for classes
- Effective mentoring of students in a research laboratory
- A demonstrated interest in curriculum development
- Involvement in activities to improve teaching skills

Teaching assignments for beginning assistant professors are deliberately reduced in their first two years to allow them to establish solid research programs and to give them time to prepare well for their first classes. The fraction of effort given to teaching in those years should be in proportion to the assignment. Classroom teaching should not be neglected, but neither should it be all-consuming. Effective time management is one of the traits that an assistant professor should demonstrate in preparation for the sixth-year review.

**Scholarship.** Scholarly activity in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry should lead to the generation of knowledge that is widely disseminated to the scientific community in the form of peer-reviewed publications. Because of the teaching mission of the department, faculty must involve students in the generation and publication of research results.

Research in chemistry and biochemistry is expensive, and it is unrealistic to expect that a research program will thrive without regular infusions of funds from outside BYU. For this reason, regular efforts to obtain external funding are an essential component of scholarly activity. Beginning faculty in the department are provided with startup packages to help them establish productive laboratories and to generate preliminary
results that form the basis for proposals to external funding agencies. The startup funds, combined with reduced teaching assignments that are given in the critical initial years of a professorial appointment, constitute a one-time stewardship that will not be provided again over the course of a career. In many ways, the sixth-year review is an accounting of that stewardship, and a successful candidate will have demonstrated wise use of startup resources.

The Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry has a long tradition of collegiality and collaboration, and research collaborations among faculty members are encouraged. It is essential, however, for an assistant professor involved in such a collaboration to demonstrate initiative and creative input in the collaboration that goes far beyond what would be provided by a technician or well-trained postdoc. The assistant professor must demonstrate an ability to generate ideas and follow them through to the publication of results, whether as an independent researcher or as part of a collaborative effort.

We resist the temptation to set numerical benchmarks for external funding or for publications, as the numbers will vary widely depending on the subdiscipline in the department and on the nature of the research effort. However, some general expectations can be applied to all candidates. The successful candidate for continuing faculty status and promotion to associate professor will have done the following:

- Wisely used startup time and resources to establish a viable research program
- Presented original research results at scientific meetings
- Begun publishing results generated at BYU in well-regarded journals appropriate to his or her field of study
- Involved students, preferably a mix of graduates and undergraduates, in the research effort
- Established a pattern of timely and regular submission of well-prepared proposals to external funding agencies
- Demonstrated a willingness to seek advice from a mentor or senior colleagues in writing proposals
- Demonstrated a willingness to change proposal writing and submission practices in response to feedback from peer reviewers and faculty colleagues if initial attempts to obtain funding are unsuccessful

Citizenship Good citizenship in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry goes beyond the accumulation of a list of committee assignments. It implies a combination of attitude and effort that makes the department a better place to work for all employees. In a broader context, citizenship implies an attitude of service toward the scientific community. The evaluation of citizenship during the sixth-year review will be based on the following indicators:

- Willing and effective service on a limited number of department, college, and/or university committees
- Responsible management of departmental supplies, wage, and travel funds
- Courteous treatment of administrative and staff employees
• Timely responses to requests for reports or other information from the department office
• Service to the scientific community outside BYU

Full Professor

Although the general nature of a professorial appointment does not change when a faculty member is promoted to associate professor, the review for advancement to full professor serves a fundamentally different purpose than does the sixth-year review for CFS and advancement to the rank of associate professor. Whereas the latter is the basis for making a long-term commitment to a faculty member, the former serves to acknowledge and reward meritorious performance by a colleague to whom the long-term commitment has already been made. The opportunities provided to assistant professors are deliberately uniform, as are their performance expectations. As careers progress, research, teaching, and service opportunities will vary more widely among faculty, and it is appropriate that a more rigorous and flexible set of expectations be applied in the review for advancement to full professor. Those expectations are summarized in the following paragraphs.

Teaching  Regardless of commitments to research or service, a candidate for full professor should demonstrate commitment to teaching undergraduates. A large research or administrative commitment may reduce the quantity of classroom teaching, but it should not affect the quality. Minimal expectations for advancement to the rank of full professor include the following:

• Consistently positive evaluations by students and peers
• Consistent, careful preparation for lectures
• Accessibility to students
• Scheduling of professional travel and other activities to minimize absences from class
• Active engagement in efforts to improve teaching in the department

Some faculty will go far beyond these minimum expectations by assuming larger-than-average teaching assignments, by receiving consistently excellent evaluations from students and peers, and by becoming leaders in classroom innovation and curriculum development. Exceptional teaching, combined with acceptable levels of scholarly activity and department service, may serve as the basis for advancement to the rank of full professor.

Scholarship  All professorial faculty should maintain a level of creative activity throughout their careers. The department norm for advancement to full professor is maintenance of an externally-funded, productive research program in which both undergraduate and graduate students are involved. Implicit in the submission of successful grant applications and of regular publication in peer-reviewed journals is an appreciation outside of BYU for the faculty member’s research. A faculty member whose research effort falls below the department norm may be considered for
advancement based on a combination of more-modest research activity with exceptional performance as a teacher and citizen.

*Citizenship*  An associate professor should be fully engaged in the activities of the department and the profession. The citizenship expectations for advancement to full professor do not change in kind from those listed for granting of CFS and promotion to associate professor. However, a candidate for full professor will be expected to have assumed greater responsibility and demonstrated a higher level of maturity in citizenship contributions than a candidate for associate professor.