

Department of Integrative Biology, Governance overview

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Brief Description of Department

The Department of Integrative Biology seeks to understand and teaches about the diversity, variability, and change of the living world. We address the grand challenges of biology, studying the evolution and dynamics of life at all levels and scales. We pursue basic science that serves as the foundation for novel solutions to practical problems facing our society, including evaluating ecosystem services, characterizing disease outbreaks, and exploring how genetics and neuroscience shape mental health. The Department emphasizes interdisciplinary approaches, integrating across fields such as genetics, genomics, neuroscience, behavior, conservation biology, mathematics and statistics, computer science, and infectious diseases.

The Department of Integrative Biology has an Executive Committee that advises the Chair in decision making. At the same time, major Departmental decisions, in particular hiring and promotion decisions, remain under the purview of either the Budget Council, all tenured faculty members, or all faculty members, as appropriate. The Executive Committee will consist of the Department Chair, the two Associate Chairs (Undergraduate and Graduate Education), and three Councilors. The specific duties and policies of operation of the Executive Committee are described in the document “Integrative Biology Executive Committee” (attached). The Department faculty approved this document by majority vote on Feb. 2, 2016.

The department holds regular meetings with the entire faculty. Before each meeting, the Department Chair solicits agenda items from the faculty. All members of the voting faculty can request that a given item be added to the agenda and discussed before the entire faculty.

Promotion & Tenure

For promotions from Associate to Full Professor and for early promotions for Assistant to Associate, the Chair consults with the faculty member, the merit review committee, the Executive Committee, and recent members of the CNS Promotion and Tenure committee to decide if the faculty member is ready to be considered for promotion. At the faculty-member’s request, the Chair will put the issue before the entire Budget Council (for

promotions to Full Professor) or the entire tenured faculty (for promotions to Associate Professor).

For all faculty members that are put forward for promotion, the Chair appoints a two-member promotion and tenure committee each. The promotion committee works with the faculty member to put together the promotion dossier. Letters of evaluation are solicited from 10 external writers in the appropriate fields, five of which are suggested by the committee and five by the faculty member under consideration for promotion. Once the dossier is complete it is made available to the faculty for review (to all tenured Professors for promotions to Associate Professor with tenure or to the Full Professors for promotions to Full Professors). All faculty members considered for promotion are required to give a research seminar. After the seminar, the Chair schedules a faculty meeting to discuss the dossiers and a vote is taken. Faculty members who cannot attend are requested to submit a proxy vote prior to the meeting. Any faculty members who miss the meeting and do not submit a proxy vote are counted as absent in the final vote.

Annual and Comprehensive Periodic Review of Faculty

The Department reviews the performance of all faculty members each year. In brief, faculty members are reviewed on a five-year rolling basis, i.e., each year faculty members will be reviewed based on their activities during the previous five years. The review is carried out by a 4-person committee appointed annually by the Department Chair, and it each faculty member's performance in the areas Research, Teaching, and Service. The results from this review are used to decide on faculty members' merit raises and teaching assignments.

A detailed description of this review process is provided in the separate document "Integrative Biology Faculty merit, raise, and workload policy" (attached).

Faculty Recruiting

The Chair appoints a search committee from among the faculty in IB. Committee members are chosen so that the committee has both sufficient expertise regarding the area of the search and is sufficiently diverse to ensure a successful and broad search. The search committee conducts the initial screening of all applications.

Recommendations from the search committee are brought forth to the entire IB faculty for the interviewing process. Candidates are invited in for two days to present a research seminar, meet with IB faculty, graduate students, and other key administrative personnel. After all interviews are done, the search committee makes a recommendation to the IB faculty. The faculty then meet and make a final decision. Detailed voting procedures are specified in a separate document.

Faculty Mentoring

The Chair assigns faculty mentors to all new Assistant Professors. Depending on the number of Assistant Professors requiring mentoring, the Chair may either appoint a mentoring committee for all Assistant Professors or assign individual mentors for each Assistant Professor, selected based on common research interests and teaching expertise. Faculty mentors provide informal advice to the new Assistant Professor on issues related to teaching and research. They are asked to assist with making collegial connections at the university, departmental and university rules and regulations, as well as the tenure and promotion process.

Integrative Biology uses their annual faculty review process for assessment of Assistant Professors each year. The Chair also meets with the Assistant Professors each year and uses this evaluation as a guide for advising them on their progress.

Faculty Retention

The Chair encourages any faculty members who are considering applying or interviewing for faculty positions at other institutions to keep him/her informed about these opportunities. If the faculty member receives an offer the Chair discusses this with the Executive Committee to seek advice on putting together a retention package for the faculty member. Then the Chair negotiates a retention package with the Dean of the College of Natural Sciences. In some cases, the retention package requires the use of significant departmental funds/resources, e.g. an endowed professorship or chair. If this is the case, the Chair convenes a meeting of the Budget Council to discuss and vote on any departmental commitments.

Describe the processes that are in place to promote diversity and gender equity in the department.

Hiring. Diversity and gender equity begin with the hiring process. In all faculty searches, we monitor the percentage of female candidates throughout the various stages (initial applicant pool, subsequent rounds of selection, short-list, interview). In all these stages, also pay attention to the presence of minority and other diverse candidates. If we observe that the fraction of female or diversity applicants is dropping significantly at any stage in the selection process, we will carefully compare the qualifications of the selected and rejected candidates to determine whether any bias may have crept into the selection process. In particular, we will compare objective metrics among selected and rejected candidates, such as number of publications, number and magnitude of grants received, or number of publications, to determine whether different standards may have been applied to different groups of applicants.

In recent hires, we have had many female applicants but very few diversity candidates. To increase our pool of diverse applicants, in future searches we will attempt to proactively identify minority candidates working in the area targeted by the search, by contacting colleagues who may have such graduate students or postdocs and by looking for appropriate candidates at conferences. We will then reach out to these candidates directly and encourage them to apply to our position.

Committee assignments. Whenever feasible the chair appoints faculty to serve on 3rd year review committees, promotion committees and search committees that include at least one person that is either a female or minority.

Voting Procedure for Selecting Candidates to Interview (11-02-2016)

1. The Search Committee will develop a proposed list of candidates to be interviewed (typically 3–5 candidates per position to be filled) plus a small number (typically 2–4) of potential alternative candidates. Both lists of applicants will be sent to the faculty at least one week before the faculty meeting. (Selection of these candidates will be based on the Search Committee's evaluation of applicants' files and comments sent to them prior to developing the list by faculty who have reviewed applicant files. The procedures by which the Search Committee composes the list are at their discretion.)
2. Faculty will have one week to evaluate the candidates and to propose amendments or modifications of the proposed lists to the Search Committee.
3. The Search Committee will take the faculty feedback into consideration and possibly amend their initial lists.
4. At the faculty meeting, the Search Committee will present a brief synopsis of each candidate proposed to be interviewed and each of the alternative candidates, and summarize their collective opinions about each candidate's strengths and acceptability as a potential faculty member. The Search Committee will also explain any additional choices they made in preparing their lists, including but not limited to balancing of research topics, career stage of applicants, and gender and diversity.
5. After discussion, faculty members may make motions to (i) add candidates from the list of proposed alternatives to the list of proposed invitees, (ii) remove candidates from the list of proposed invitees, or (iii) replace specific candidates from the list of invitees with candidates from the list of proposed alternatives. These motions will be voted on separately.
6. The faculty will vote on the final list of proposed invitees, and if the motion passes, these candidates will be invited to interview. If the motion does not pass, the process will have to repeat from step 3.

Voting Procedure for Selecting Faculty after Candidate Interviews (10-26-16)

1. Search committee will present a brief synopsis of each candidate and summarize their collective opinions about each candidate's strengths and acceptability as a potential faculty member.
2. Faculty vote on each candidate's acceptability as a faculty member. (This can be done with a single ballot listing all candidates.)
3. All candidates deemed acceptable by the majority of voting faculty will be included on the casting ballot.
4. In the first round, everyone votes for a single candidate. If any candidate obtains a majority, the voting is complete and that candidate is offered a position.
5. If no candidate obtains a majority in the first round, there is a run-off ballot between the two candidates who obtained the highest numbers of votes. (In the event of a tie between candidates in positions 2 and 3 in the first round, there is first a run-off between those two candidates, and then the run-off between the winner of that round and the candidate who initially received the most votes.)
6. After the run-off, the position is offered to the candidate receiving the highest number of votes.
7. To select the alternate (second-choice) candidate, should the top choice not accept our offer or we are allowed two positions, the same two-tiered system is repeated after removing the top choice candidate from the ballot. (That is, we return to (4) above.)
8. To select subsequent (third- or fourth- etc. choice) candidates, the same two-tiered system is repeated after removing previously selected candidates from the ballot.