

POLICY ON ACADEMIC PROMOTION AND TENURE

Department of Fish, Wildlife, and
Conservation Ecology
New Mexico State University

Introduction

The mission of the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Conservation Ecology at New Mexico State University is to use traditional and emerging scientific methods to **prepare students to become competent professionals** and to understand the ecology of fish and wildlife and apply this knowledge to their conservation and management. Particular attention is placed on research issues that reflect the unique floral and faunal assemblages and ecosystems of New Mexico and the arid Southwest.

The Department recognizes and rewards scholarship that advances the following goals:

Goal 1 – That the Department's academic curriculum and instruction expands the scope of future options of employment of graduate and

undergraduate students, enabling them to beneficially serve the collective interests of society in the area of natural resources management and conservation.

Goal 2 – That the Department's research program represents a forum through which researchers, students, and government entities benefit from a co-discovered sense of purpose and desired future conditions for fish and wildlife resources and the management of those resources.

Goal 3 – That the Department's service and outreach help solve problems affecting fish and wildlife resources in New Mexico and the surrounding region.

Specifically, in order to be promoted and granted tenure, faculty members in the department are subject to the following expectations:

- To provide a rigorous education for undergraduates that adequately prepares them to enter the professional workforce or graduate school.
- To produce professionally ethical graduate students who have the potential to assume leadership roles in research and management within local, state and federal agencies and also are qualified to continue graduate study or vie for academic positions both at home and abroad.
- To maintain an active research program that is competitive on national and international levels and that result in publications and technical reports that advance the profession and fish and wildlife management and conservation ecology.
- To work collaboratively with the New Mexico Cooperative Extension Service program to identify, research, and develop management practices to resolve wildlife management challenges important to ranchers, farmers, natural resource management agencies, and the general public.
- To work collaboratively with the U.S.G.S. Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit to solve research and management challenges pertinent to New Mexico wildlife.
- To provide expertise and information to state, federal and tribal resource agencies to manage fish and wildlife species and their habitats for sustainable use and public enjoyment.
- To engage in service activities that contribute to the effective functioning of the Department, the College, and the University.

The most important responsibility of the University is evaluation of faculty members for appointment, reappointment, and promotion. Coincident with

this is the granting of continuing contract (tenure) for promotions to the rank of Associate Professor and above. Advancement in the academic ranks is based on the recognition of accomplishments in teaching, scholarship, outreach, and service, and represents a prediction of continued accomplishment in the future. The criteria and procedures established by the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Conservation Ecology are described below. They are in accord with the Section 5.90.3 Guiding Principles of the University policy on promotion and tenure as well as with the guidelines, policies, and procedures of the College of Agriculture and Home Economics. In the case of any discrepancies or disagreements, University policies take precedence over and supersede College and departmental policies. Candidates for promotion and tenure should be familiar with applicable College and University policies in addition to this one.

Criteria

General University-wide criteria for promotion and tenure are described in section 5.90.4 of the University and College policies on promotion and tenure.

Teaching

New Mexico State University sets forth high quality teaching as a fundamental responsibility of all faculty members. As teachers, members of the faculty are responsible for effective instruction, whether at the undergraduate, graduate, postdoctoral, extension or continuing education level. Effective teaching is characterized by (1) clear learning objectives; (2) continual improvement, effective presentation, and frequent updating of course material; (3) comprehensive student learning and retention; and (4) the ability to stimulate students' interest in and awareness of the social, political, economic, and ethical implications of the material they learn in our courses. Successful promotion and/or tenure requires documentation of teaching effectiveness via three or more of the following types of assessment instrument: useful and informative syllabi, documented course revisions/updates, other documented teaching innovations (such as the use of new techniques and technologies), participation in Teaching Academy events, student evaluations, peer evaluations, and letters from former students.

Advising and mentoring of undergraduate and graduate students are also important instructional roles for every faculty member. Undergraduate advising responsibilities include helping students plan schedules and complete graduation requirements, providing research opportunities to undergraduates, and advising student organizations. Evidence of effective undergraduate advising includes student evaluations, letters from former students, and documentation of other relevant activities such as supervising undergraduate research and advising student organizations. Graduate advising includes supervising graduate research, service on graduate advisory committees, and service as Dean's representative on graduate committees. Evidence of effective graduate advising includes documentation of all of these activities.

Scholarship

The department recognizes the four scholarships of discovery, teaching, engagement, and integration. The scholarship of discovery consists of traditional research, whether basic or applied, and the products resulting from it. The scholarship of teaching consists of exploring ways to increase the effectiveness of teaching within the discipline and disseminating the findings of those explorations. The scholarship of engagement includes, but is not limited to, activities traditionally labeled as extension, technology transfer, and technical assistance, as well as the dissemination of the products and findings of those activities. The scholarship of integration includes any activity that integrates disciplinary knowledge into a broader context, including but not limited to such activities as writing textbooks, monographs, and review papers, participation in multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research, and exploring the implications for public policy of findings from the scholarship of discovery.

Traditionally, scholarship is evaluated on the production of publications and other creative works. The term “publication” includes a variety of types of scholarship product. Peer-reviewed journal articles are the most important of these for the purposes of promotion and tenure within the Department, and a substantial record of success at producing this type of publication is essential for promotion and tenure. Other forms of publication may supplement, but not substitute for, peer-reviewed journal articles. This applies to all four forms of scholarship mentioned above.

Other endeavors that can demonstrate scholarship include, (1) development of external financial support to conduct research, particularly competitive support; (2) receipt of competitive fellowships and awards in the faculty member’s field of study; (3) invited or contributed presentations at national and international professional meetings; (4) design and execution of research in the laboratory or in the field; (5) holding of professional editorships or editing of scholarly works; and (6) lecturing in professional and other public forums. While appropriate application of the discipline to the problems of the State and region is encouraged, such scholarship will be measured by standards equally rigorous to those applicable to all of scholarship.

Outreach

Outreach encompasses professional activities by a faculty member which involve linkages between private- and public-sector entities outside of NMSU and the academic community in general. These activities may or may not take place in the context of programmatic Cooperative Extension Service activities. Outreach activities result in the generation and application of knowledge to address community needs.

Some level of involvement in outreach activities is required for all regular faculty within the Department. The nature and extent of those activities needs to be established through extensive consultation between the faculty member

and the department head during the preparation of the faculty member's yearly allocation of effort statements. Documentation of specific outreach activities by means of written statements from off-campus partners, technical publications, other independent documentation (e.g., press releases) is encouraged wherever possible.

Service

Activities recognized as service are required of all faculty members at New Mexico State University. Service represents contributions that help advance the profession and improve operation of the University; these contributions can benefit students, the department, the college, the university, the scientific community, industry, stakeholders, government entities, non-governmental organizations, the community, the state, and the nation. Professional service is commonly demonstrated by active participation in professional and scholarly societies, participation on editorial boards, service as a reviewer of scholarly works including publications and research proposals, service on professional committees, foundation review boards, writing for newsletters and participation in other public service media activities, participation in community projects, etc. Contributions to the operation of the University can be demonstrated by service on committees at the departmental, college and university level; service as elected representative in university organizations, e.g. Faculty Senate and Graduate Council; participation in academic and administrative recruitment; departmental, college, or university self-study documents or curriculum revisions, and activities that enhance student learning (e.g., student organizations, clubs, or teams). Contributions to society at large are most often demonstrated when faculty members apply their professional skill towards the solution of public problems. This can be the result of service for the public good on governmental and other special committees, boards, agencies, civic groups and commissions; service as a professional consultant either formally or informally; service through the use of the faculty member's academic expertise and particular professional skills to the solution of international, national, state, county and local problems. The distinction between service and outreach is often not clear; specific faculty activities can be assigned to only one of the two categories. The details of this assignment of activities to categories need to be determined by the faculty member and the department head during the preparation of the faculty member's yearly allocation of effort statements.

Application of Criteria for Tenure and Promotion

A. Introduction

Faculty members who have made important contributions to the Profession and the University and who have performed their duties with distinction will be considered for reappointment or promotion. Similarly, initial appointments will only be made for individuals who have either demonstrated these qualities elsewhere or who show promise for doing so at NMSU. Continued growth and contributions to areas including teaching, scholarship, outreach

and/or service are required for all ranks. Advancement to a higher rank is not automatic, but must be earned through continuous accomplishments across the full spectrum of expected activities and assigned duties. All faculty, including non-tenure-track faculty, will be held to the standards presented in this document. Application of the criteria for promotion and tenure will be weighted according to the candidate's allocation of effort.

B. Promotion to Associate Professor

General Principles.

Promotion to the rank of Associate Professor is of particular importance because academic tenure (i.e., continuous contract) is conferred simultaneously. In granting tenure the University abandons its freedom in regard to retention of the individual in an effort to assure academic freedom. The University, instead, places its trust in the judgment of peer evaluators to determine the likelihood of continued success and productivity of the candidate. For this reason, individuals promoted to the rank of Associate Professor must demonstrate qualities that provide a strong indication of the kind of continuing personal and professional development that will assure sustained productivity throughout a career.

Tenure

The Department considers scholarship as the primary criterion for tenure. Excellence in scholarship, as defined in the University and College policy statements, is necessary to achieve tenure. Effective teaching and significant levels of service and/or outreach activity are necessary but not sufficient for the granting of tenure. Such accomplishments are expected of a member in the profession, but cannot replace excellence in scholarship as a justification for tenure.

C. Promotion to Full Professor

Promotion to Full Professor represents advancement to the highest academic rank. It is based on continued personal and professional development well beyond that achieved at the rank of Associate Professor. Rigorous standards are applied in the consideration of the promotion of an individual to the rank of Full Professor. This individual is expected to have achieved significant stature in their disciplinary area, and clearly demonstrated leadership at the institutional level and beyond. Full Professors are expected to be actively engaged in multiple forms of scholarship including research. They should have an active and well-funded research program that supports undergraduate, graduate and/or post-doctoral scholars. No specific time interval is required for the promotion to Full Professor, given that a faculty member is able to demonstrate the level of scholarship and leadership required for advancement to this rank. However, as some individuals advance in their career, goals may change in accord with changing departmental or university needs. When these changes result in a declining focus on research scholarship it may become appropriate to increase consideration of other elements of scholarship in consideration for promotion to Full Professor.

General Procedures for the Promotion/Reappointment Processes

Responsibilities of the Candidate

The candidate is responsible for following the timeline for preparation and submission of promotion and tenure materials as described in Section 5.90.5.9 of the NMSU Policy Handbook. A candidate may temporarily suspend the promotion and/or tenure timeline by requesting an extension of the probationary period as described in Section 5.90.3.6.2 of the NMSU Policy Handbook.

The department strongly recommends that all candidates for promotion to associate professor should elect to have a mid-probationary review. As the name implies, this review will take place midway through the candidate's probationary period. Faculty who choose to have a mid-probationary review must submit their portfolio to the department head by mid-January of the year in which the review is to be conducted. The portfolio shall be prepared in accordance with Section 5.90.5.5 of the NMSU Policy Handbook and will be reviewed by the departmental promotion and tenure committee, the department head, and the College promotion and tenure committee. The College promotion and tenure committee will provide to the department head and the candidate a written evaluation of progress toward promotion and tenure. The review is to be conducted according to the guidelines set out in this policy. See Section 5.90.3.7 of the NMSU Policy Handbook for additional information.

A candidate either for promotion from assistant professor to associate professor, or from associate professor to professor must prepare a portfolio including comprehensive documentation of the candidate's accomplishments in the performance of assigned duties. The portfolio format is specified in Section 5.90.5.5 of the NMSU Policy Handbook; further details of the format are provided in the College's promotion and tenure policy. The candidate may request sample portfolios from the department head; if portfolios of actual persons are used, the department head will obtain written permission from the owners of those portfolios before they are provided to the candidate. Between the time that the candidate's portfolio is submitted to the departmental promotion and tenure committee for review and 48 hours before the committee meets to review the candidate's portfolio, the candidate may change, add, or delete materials from the portfolio only if any such changes are described in writing by the candidate and made available to the entire committee; the exception to this is that letters of recommendation may not be removed from the portfolio. During this time, the portfolio will be stored securely in the office of the chair of the departmental promotion and tenure committee; if the chair loans out the candidate's portfolio to other committee members for review, they also are obligated to store the portfolio securely and treat all materials in it as confidential. After the departmental committee has met, no changes may be made to the portfolio. However, the candidate has the right to review all items included in the portfolio at any time prior to review

by the departmental promotion and tenure committee, the department head, or the College promotion and tenure committee.

At any time in the process of promotion and tenure review, a candidate may withdraw from further consideration in accordance with Section 5.90.5.6 of the NMSU Policy Handbook. The appeals process applicable to promotion and tenure decisions is described in Sections 4.05.40 and 4.05.50 of the NMSU Policy Handbook.

Responsibilities of the Department Head.

The roles and responsibilities of the Department Head are described in Section 5.90.5.3 of the NMSU Policy Handbook.

The Department Head annually evaluates members of the department in the fall of each year and reports these evaluations to individual faculty members and the College Administration. This process is described in Section 5.86 of the NMSU Policy Handbook. The goal is to assure that all faculty members are provided adequate supervision and direction. This annual review also serves to promote the effectiveness of the department, college, and University by assuring that every faculty member has a clear understanding of expectations. Each faculty member will, in consultation with the department head, prepare an allocation of effort statement as part of the annual performance evaluation process; the allocation of effort statement is described in detail in Section 5.90.3.4 of the NMSU Policy Handbook and Appendix 2 of the College's Criteria for Promotion and Tenure. In addition, pre-tenure faculty members have an additional progress evaluation review each spring, specifically to assess and provide feedback on their progress toward tenure. All annual performance evaluations and allocation of effort statements will be provided to the College Promotion and Tenure Committee. These duties are required of department heads, therefore junior members of the faculty should not hesitate at any time to discuss with the Department Head specific expectations in regard to their position, the quality of their own services and the outlook for their future.

The department head is responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all records related to faculty performance evaluations and allocations of effort, and for ensuring the secure storage of those records and of candidate portfolios until those portfolios are transmitted to the Department's Promotion and Tenure Committee. The department head is also responsible for making sure that all members of the Department's promotion and tenure committee are familiar with the provisions of the University's Conflict of Interest Policy, particularly as it pertains to the promotion and tenure process.

At least every three years, the department head will charge the Department's Promotion and Tenure Committee to review the Department's promotion and tenure policies and update them if necessary or desirable. The department head will consult with the Department's Promotion and Tenure Committee

regarding any proposed revisions. If the departmental policy should change during a faculty member's pre-tenure or pre-promotion period, the faculty member may choose one of the policies for evaluation purposes by notifying the department head in writing.

During the promotion and tenure process, the department head will provide sample portfolios to the candidate when requested, and is responsible for securing any required permissions. The department head also manages the process of soliciting and compiling internal and external reviews, and the addition of any materials to the candidate's portfolio. The department head will keep each candidate for tenure and/or promotion informed as to the progress of the candidate's portfolio through the system, and will notify the candidate in writing of negative decisions on tenure and/or promotion.

The department head is also responsible for conducting post-tenure reviews of faculty members as described in Section 5.87 of the NMSU Policy Handbook.

Peer Review

Evaluation of a faculty member's accomplishments can best be made through the informed judgments of qualified colleagues in the profession. Although such evaluations are necessarily subjective, this approach holds the best opportunity to protect the interests of the candidate faculty as well as the academic institution and its students. In matters of promotion the department will always seek external evaluators of the highest caliber who have no direct personal or professional relationship to the faculty member.

The peer review process for candidates for tenure and/or promotion is managed by the department head in consultation with the candidate. Each evaluator will receive the candidate's complete CV and reprints of the candidate's publications, but will not necessarily receive all supporting documents. The College and departmental promotion and tenure policies will be provided to all external reviewers. If evaluators request additional information in writing from the department head, the department head will inform the candidate of the request and discuss the request with the candidate. If the department head and the candidate agree to send the requested information, the department head will manage this task.

Each candidate's documentation will include at least five external letters from academic faculty members at or above the candidate's own rank and within the candidate's disciplinary specialty, as well as at least three letters from colleagues within NMSU, with at least one of these from outside the College. Letters from former graduate and undergraduate students will also be obtained. For some candidates, letters from governmental agencies or non-governmental organizations may also be appropriate. The department head will request a list of suggested reviewers from the candidate; although the department head may also invite reviewers not suggested by the candidate, at least half of the letters included in the documentation file will be from

reviewers suggested by the candidate. It is recommended that the department head send requests for letters to the reviewers by early July so that letters may be received by early September. Unsolicited letters will be submitted to the candidate for review and will only be incorporated into the documentation file with written approval of the candidate.

The department head will provide specific instructions to each reviewer. These will include the following:

- A request for a brief statement regarding the individual's qualifications for serving as a reviewer.
- A request that the reviewer indicate the nature of any relationship between the candidate and the reviewer.
- Notification that the candidate will have the opportunity to read the letter of evaluation.
- Notification that third parties may have an opportunity to review letters as well. This includes the departmental and college promotion and tenure committees, and may also include other parties in the event of an EEOC or other appeal or investigation of a promotion and tenure decision.

The Departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee

The departmental promotion and tenure committee shall be composed of no fewer than three members. In instances of tenure, all voting members must be tenured. In instances of promotion, all voting members must hold a rank at least equal to the rank for which the candidate is applying. If there are fewer than three eligible members, the committee is composed of all eligible members of the department's faculty. If there are not enough eligible faculty members within the department to constitute a committee, the Department Head will, in consultation with the existing committee and the candidate, select a member or members from outside the department.

If there are more than three eligible faculty members, a member may serve on the committee for a maximum of six consecutive years, after which that individual must rotate off the committee for at least one year. Each year, the members of the committee will elect a committee chair. The chair calls meetings and conduct the business of the committee. The chair of the department committee will supervise the election of the Department's representative on the College promotion and tenure committee, if the department has a representative on the College committee that year (see section 5.90.5 of the College policy on promotion and tenure for details).

At least every three years, the department head will charge the Department's Promotion and Tenure Committee to review the Department's promotion and tenure policies and update them if necessary or desirable. The department head will consult with the Department's Promotion and Tenure Committee regarding any proposed revisions. Proposed new policies will be discussed and voted on by the entire faculty.

In its consideration of candidates for tenure and/or promotion, the department promotion and tenure committee will maintain confidentiality of records, documentation, and deliberations at all times. The Dean of the College or his representative, as well as the Department Head, may meet with the departmental promotion and tenure committee to discuss procedural matters only. The deliberations and voting of the promotion and tenure committee will be conducted in closed session only among committee members. The recommendations of the promotion and tenure committee regarding each candidate will be surveyed via secret written ballot. Voting must be in person; absentia and proxy votes are not permitted. All vote counts must be recorded in writing.

The departmental promotion and tenure committee will submit, for each candidate considered, a memorandum summarizing its recommendations and the vote counts to the department head and the dean. The recommendation will reflect the majority view of the committee. It will contain specific commendations, concerns, and recommendations addressing the department's criteria in each of the areas required for tenure and/or promotion. It will also allow for and include any dissenting opinions concerning specific commendations, concerns, and/or recommendations not reflected in the majority view. Each candidate will be informed in writing of the department promotion and tenure committee's recommendation and vote count, and shall receive a copy of the memoranda sent to the department head and the dean.

Time Line for the Promotion/Tenure Processes

The time line for promotion and tenure is specified in Section 5.90.5.9 of the NMSU Policy Handbook. A current timeline with specific deadlines and target dates for each year is distributed annually by the Provost's office and forwarded to faculty by the Dean's office.