Neurobiology – Fourth Year Appraisal Expectations

We have included a copy of our School normal merit standards with this letter. In addition to those broad standards, Neurobiology has established expectations for faculty at the fourth year appraisal review. We expect good progress toward developing a coherent and independent research program with the potential for significant future impact. This is typically documented by at least 1 primary peer reviewed research article as corresponding or co-corresponding author and 1 grant as PI or Co-PI from a federal agency and/or major research foundation. We also highly value collaborative research and generally count publications as non-corresponding senior author as 0.5 of the full value that is assigned to the corresponding author, although collaborative publications can be weighed even higher if a substantial independent contribution to the published work is documented. If co-corresponding author, or co-author, independence from former mentors is expected. Further, we expect a strong teaching effort, and service appropriate to the Assistant Professorial rank. Such service is typically serving annually on one committee within the School, active participation in the Department's functions such as faculty searches, science chalk talks, and involvement with the graduate programs. Teaching includes a record of effort and progress toward creating an effective teaching style and utilizing campus resources (e.g. Teaching and Learning Commons) as needed, as well as developing a record of mentorship, particularly in association with building an active laboratory. Faculty with at least one R01 grant or equivalent funding and at least one impactful research article as corresponding or co-corresponding author, and with no weakness in teaching or service, may receive a favorable appraisal. In reviewing the last 10 years of Neurobiology fourth year appraisals, we acknowledge that most faculty at this stage do not yet have one or more corresponding or co-corresponding author research articles and/or have not been awarded major funding (but typically have clearly demonstrated progress in grant acquisition), and therefore will most likely receive a favorable with recommendations appraisal rating.

Neurobiology Normal Merit Standards: Tenure

We have included a copy of our School normal merit standards with this letter. In addition to those broad standards, Neurobiology has established expectations for faculty being evaluated for tenure. We expect establishment of outstanding scholarly reputation and of national recognition in the field, along with evidence of a coherent and independent ongoing research program with a positive trajectory of significant impact. These requirements can be documented by at least 2 primary peer reviewed research articles as corresponding or co-corresponding author, and sustainable funding from NIH, NSF or a comparable agency as PI or co-PI (NIH term is MPI). In addition, we highly value collaborative research and generally count publications as non-corresponding senior author as 0.5 of the full value that is assigned to the corresponding author, although collaborative publications can be weighed even higher if a substantial independent contribution to the published work is documented. If co-corresponding author or co-author, independence from former mentors is expected. Further, we expect a strong teaching effort, and service appropriate to the Assistant Professorial rank. Such service includes annual membership on a committee within the School, and a combination of active participation in the Department's functions such as faculty searches, science chalk talks, and involvement with graduate programs. Teaching includes a clear commitment to and record of an effective teaching style, as well as a record of mentorship, particularly in association with an active laboratory.

Neurobiology Normal Merit Standards: Promotion to Full Professor

We have included a copy of our School normal merit standards with this letter. In addition to those broad standards, the Department of Neurobiology has established expectations for faculty eligible for consideration for promotion to Full Professor. We expect a strong record of innovative research, generally measured by primary peer-reviewed research articles, i.e., senior corresponding or co-corresponding authorship on an average of one paper per year that make important contributions to both special subject areas and broad fields in neuroscience. We also highly value collaborative research and generally count publications as non-corresponding senior author as 0.5 of the full value that is assigned to the corresponding author, although collaborative publications can be weighed even higher if a substantial independent contribution to the published work is documented. In addition, we expect a strong record of external funding support, e.g. being a primary PI or co-PI (MPI is NIH term) on at least one active grant from NIH or equivalent agencies in the review period. The research program should reflect broad recognition and national and international impact, as reflected through a variety of metrics such as invited research talks, participation in conferences, service as an advisory or editorial board member or as a reviewer of research grants or institutions. Furthermore, we expect excellence in teaching and in mentorship to trainees, and a growing record of service to the Department, School, and Campus. Campus service includes consistent and active participation in faculty governance, such as serving on impactful committees in the School, with leadership roles. Sustained engagement in the Department's functions such as faculty searches, mentoring junior faculty, and training graduate students, is expected. Faculty at this level should have a record of teaching excellence reflecting a commitment to undergraduate and graduate education, along with a growing record of mentorship that demonstrates that graduate and postdoctoral mentees have gone on to successful careers.

Neurobiology Normal Merit Standards: advancement to Step VI

We have included a copy of our School normal merit standards with this letter. In addition to those broad standards, the Department of Neurobiology has established expectations for faculty eligible for consideration for advancement to Step VI. We expect a strong record of innovative research, generally measured by primary peer-reviewed research articles, i.e., senior corresponding or co-corresponding authorship on an average of one to two papers per year that make important contributions to both special subject areas and broad fields in neuroscience. We also highly value collaborative research and generally count publications as non-corresponding senior author as 0.5 of the full value that is assigned to the corresponding author, although collaborative publications can be weighed even higher if a substantial independent contribution to the published work is documented. In addition, a strong record of external funding support, e.g. being a primary PI or Co-PI (MPI is NIH term) on at least one active grant from NIH or equivalent agencies in the review period, sustained excellence in teaching, student education and mentorship to trainees, a strong record of service to the Department and to the School, as well as important contributions to the campus and the profession are expected. Their research program should demonstrate national and international recognition and significant impact, as reflected through a variety of metrics such as invited research talks and leadership roles in conferences, service as an advisory board member or consultant on reviews of research grants or institutions, service in editorial roles, etc. Campus service includes consistent and active participation in faculty governance, such as serving on senate committees, and leadership roles on impactful committees in the School. This campus-level service is an explicit expectation for advancement to and past Step VI. School and Departmental service expectations include annual membership of one School committee, sustained engagement in the Department's functions such as faculty searches, mentoring junior faculty, and training graduate students. Faculty at this level should have a record of teaching excellence reflecting a commitment to undergraduate and graduate education, along with a record of successful mentorship.

Neurobiology Normal Merit Standards: advancement to above scale and advancement further above scale

We have included a copy of our School normal merit standards with this letter. In addition to those broad standards, the Department of Neurobiology has established expectations for faculty eligible for consideration for advancement to above scale or advancement further above scale. We expect a strong record of innovative research, generally measured by primary peer-reviewed research articles, i.e., senior corresponding or co-corresponding authorship on an average of one to two papers per year that make significant contributions to both special subject areas and broad fields in neuroscience. We also highly value collaborative research and generally count publications as non-corresponding senior author as 0.5 of the full value that is assigned to the corresponding author, although collaborative publications can be weighed even higher if a substantial independent contribution to the published work is documented. In addition, a strong record of external funding support, e.g. being a primary PI on at least one active grant from NIH, NSF or equivalent agencies in the review period, sustained excellence in teaching, student education and mentorship to trainees, a strong record of service to the Department and to the School, as well as significant contributions to the campus and the profession are expected. Their research program should consistently demonstrate national and international recognition and significant impact, as reflected through a variety of metrics such as invited research talks and leadership roles in conferences, service as an advisory board member or consultant on reviews of research grants or institutions, service in editorial roles, and election to scientific societies. In addition, there should be evidence that this level of achievement will continue beyond the current review. Campus service includes consistent and active participation in faculty governance at the highest level, such as serving on senate committees with campus-wide impact, leadership roles in the School, and sustained engagement in the Department's functions such as faculty searches, mentoring junior faculty, and training students in graduate programs. Faculty at this level should have a record of teaching excellence reflecting a commitment to undergraduate and graduate education, along with a record of successful mentorship.

Discipline-specific Impacts Statement

The Department of Neurobiology conducts research that is inherently hands-on. Faculty in this field study living things that require in-person care and attention around the clock, 7 days a week. The work requires dedicated lab personnel, which include graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, undergraduate students, and research staff. Research opportunities for all NB faculty were severely hindered by a number of external events since the beginning of 2020. First, the restrictions on campus access and limitations on personnel density that were in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic from March 2020 until Summer 2021 placed great stress on our faculty and their research programs. The impact was particularly significant on our junior faculty that were just launching their independent research programs, and was greatly exacerbated by the campus's poorly-managed Enterprise System Renewal (ESR) transition, including a new payroll system, timekeeping system, and financial system, that was launched in the midst of the pandemic. The negative effects of the pandemic and the ESR transition continue to reverberate and have negatively impacted the ability of NB faculty to advance their research agendas and generate timely publications. In particular, the inability to accurately monitor lab finances following the ESR transition has impacted decision-making, hiring, and in turn research productivity. Compounding these two events, the UAW strikes and collective bargaining agreements for graduate students and postdocs in late 2023/early 2024, which both disrupted normal work plans and significantly and suddenly increased costs for graduate students and postdocs that work in NB faculty research groups, negatively impacted NB faculty research programs. The pandemic and the UAW strike also disrupted teaching and significantly increased the time burden placed on NB faculty to abruptly adjust their courses, which further affected their research productivity. These events have also had an outsized impact on our Teaching Professors, as these faculty are responsible for teaching multiple courses each year including, for most Teaching Professors, laboratory courses. More recently, the disruption of federal funding and the uncertainty associated with it has added yet another significant stress to the research efforts of NB faculty that rely on federal support for their research programs. Altogether, these events have had a substantial negative impact on the scholarly opportunities available to faculty in our field. During the current academic reviews, we will therefore carefully consider achievement relative to opportunity for each NB faculty member.