

BYLAWS  
Department of Biology  
Valdosta State University

**ARTICLE I.** Meetings of the faculty

Section 1. Regularly scheduled meetings of the department shall be held at least twice each semester.

Section 2. The head of the department shall call additional meetings as deemed necessary.

**ARTICLE II.** Voting on matters of departmental policy and procedures, curriculum, academic standards and integrity, academic honors, committee membership, departmental representation, nominations for college and university positions, and revision of departmental bylaws.

Section 1. Eligibility

- a) All Biology faculty who are tenured or tenure-track are eligible to vote.
- b) Absent faculty may vote by written proxy.

Section 2. Quorum

- a) A quorum shall consist of two-thirds of those eligible to vote.
- b) Proxies shall not count toward a quorum.

Section 3. Passage of a Motion

- a) A simple majority of those voting shall be required to pass a motion.
- b) A two-thirds majority of those voting shall be required to pass an amendment to the departmental bylaws.

When school is not in session and during the summer sessions, a simple majority of all those eligible to vote shall be required to pass a motion.

**ARTICLE III.** Committees

Section 1. Standing committees shall be composed of faculty with full-time appointments. Other faculty may serve on committees in an *ex-officio* capacity. Standing committees shall meet at least once each semester, except summer, and each committee shall elect its chair annually, effective Fall Semester of the academic year.

- a) Departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee shall consist of all tenured departmental faculty, not including the Department Head. This committee shall review and make recommendations on the dossiers of faculty applying for pre-tenure review, promotion, tenure, and post-tenure review.

- 1) Decisions regarding promotion shall be restricted to faculty holding rank equal to or higher than that for which the applicant for promotion is applying.
  - 2) Decisions regarding post-tenure review shall be restricted to faculty holding rank equal to or higher than that held by the applicant for post-tenure review.
  - 3) Peer evaluation of faculty being considered for tenure shall be restricted to tenured faculty only.
  - 4) The committee shall elect a chair for the academic year from among the members holding the rank of Professor; the chair shall compose all of the letters for faculty applying during the year, with input and approval from members eligible to make decisions as defined in numbers 1 and 2.
- b) Biology Curriculum Committee shall consist of four tenured or tenure-track departmental faculty elected to staggered four-year terms. This committee shall periodically review the departmental curriculum and make recommendations about all proposals for new courses and course revisions and modifications of the curriculum. Recommendations that receive majority support of the committee shall be sent to the department for approval.
- c) Course Syllabus and Coordination Committees shall consist of the departmental faculty members involved in teaching each of the following courses:
- i. Non-majors introductory biology courses (BIOL 1010; 1020; 1030 and 1040).
  - ii. Majors introductory biology courses (BIOL 1100; 1107 and 1108).
  - iii. Human Anatomy and Physiology (BIOL 2651 and 2652),
  - iv. Genetics, Ecology and Evolution, and Senior Seminar (BIOL 3200, 3250, 4900).
- These committees shall determine general course policy and content for their respective courses.
- d) Connell Lecture Committee shall consist of three departmental faculty elected to staggered three-year terms. This committee shall select a speaker and make arrangements for the annual Connell Lecture.
- e) Laboratory Safety and Hazardous Materials Committee shall consist of three departmental faculty elected to staggered three-year terms. This committee shall periodically review and make recommendations about policies on laboratory safety and hazardous materials in the department.
- f) Assessment Committee shall consist of three departmental faculty elected to staggered three-year terms. This committee shall periodically review and make recommendations about departmental curriculum assessment and make recommendations to the departmental Curriculum Committee about matters affecting the curriculum.
- g) Graduate Committee shall consist of six departmental faculty elected to staggered three-year terms (two members per year) and the Graduate Coordinator for a total of seven (7) members. The Graduate Coordinator, who chairs the committee, is appointed by the department head for an indefinite term. The committee shall

- create and review graduate policies; evaluate students for admission and stipends; and oversee the general operation of the graduate program
- h) Pre-Health Professions Student Evaluation Committee shall consist of four of the departmental faculty designated as advisors for students seeking careers in medicine and allied health professions, dentistry and veterinary medicine, who shall be elected to staggered four-year terms. The committee will meet at least twice annually to provide evaluation letters for students applying to graduate programs in the health professions.
  - i) Student Awards Committee shall consist of three departmental faculty elected to staggered three-year terms. Duties of the awards committee are to identify outstanding biology major students for department awards and scholarships, as described in Appendix C. In addition, the committee should encourage faculty to nominate eligible students for various college and university-wide awards
  - j) Peer review of teaching committees shall consist of 3 members of the P&T Committee agreed upon by the candidate and the Head of the Biology Department. Peer review of teaching procedures will proceed as outlined in Appendix B.
- Section 2. *Ad Hoc* Committees shall be appointed by the Head of the Biology Department for a specific term of office. The Department Head shall notify the departmental faculty of the existence of any *ad hoc* committees.

### Section 3. Operation of Committees

- a) Unless otherwise specified, each standing and *ad hoc* committee shall elect a chair and operate under a set of goals given them at the time of appointment.
- b) Requirements for committee vote shall conform to ARTICLE II, Sections 2 and 3.
- c) Each standing and *ad hoc* committee shall make a report to the department of its activities at least once a year.

## ARTICLE IV. Changes in the Curriculum

Section 1. New course offerings, course deletions, changes in requirements for the A.A., B.A., B.S. and M.S. degrees with a major in Biology.

- a) The department head or any tenured or tenure-track departmental faculty may propose such changes using the current University-approved form for REQUEST FOR NEW OR REVISED COURSE plus written justification.
- b) Written proposals to modify courses or curricula shall be reviewed by the Curriculum Committee, which shall then make recommendations to the departmental faculty.
- c) After review and recommendation by the Curriculum Committee, a copy of the REQUEST FOR NEW OR REVISED COURSE plus written justification must be distributed to all departmental faculty at least one week prior to discussion and vote.
- d) A majority of the eligible voting departmental faculty is required to approve and to adopt proposals for new course, course deletions, course revisions and changes in the curriculum and in degree requirements.

- e) Unless there are extenuating circumstances, new elective courses in the curriculum should be offered at least once as “Topics in Biology” (BIOL 4000/6000 or BIOL 4010/6010; see Appendix A).
- f) Because of the multi-level review process for new courses and the March deadline for catalog changes, faculty who wish to propose a new course, following its initial offering as Topics in Biology, should submit the new course proposal to the Curriculum Committee no later than the first month of Fall Semester of the academic year before that in which the course will first be offered.

Section 2. Guidelines for the approval of specific course offerings to be offered as “Topics in Biology” (BIOL 4000/6000 and BIOL 4010/6010) are specified in Appendix A.

**ARTICLE V.** Departmental Awards and Scholarships. Departmental awards will be made annually during Spring Semester. Recipients of departmental awards must have residence credit at Valdosta State University of at least sixty (60) semester hours in academic subjects at the end of the semester in which the award is given and expectation of receipt of the degree at the next regularly scheduled Spring Semester graduation. Eligibility for awards is extended through the Summer Semester following Honors Day. Any person eligible for the award who does not meet the qualifications stated above may be considered for the award the following year, whether or not the student is enrolled at the time of Honors Day.

Section 1. The Marjorie E. Carter Award shall be made by the departmental faculty according to the criteria established at the time of endowment.

- a) “The recipient of the award shall be a senior biology major who stands high academically, who most nearly typifies the standards of the University and of the Department of Biology and who best exemplifies qualities of character and professional excellence manifest in the life and service of the late Dr. Marjorie Estelle Carter.”
- b) The recipient must possess an overall grade point average of B (3.0) or higher in academic courses.
- c) To be eligible for nomination by the faculty, students must submit a Curriculum Vitae before midterm to the instructor of the Senior Seminar course in which they are enrolled. To be considered, candidates must be nominated by a faculty sponsor.
- c)d) By mid-term of Spring Semester, the nominating faculty sponsor must submit to the Chair of the Awards Committee a curriculum vitae of the nominee and a statement detailing the qualifications of the nominee for the award.

Section 2. The Biology Department Award shall be given, subject to approval by the biology faculty, to the graduating senior with the highest grade point average (GPA) based on sixty or more semester hours of credit earned at Valdosta State University, or with the highest grade point average in math and science courses. Only those grades

earned at Valdosta State University will be used in computing GPA. A student who has earned 45 semester hours at VSU and is anticipated to complete at least 60 hours by the time of graduation may be considered for the award, provided he or she meets the other criteria stipulated in this Section and in the introduction to Article V. In case of a tie, the faculty in making its decision may consider factors such as the number of math and science courses completed.

Section 3. Other awards and scholarships currently administered by the Biology Department are described in Appendix C.

## **ARTICLE VI. Guidelines for Tenure-track Faculty Searches**

### Section 1. Search Committee Designation

- a) After discussion and vote by the departmental faculty about which discipline to stipulate in the advertisement for a given faculty position, a search committee consisting of at least three tenured or tenure-track faculty shall be appointed by the Department Head.
- b) The committee's first task will be to draft an advertisement for the position, subject to approval by the faculty. This advertisement will be placed in *Science*, and possibly in other publications.
- c) The appointed search committee shall elect its own Chair, who will work with the Department Head in gathering applicants' files, reviewing their completeness, and making them accessible to committee members and other faculty, and in completing paperwork related to EEO and other required documentation.

### Section 2. Application Materials, Requirements and Deadlines

- a) In order to be considered for the position, each applicant must submit, at a minimum, a letter of application (including such statements as indicated in the job ad), a Curriculum Vitae, and copies of official transcripts showing degrees earned, or the equivalent. These items must have a postmark date or FAX or e-mail date no later than the closing date appearing in the ad in *Science*.
- b) Three letters of reference are required (unless stated otherwise in the ad). These may be accepted up to three weeks after the closing date, at the committee's discretion. The committee may decide, at its discretion, to eliminate candidates lacking one or more letters (see 4.c.).

### Section 3. Potential Conflicts of Interest.

Following the closing date, and after initial review of the files of all qualified applicants, if an appointed committee member shall discover that one or more applicants is a person or persons with whom the member has had a prior close personal relationship, s/he should make this known to the committee and the Department Head and discuss whether it is appropriate to continue to serve on the committee.

### Section 4. Review Process, Protocol & Timetable

- a) The first goal for the committee will be, within three business weeks of the closing date, to narrow the field of candidates to a maximum of 12 (but preferably at least eight candidates), and then to present these names to the departmental faculty, at large, and request their rankings and comments about these candidates.
- b) Applicants whose names go forward to the faculty after the initial screening shall be those who, in the opinion of the committee, demonstrate via their CV, transcripts and letters:
  1. teaching experience in the advertised discipline, or evidence of sufficient academic background in that discipline to be well qualified to teach courses within the discipline offered in our curriculum;
  2. research experience in the advertised or a closely related discipline if specified;
  3. an ongoing interest in and commitment to teaching and research in the advertised discipline, as clearly indicated in their letters of application and supporting letters from referees;
  4. a likelihood of achieving tenure and promotion under the current College of Arts and Sciences guidelines.
- c) An applicant's name shall not go forward as a candidate after the initial three-week screening period if his/her file is lacking application letter, CV, copies of transcripts (or equivalent), or more than one of the three required letters of reference.
- d) The departmental faculty shall be given a period of one week to review the candidates' folders and submit their written comments and rankings to the committee chair.
- e) The committee chair shall tally and distribute to the committee results of the faculty's ranking and comments on the candidates. Following this, the committee shall produce a final ranking (considering committee members' rankings as well as those of the faculty at large). The committee shall report to the faculty the results of the overall ranking and their recommendations. If their recommended ranking varies from the overall ranking, the committee chair must submit this recommendation to the faculty for vote of approval.
- f) From this ranking (e), the committee is encouraged to conduct telephone interviews with at least the top five candidates (or more, pending results of the phone interviews), in order to verify their qualifications, suitability, and continued interest in the specific position as advertised. The department will develop and keep on file a list of questions to ask candidates during the phone interview, to be used, with or without modification, at the committee's discretion. It is recommended that the interviews be conducted by conference call and that at least two of the three committee members participate in each interview.
- g) Following the telephone interviews, the committee shall reconvene to discuss its results and amend its rankings, if necessary; these final rankings shall then be submitted to the Department Head as a ranked list of potential candidates for interview.
- h) The elapsed time between the committee chair's receipt of comments and rankings from the faculty and submission of a ranked list of finalists to the Department Head shall be no more than two business weeks.

- i) Immediately upon receipt of the ranked list of finalists from the committee (g), the Department Head shall file the required paperwork with the University Office of Social Equity. Upon notification that the search meets required guidelines, the Department Head shall request permission from the administration to invite the top two or three candidates to campus for interviews, and to go further down the list for invitations, should one or more of the top candidates decline an interview.
- j) Should two candidates from the ranked list of finalists not be found for interview, the committee should reconvene immediately to recommend to the Department Head such additional names as it deems may be qualified for interview; this may necessitate additional telephone interviews.

#### Section 5. Termination of an Unsuccessful Search.

Should the committee be unable to recommend two finalists from the pool of candidates whom they have interviewed by phone, the search shall be terminated without an interview being conducted.

#### Section 6. Interview Process

- a) It is recommended that each candidate be scheduled for at least one full day (normal business day) on campus; a longer stay would be desirable.
- b) The committee chair and Department Head will be responsible for arranging the visit and determining the schedule; they will attempt to accommodate faculty needs and desires to meet with each candidate as much as is practicable, including office meetings as well as on- and off-campus meals.
- c) A research seminar will be required and will be scheduled at a convenient time for a majority of faculty to attend.
- d) It is recommended that a one-hour "open meeting" time for all interested faculty to meet together with the candidate be scheduled.

Section 7. Final Decision.

The Department Head shall call a meeting of the departmental faculty for the first Tuesday after the end of the last interview for a position, where those assembled will discuss the interviews and vote according to departmental bylaws on whom to offer the position, and whether the other candidate(s) is (are) also acceptable, should the first choice decline the offer.

Section 8. Other Considerations.

Committee members may contact, by letter, phone, or e-mail, the immediate supervisor of the applicant only after being given consent by the applicant.

Section 9. Department Chair Search.

In the case of a search for a Department Chair the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences shall set the criteria and procedures for the search preferably based on the previously outlined search criteria (section 1-8).

**ARTICLE VII. Summer Session Teaching.** The following guidelines (adopted iv-1982, revised x-1994) shall be used to determine priority for teaching during summer session.

Section 1. Through written solicitation, the Department Head shall determine which faculty members wish to teach during summer sessions.

Section 2. The following ranked criteria shall be considered when making teaching assignments during summer sessions.

- a) Course demand and faculty specialization.
- b) Preference will be given to faculty members retiring within two years. In order to qualify, the faculty member must have filed a written intent with the Department Head and Personnel Office.
- c) Possession of the terminal degree.
- d) A numerical ranking based on the number of summer session credit hours taught during the last four years shall be computed for each faculty member by adding the number of summer session credit hours taught by the faculty member within the last four summers and dividing by the number of summers the faculty member has taught. Faculty members with the lowest number shall have the highest priority. Courses funded by other departments or colleges but taught by Biology Department faculty will be counted in this formula.
- e) When additional course sections are available after each faculty member who desires to teach has received one section, additional assignments shall be made by rounds using the same ordered criteria.

Amended and Approved 28 February 2000.

Amended and Approved September 2005.

Amended and Approved 2013.

## APPENDIX A

## Bylaws

## Department of Biology

## Valdosta State University

GUIDELINES FOR APPROVAL OF SPECIFIC COURSES TO BE OFFERED AS *TOPICS IN BIOLOGY* (BIOL 4000/6000 or BIOL 4010/6010)

Adopted December 1, 1992, amended 28 February 2000 and 2013.

- I. A full-time faculty member in the Department of Biology may propose to offer a topics course under BIOL 4000/6000 or BIOL 4010/6010 for a specific semester by submitting to the Curriculum Committee, in advance (see IV below), the following:
  1. The current form for REQUEST FOR NEW OR REVISED COURSE
  2. A detailed course outline, including
    - a) format (e.g., Lecture, Lecture/Lab, Field, etc.),
    - b) credit hours,
    - c) prerequisites in addition to BIOL 1107 and BIOL 1108 or their equivalents,
    - d) schedule, hours per week in lecture, lab, or field,
    - e) detailed syllabus that includes lecture/lab topics, number and value of exams, quizzes, papers, and projects,
    - f) required text(s) and other ancillary materials.
  2. Outline of equipment, supplies, and space needs as required by Department Head, including estimates of costs of supplies, travel, vehicle rental, etc.
  3. Cover letter justifying the following
    - a) need for the topics course,
    - b) specific knowledge-based goals for students successfully matriculating,
    - c) summary of instructor's qualifications for teaching subject.
  4. A current *curriculum vitae* of proposed instructor, including the following
    - a) courses taught,
    - b) publications,
    - c) list of relevant formal coursework completed (or copies of transcripts).
- II. Part-time faculty members may submit proposals only at the request of a majority of the fulltime faculty members at a departmental meeting (see III). This will ensure that such proposals are approved only when the Department deems the course beneficial for the curriculum, and then only when the present full-time faculty lacks the requisite expertise to teach the course.
- III. Before any specific BIOL 4000/6000 or BIOL 4010/6010 course is scheduled, the completed proposal as described above must be approved by a majority vote of the biology faculty at a regular faculty meeting at which a quorum is present.
- IV. Deadlines for submitting proposals to the Department Head.

Summer Semester.....Midterm date of preceding Fall Semester

Fall Semester.....Midterm date of preceding Fall Semester

Spring Semester.....Midterm date of preceding Spring Semester

APPENDIX B  
Bylaws  
Department of Biology  
Valdosta State University  
**Policy and Procedures for Peer Review of Teaching**  
(Adopted Spring 2009)

I. Purpose of the Peer Review

1. The primary objective of the peer review process is for use in promotion and tenure decisions.
2. The secondary objective of the peer review is for the improvement of teaching.

II. Faculty to be Peer-Reviewed

1. All faculty being considered for promotion and tenure are required to be peer-reviewed per college guidelines.
2. Any faculty member may elect to be peer-reviewed at any time.

III. Schedule of Peer Review

Assistant Professors

1. The first peer review will take place during the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> semester after hire. The results of the review will be distributed to the faculty member by the peer review committee.
2. The second peer review will take place between the 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> semester after hire and the results will be used in future P&T decisions.

Associate Professors

1. Any Associate Professor wishing to apply for promotion to Professor must complete one peer review prior to application for promotion.
2. Courses to be peer reviewed
  - a. The Peer Review Committee and the candidate will determine which course or courses are to be reviewed and a schedule for the review.

IV. Composition of the Peer Review Committee

1<sup>st</sup> Pre-Tenure Review

The committee performing the first pre-tenure peer review of faculty will consist of 3 members of the P&T Committee agreed upon by the candidate and the Head of the Biology Department.

2<sup>nd</sup> Pre-Tenure Review

The committee performing the second pre-tenure peer review will consist of 3 members of the P&T committee agreed upon by the candidate and the Head of the Biology Department. In addition, during the second pre-tenure peer review all members of the P&T Committee may make an informal classroom visitation/observation at a mutually agreeable time.

Post-Tenure Review for Promotion to Professor

The committee used for post-tenure peer review of an Associate Professor applying for promotion to Professor will consist of 3 members of the P&T

committee agreed upon by the candidate and the Head of the Biology Department. In addition, during the post-tenure peer review any member of the P&T Committee may make an informal classroom visitation/observation at a mutually agreeable time.

#### Optional Peer Review

The committee used for an optional peer review by a faculty member will be composed of 3 members of the P&T Committee agreed upon by the candidate and the Head of the Biology Department. The results of the peer review will be given to the candidate who has the option of including them in their Annual Activity Report and Action Plan.

All members of the department Promotion & Tenure Committee will be officially notified of the candidate's teaching schedule to facilitate the informal classroom visits/observations associated with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Pre-Tenure Review and the Post-Tenure Review for Promotion to Professor (described above).

#### V. Instruments to be used by the Peer Review Committee

The peer review committee will use two instruments in their review:

##### Classroom Observation

The peer review committee will use the attached document entitled "Reviewer Comment Sheet for Classroom Observations" during classroom observations.

##### Supporting Documentation

The supporting documentation provided by the faculty member being reviewed must be appropriate to the period under evaluation. Required components will include:

1. Syllabus
2. Name of Text with supporting information
3. Examples of Tests and Assignments
4. Personal Teaching Philosophy

Additional documents may be supplied at the discretion of the faculty member being reviewed.

APPENDIX C  
Bylaws  
Department of Biology  
Valdosta State University  
**Other Student Awards and Scholarships Administered by the  
Biology Department**

I. The Mack Varnedoe Greer, Sr., MD Scholarship (#19148) shall be awarded to a rising senior of outstanding character, with a GPA of at least 3.5, who plans to pursue a career in medicine. The recipient will be chosen by faculty who advise students in the pre-medical program in consultation with the VSU Foundation Scholarship Committee.

II. The Marsha Paulk Scholarship (#19431) was established by Ray Bowden and Pamela P. Bowden in memory of Pamela Bowden's sister, a former student at VSU. One or more scholarships will be awarded annually to student(s) majoring in biology and pursuing the career goal of becoming physician assistants. This scholarship is renewable as long as recipient(s) continues to meet the requirements. Apply to the Office of Financial Aid by completing a VSU General Scholarship Application.

III. The David and Cecelia Ratcliffe Scholarship Fund (#20055) shall be awarded to an outstanding VSU student (or students) majoring in biology, who has been involved in research and has the potential to contribute to the field of biology.