DEPARTMENT OPERATING PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

Biology Department, College of Science and Engineering

Approvals—Department (1/27/2025), PPBC (3/20/2025), Dean (9/25/2025), Provost (9/25/2025)

These Biology Department Operating Procedures and Policies are to be considered as a supplement to the policies and procedures defined under a) the collective bargaining agreements between the University and the faculty and staff unions, b) the University's operating procedures and policies, and c) the College of Science and Engineering's operating procedures and policies. In the event of conflict between this document and the policies and procedures adopted by these higher administrative levels, the policies and procedures of the higher administrative level shall take precedence.

I. Department Mission and Vision Statements

Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide an outstanding learning environment that integrates education, scholarship, and service to actively engage students in the biological sciences and to foster their development as lifelong learners.

Vision Statements

Teaching

We aim to provide an excellent undergraduate and graduate education in the courses we teach, the research opportunities we offer, the advising we provide, and the ready access to faculty that students have. We aim to provide our students with the background and skills that enable them to enter a variety of professional careers in biology.

Research

We aim to maintain an active research environment that contributes significantly to the generation of knowledge and that enhances the scholarly growth of our students by providing them with first-class research experiences.

Diversity

With a recognition that many populations have been historically underserved, we aim to provide a supportive environment and culture of inclusiveness that encourages and enables all students, staff members, and faculty members.

Access

We aim to balance enrollment in our courses and major to achieve our goals of maintaining high course quality and acceptable times to completion of the degree.

Meeting Needs

We aim to offer the courses and programs that serve the interests of our students and the needs of the State.

II. Department Membership and Voting Rights

A. Voting members of the Department shall include all faculty (TT and NTT) with an appointment of 0.5 FTE or greater, and all permanent staff.

B. Only tenured faculty members may vote on tenure and promotion decisions. All tenure-track faculty members may vote on tenure-track hiring decisions, and any other issues for which the faculty collective bargaining agreement states that voting must be done by tenure-track faculty members only. The Chair will inform tenure and/or promotion candidates and the voting faculty members of the results of the vote (unanimous or split; if split, the Chair will indicate the direction of the split without providing the specific vote count).

C. Only faculty members (TT and NTT) may vote on curricular decisions, including new course requests, course revisions, and changes to degree and/or program requirements.

D. Voting shall be done by show of hands at departmental meetings for any items not deemed to require a confidential vote. The items listed below shall require a confidential vote. Votes will be submitted confidentially to the Chair, and the Chair will notify the department of the outcome of the vote, including a complete reporting of the vote count:

- Rankings of job candidates to interview for tenure-track positions
- Rankings of tenure-track candidates after their interviews
- New course requests
- Course revisions
- Changes to degree and/or program requirements
- Outstanding graduating senior, undergraduate research award, and Presidential scholar nominee
- Changes in departmental operating procedures
- Other issues, as requested by the faculty or staff as needing confidential votes. In such cases, the decision to vote confidentially shall be made by show of hands.

III. Departmental Meetings

A. Department meetings will be held at 4pm on Mondays as necessary.

B. Additional meetings may be called as needed by the Chair. Department members may request additional meetings by consultation with the Chair.

C. The Chair will provide an agenda at least 24 hours in advance of each meeting whenever possible. Department members may request additional agenda items by consultation with the Chair.

D. Minutes of Department meetings will be taken by a person designated by the Chair and will be distributed to the faculty and staff within one week of the meeting whenever possible.

IV. Chair Responsibilities

In addition to the responsibilities defined in the Collective Bargaining Agreement and the College Operating Procedures and Evaluation Plan, the Chair has the following specific responsibilities:

A. Consult with Department faculty and staff regarding matters affecting the Department, especially regarding appointments, curriculum, budget, space, faculty assignments and workloads, course scheduling, advising, assessment, and faculty and staff evaluations. It is important that the Chair promote a sense of ownership by faculty and staff of the decisions made internally affecting the Department.

B. Schedule and preside over Department meetings at which matters of importance to the Department are discussed and acted upon.

C. Assist faculty members in their efforts to continue to improve their teaching and achieve their goals of research/creative activity and service. Assist faculty and staff in reaching professional goals within the context of the goals of the Department. Confer annually with all members of the Department to identify and discuss their academic accomplishments and goals, including but not limited to successful progress toward tenure, promotion, and post-tenure reviews.

D. Provide leadership in the selection of new tenure track and non-tenure track faculty members and new staff members.

i. With the full involvement of the tenure-track faculty, establish priorities for hiring additional tenure-track faculty members in a manner consistent with the Department's strategic goals and mission. For tenure-track hires, negotiate with candidates and the Dean the conditions of employment including salary, teaching, research and service responsibilities, and startup packages.

ii. In consultation with the Personnel Committee Chair, determine NTT hiring needs in a manner consistent with the Department's goals and mission, participate in interviewing candidates identified by the Personnel Committee, and make recommendations to the College regarding employment of new NTT hires for the Department.

iii. In consultation with the appropriate staff members and the Executive Committee, establish priorities for hiring additional staff members in a manner consistent with the Department's strategic goals and mission, form and chair *ad hoc* search committees for any such hires, and make employment offers to new staff hires for the Department.

E. Chair the Schedule Committee and consult with that committee to draft a course schedule for the following year. Assign teaching responsibilities and service workloads to individual faculty members to meet Department goals and student needs within allocated resources and to provide equity among faculty members.

F. Assure that the Department follows College and University procedures in all personnel matters.

G. Respond to the day-to-day business of the Department in a timely manner.

H. Communicate on a regular basis with the Dean regarding departmental needs, accomplishments and planning.

I. Represent the Department at the Dean's Advisory Council, Provost's Advisory Council and other appropriate College and University meetings; provide information from the Department to contribute to discussions and decisions at those meetings and communicate back to the Department faculty and staff information that results from those discussions.

J. Suggest membership on departmental committees in consultation with likely chairs for the major committees. The committee membership is discussed at the first Department meeting of the academic year and voted upon by the faculty and staff.

K. Notify faculty, staff and the Dean's office of extended absences from campus and appoint an acting chair when appropriate.

L. Oversee the development strategy for the Department, meet with potential donors, and work with the College and University development offices to increase funding in support of the Department's strategic goals.

M. Directly supervise the Department Manager and Stockroom Manager and fulfill all supervisory duties associated with this role.

N. Compile and submit the Department's Annual Report to the College.

V. Departmental Standing Committees*

MAJOR STANDING COMMITTEES

Executive This committee is composed of the Chair, the chairs of the other Major Standing Committees, the Department Manager, and the Stockroom Manager. The committee shall consult with and advise the Chair on matters of policy, strategic planning, and personnel matters, assist the Chair in establishing the agenda for the Department meetings as necessary, oversee decisions pertaining to the departmental budget (including large purchases and course fees), make recommendations to the Department regarding policies pertaining to the appropriate use of the space in the Biology Building (including the locations of the major shared equipment that is in the Department) and monitor space use to ensure compliance with such policies, and assume other duties as necessary.

Graduate Program This committee is chaired by a faculty member who serves as Graduate Program Advisor. The remainder of the committee is composed of two to three additional faculty members, the graduate program coordinator, and two graduate student members. The committee makes decisions on applicant admissions into the graduate program, TA assignments, research funding awards, and annual teaching and research accomplishment awards. The committee makes recommendations to the Department regarding revisions to the graduate program curriculum and ensures that the Graduate handbook and Graduate program website are current. The committee also ensures compliance with policies and procedures related to the graduate program.

Personnel This committee is composed of at least five faculty members. The committee oversees the recruitment and screening of applicants for NTT positions by assessing applications to the vacancy pool and participating (with other faculty members as needed) in search committees for NTT hires. The committee also oversees the evaluation of NTT instructors, provides feedback to these instructors, and presents a summary letter of evaluation for each NTT instructor to the Department Chair (every 3 years for Senior Instructors, annually for all other NTT instructors), for use in end-of-year reporting. The committee also reviews applications for research associate appointments and brings its recommendations to the faculty for a vote.

Undergraduate Admissions This committee is composed of at least five faculty members and both Program Coordinators. The committee is responsible for determining admission into the major and minor based on the student applications. The committee oversees the Biology Assessment, and reviews student essays. In addition, this committee reviews and revising the application process to ensure it is meeting our commitment to improving accessibility, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Undergraduate Advising This committee is composed of at least five faculty members and both Program Coordinators. The committee is responsible for coordinating the advising activities of the Department, including providing guidance to faculty and staff to ensure effective and consistent advising, running quarterly advising workshops for faculty, and running quarterly Phase II advising workshops for students. In addition, this committee provides recommendations for practices that would improve the effectiveness of departmental advising.

Undergraduate Curriculum This committee is composed of at least five faculty members and a Program Coordinator, and is responsible for making recommendations to the Department regarding decisions about new courses, course revisions, and changes in programmatic requirements to keep our curriculum relevant, up-to-date, and aligned with strategic goals as well as needs identified via curricular assessment.

MINOR STANDING COMMITTEES

Greenhouse This committee is composed of three to four faculty members and a Instructional Lab Technician who supports biology courses that rely on the greenhouse. The committee makes recommendations to the Chair and Department on greenhouse operations. In cooperation with the Executive Committee, this committee decides on greenhouse space allocation and operating procedures for the research greenhouse.

Laboratory Oversight for Biol 101, 204, 205, and 206. Each of these committees is composed of three to four faculty members. The committees coordinate changes in lab exercises and oversee changes in the lab manuals for the courses, seeking relevant input from other instructors, Instructional Lab Technicians and Graduate TA's as needed.

Safety. The committee is composed of 4-5 members including faculty, administrative or technical staff, and the Department Safety Coordinator (non-voting). The committee identifies and prioritizes safety concerns within the department and develops policies

and procedures to promote safe workplace practices. Communication and enforcement of appropriate safety practices is done as needed.

Scholarship Awards This committee is composed of at least three faculty members. The committee solicits nominations/applications for the various undergraduate scholarships offered by the Biology Department and decides who is to receive the scholarships each year. Solicits nominations for the undergraduate research accomplishment award, outstanding graduating senior award, and Presidential Scholar nomination, and other College- or University-wide undergraduate awards, and brings recommendations for recipients of these awards and honors to the department for a vote.

Schedule This committee is chaired by the Chair and includes two other faculty members, one of the Program Coordinators, and the Stockroom Manager. The committee develops the class schedule for the upcoming year, taking into account the projected demand for courses, the requirements of the emphases, potential conflicts that could impede graduation, and faculty teaching interests, and makes revisions to the schedule as needed.

Seminars and Group Gatherings This committee is composed of at least three faculty members and the Office Assistant. The committee recruits other biologists to come to campus to give a public seminar as part of the Biology Department Seminar Series, arranges their travel and meals and accommodations, as needed, organizes the schedule of visits for the invited speaker, and introduces the speaker at the Department Seminar. The committee also organizes other department special events including the Fall Potluck, Commencement Celebrations, and Alumni Celebration events.

INDIVIDUAL ROLES

Assessment Coordinator The department's Assessment Coordinator is a faculty member responsible for overseeing the collection and analysis of data with which the Department can assess the efficacy of its curriculum, and providing summaries of those data as needed to inform decisions relating to the Department's teaching goals.

Library Liaison The department's Library Liaison makes recommendations to the library regarding acquisitions of scientific publications to be of use to both faculty and students and informs the department of any changes to library policies, procedures, or holdings that will affect the department.

VI. Processes for Changing or Amending Department Operating Procedures and Policies

These Operating Policies and Procedures may be amended by a favorable vote of a majority of the faculty and staff members of the Department. Any changes or amendments become effective immediately upon approval.

*Faculty membership on Departmental Standing Committees will be filled by tenure-track faculty members; NTT faculty members are generally exempt from such service unless they are paid for service, per the guidelines in the CBA.

VII. Summer Teaching Assignment Procedures

The following procedures shall be used to determine summer teaching assignments for TT and NTT faculty members in the Biology Department. The implementation of these procedures shall be the responsibility of the Department Chair.

During fall quarter, the Chair shall provide a proposed list of courses for summer session with a call for teaching preferences for these courses from all interested faculty members currently employed by the Department. Interested faculty members shall respond to the Chair in writing with a list of summer courses s/he would like to teach, in ranked order, and the maximum number of courses s/he wishes to teach. At this time, faculty members may propose summer course offerings not on the Chair's list, by submitting a brief (1-2 p.) justification for the course to the Chair. Courses that are anticipated to be in high demand by students will be approved, assuming space and staffing are available.

General considerations:

The primary goal of these procedures is to meet the instructional needs of the summer teaching program, using well-qualified faculty members for each course. In this context, the Chair has the authority to assign particular courses to particular individuals, taking into account the preferences expressed by individual faculty, the instructional needs of the summer program as a whole, and the prioritization process outlined below. In the absence of other considerations, faculty members with higher priority have the opportunity to be assigned a course before faculty members with a lower priority. However, the individual with the highest priority does not necessarily get his/her first choice of course(s) as outlined below.

- Courses shall only be assigned to faculty members properly qualified to teach them.
- Any course that is requested by only one qualified faculty member shall be assigned to that individual without regard to the priority established below.
- Compensation for courses shall follow relevant sections of the UFWW-WWU CBA.

Establishing priority:

1) Prior experience teaching a course is considered the major qualification.

2) In recognition of the substantial investment in tenured and tenure-track faculty members by the Department, College, and University, tenured and tenure-track faculty members have higher priority than non-tenure-track faculty members.
3) Among tenured and tenure-track faculty members priority order shall be full professor, associate professor, assistant professor. Among non-tenure-track faculty members senior instructors have priority over instructors.
4) A faculty member that did not teach any course during the previous summer has priority over a faculty member that did teach the previous summer.
5) Except in unusual circumstances, no faculty member shall be assigned more than one summer course unless all appropriately qualified faculty members (including non-tenure-track faculty) requesting summer teaching have been assigned a requested course.
6) Courses that remain unassigned, but are deemed necessary by the Department for the summer program shall be staffed with non-tenure track instructors not currently employed by the Department.
7) Courses that remain unassigned, but are deemed not necessary for the summer program by the Department shall be removed from the summer offering list by the Chair.

VIII. Tenure-track teaching load calculation policy

Biology teaching load calculations for tenure-track faculty are based on contact hours. The standard load for established tenure-track faculty members is approximately 20 contact hours/yr/FTE, while assistant professors have a load that is reduced by the equivalent of one course/year in their first two years as they are getting established in both research and teaching. The department uses a standardized list of credit hours associated with each Biology course for calculating each faculty member's load.

IX. Procedures related to responding to students and persons in acute distress
Emergency: While in the Biology Building, anytime someone loses consciousness or appears to be having a medical emergency or urgent crisis, a call for emergency response will be made to either 360-650-3911 or 911 for them to assess the situation. An incident report should be filed with https://ehs.wwu.edu/incident-hazard-reporting

Non-emergency: For non-emergency medical and/or behavioral crises, a call to Public Safety Dispatch should be made to detail the situation, 360-650-3555. Dispatch can contact other relevant campus entities to respond if needed and available. An incident report should be filed at https://ehs.wwu.edu/incident-hazard-reporting.

Action Plan: It is the responsibility of anyone who knows they may experience symptoms of a medical emergency, or symptoms that may appear to be or be seen as an emergency to notify their instructor or department personnel, prior to any crisis, if the

above procedures are not a suitable response. By doing so, the Biology department will work with the individual on a plan on how to properly and respectfully respond to the issue should it occur.

Several offices on Campus are available to students to support the development of proper safety plan.

Student Health Center (360-650-3400)
Disability Access Center (360-325-3083),
Counseling and Wellness Center (360-650-3164)

Biology Course Contact Hours

Course	Contact Hours
BIOL101 (Lec)	4
BIOL204 (Lec)	4
BIOL204 (Lab)	1.5
BIOL205 (Lec)	4
BIOL205 (Lab)	1.5
BIOL206 (Lec)	4
BIOL206 (Lab)	1.5
BIOL245 (Lec/Lab)	6
BIOL300	0
BIOL321	4
BIOL322	7
BIOL324	7
BIOL325	4
BIOL326	5
BIOL327	4
BIOL328	4
BIOL340	5
BIOL345	4
BIOL346 (Lec/lab)	7
BIOL348 (Lec)	3
BIOL348 (Lab)	2
BIOL349 (Lec)	3
BIOL349 (Lab)	2
BIOL400	0
BIOL401	3
BIOL407 (Lec/lab)	7
BIOL410	4
BIOL416	4
BIOL432	4
BIOL444	1
BIOL445	1
BIOL446	4
BIOL451	3
BIOL452 (Lec/lab)	7
BIOL453 (Lec/lab)	7
BIOL456	8
BIOL460 (Lec/lab)	7
BIOL462 (Lec/Lab)	7
BIOL464	4
BIOL465 (Lec/lab)	7
BIOL467	3
Course	**Contact Hours**
BIOL468	3
BIOL470	3
BIOL473	3
BIOL480 (Lec/lab)	7
BIOL482	4
BIOL484 (Lec/lab)	9
BIOL487 (Lec/lab)	9
BIOL520	3
BIOL521	1
BIOL522	3
BIOL525	1
BIOL699	0