

Texas A&M University

## **Faculty of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology**

Academic and Operational Policies

*Amended March 2025*

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### **I. Description and Purpose**

The Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology (EEB) at Texas A&M University (TAMU) represents an interdisciplinary group of faculty, students, and postdoctoral researchers from multiple departments in several colleges within the University. The purpose of the program is to integrate individual research and teaching programs in the discipline of ecology and evolutionary biology into an internationally outstanding graduate and postgraduate research and teaching program.

Specific goals of the program include:

- to maintain, grow, and strengthen the Doctoral Degree Program in EEB.
- to identify and formally link TAMU faculty members with a major research focus in EEB.
- to enhance recruitment of the most competitive graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, and faculty.
- to create an environment that fosters establishment of interdisciplinary teams that can compete for extramural funding for research and graduate training.
- to enhance interdisciplinary training in ecology and evolutionary biology.
- to provide learning and training opportunities in EEB to undergraduate students, graduate students, and postdoctoral scholars at TAMU.

### **II. Membership**

A. Core members of the Faculty of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology will be entitled to serve as committee chair for EEB students. Core membership requires:

1. membership in the Graduate Faculty at TAMU.
2. willingness and capability to serve as committee chair for students seeking a graduate degree in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology.
3. willingness and capability to teach graduate courses in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology.
4. willingness to serve on standing committees and attend meetings of the Faculty of EEB.
5. approval by a majority of the Executive Committee of the Faculty of EEB.
6. written approval of faculty members department head.

7. submission of an annual report of scholarly activities, as well as other reporting information as required by the Chair.

Failure to submit a report in two consecutive years shall result in loss of membership. Core members who do not serve on student or standing committees, teach EEB courses, or attend faculty meetings in two consecutive years will be automatically classified as Associate members.

B. Associate membership in the Faculty of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology is available to members of the TAMU graduate faculty who have research interests in EEB. Associate members can serve on EEB graduate student committees and standing committees and can serve as co-chair along with an EEB core member. Admission shall be determined by a favorable vote of the majority of the Executive Committee after nomination of the candidate by any member of the Faculty. Submission of an annual report is required as for core members.

C. Adjunct membership is available to members of graduate faculty at other institutions who can be nominated and approved using the same criteria as prescribed for associate membership. Adjunct members may co-advise students and serve on student committees as do associate members, provided they are appointed to the TAMU graduate faculty. Submission of an annual report is required as for core members.

D. Student and postdoctoral membership is automatically conferred upon students and postdoctoral fellows, respectively, under the supervision of EEB full and associate faculty, and is contingent upon EEB full or associate membership of their primary supervisor.

#### E. Evaluation of potential members

The executive committee will evaluate nominations and applications of individuals desiring membership in the Faculty. This evaluation will be based on evaluation of documentation, in the form of a curriculum vitae, indicating that the candidate has a viable research and graduate education program in EEB. The committee will be charged with making a final recommendation as to whether the candidate is accepted as a member, and if so, whether the candidate should be a core, associate, or adjunct member. The executive committee may periodically re-evaluate the continued membership of participating Faculty.

### **III. Organizational Framework**

#### A. Executive Committee

1. The executive committee will comprise ten members elected by core members of the Faculty of EEB. These members will include the Chair, Chair-Elect, and Past Chair, the Chairs of the five standing committees, the EEB Program Coordinator (non-voting), and the EEBISO President.
2. The elected chairs of the following committees will become members of the Executive Committee: Curriculum, Outreach, Seminar, Communications, and ARC.
3. The executive committee will be responsible for advising the Chair of the Faculty and assisting in direction of the overall program.

## B. Chair of the Faculty of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

1. The Chair will be the chief administrative officer of the Faculty of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. The Chair will be a member of the Executive Committee and selected by the full faculty. The term of the Chair will be two years, preceded by two years on the Executive Committee in the role of Chair-elect and followed by two years on the Executive Committee as Past Chair.
2. Responsibilities of the Chair include:
  - a) administration of the Faculty, including ex officio membership on all standing committees, chairing all official meetings of the Faculty and Executive Committee, and distributing minutes of all meetings to the membership subsequent to approval by the Executive Committee.
  - b) maintenance of archival records pertaining to service and other academic and scholarly activities of the Faculty.
  - c) appointment of ad hoc committees with approval by a majority of the Executive Committee.
  - d) development of the budget and approval of expenditures.
  - e) supervising personnel hired by the Faculty.
  - f) fulfilling and delegating reporting and compliance requirements.

## C. Chair-Elect and Past Chair of the Faculty of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

1. The Chair-Elect and immediate Past Chair will be members of the Executive Committee and ex officio members of all standing committees and will assist in fulfilling the Chair's duties as designated in item III.B.2.
2. The immediate Past Chair will serve as Chair of the Graduate Recruiting and Admissions Committee (GRAC).
3. In either the absence of the Chair or by request of the Chair, first the Chair-Elect and then the Past Chair may assume the position of chief administrative officer and be responsible for all duties designated to the Chair.

## D. Election of Executive Committee and Terms of Service

1. Members of the Executive Committee will be elected by electronic ballot to be distributed to all core members of the Faculty of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. Outreach, Seminar, Communications, and ARC chairs will be elected during odd years. The Curriculum chair, and the program Chair will be elected during even years. Two-year terms will begin August 1 of each year. Individual faculty members receiving the largest number of total votes will be elected to the Executive Committee.

2. In the case of a vacancy in either the Executive Committee or a standing committee prior to an election, appointment of a replacement, for the duration of the term, will be made by the Chair and with the approval of the majority of the Executive Committee.
3. Nominations and self-nominations for Executive Committee positions, including Chair, will be accepted by the Chair-elect up to April 15 of the year the term is to begin. Candidates must confirm their willingness to serve if elected. Election ballots will be distributed on May 1 and due by May 15. Terms will begin August 1 of the year of election and run through July 31 of the year after next.
4. Members of standing committees will be solicited from the core and associate membership and appointed for two-year terms by the Committee Chair.

#### E. Meetings and Policy Decisions

1. General meetings of the Faculty of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology will be held once per long semester. Other meetings of the Executive Committee will be held as required for conducting business of the Faculty. These meetings will convene at the request of the Chair or any member of the Executive Committee.
2. A quorum for the Executive Committee meetings will require a minimum of five members. At the general meetings, a quorum will constitute half of the core members plus one. Executive Committee members may appoint a proxy from the core membership for meetings of the Executive Committee.
3. Policy changes may be proposed by any core or associate member of the Faculty. Policy proposals will be assigned to an ad hoc committee or an appropriate standing committee and then reviewed by the Executive Committee prior to being voted upon by the entire core Faculty. Prior to any vote, a written notice of the proposal will be submitted to all core members two weeks prior to the vote. Any policy changes will require a majority vote of a quorum of core members of the Faculty of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology.

#### F. Standing Committees

All standing committees will consist of a Chair, who will be a member of the Executive Committee, plus appointed members from the Faculty of EEB. New committees will convene at the beginning of the fall semester, and membership of committees will be for two years. The number of members appointed to a committee will be set by the Executive Committee during the spring semester prior to the election of the next committee chair. The EEB Program Coordinator will be a non-voting member of all standing committees.

1. Curriculum Committee. The committee will be charged with strengthening and maintaining the doctoral curriculum in EEB. The committee will evaluate proposals for new courses with the EEEL prefix, as well as make recommendations for other pertinent courses pertaining to the fulfillment of the PhD. The committee will evaluate existing graduate courses through student and faculty input. Before the beginning of each academic year, this committee will compile an updated list of forthcoming courses that satisfy EEB distribution requirements, as well as other relevant courses, for distribution by the Communications Committee. Training will fall under the jurisdiction of the Curriculum Committee and they will be charged with organizing and maintaining

workshops, field courses, and other high-impact learning experiences that complement formal coursework.

2. Outreach Committee. The committee will be charged with organizing and implementing the Darwin Day annual outreach event for the community of Bryan-College Station.
3. Seminar Committee. This committee will solicit names of speakers and topics of interest from members of the EEB community. They will organize formal seminar presentations either directly through the Faculty or coordinated with respective departments, colleges, or interdisciplinary units. They will coordinate opportunities for interaction between visiting scholars and graduate students and faculty at TAMU. At the beginning of each semester, this committee will compile a list of seminars campus-wide with relevance to EEB for distribution by the Communications Committee. The outgoing Seminar Chair will continue to work in an advisory role to assist with visits by seminar speakers invited during her/his term.
4. Communications Committee. The committee will work with administrative staff and EEB community members to disseminate information relevant to EEB in a timely manner.
5. Graduate Recruiting and Admissions Committee (GRAC). The GRAC will be charged with evaluating applicants to the PhD program in EEB and making decisions on admissions and nominations for competitive fellowships, as well as selecting applicants for recruiting events.
6. Assessment and Reporting Committee (ARC). The ARC will be tasked with monitoring student progress towards the degree and with reporting program metrics to administrative entities.
7. Ad hoc Committees. The Chair, with the approval of the Executive Committee, may appoint ad hoc committees for designated purposes and a limited time. These committees will report to the Executive Committee, who will be responsible for reporting results to the full membership.

G. Student Representation. The EEB interdisciplinary student organization president will represent student concerns and participate in communications and meetings of the Executive Committee.

H. Program Coordinator. The Program Coordinator will assist the Chair and will have administrative responsibilities. They will become a central communicator and facilitator for faculty, students, and the international network. Duties include managing day-to-day activities and information requests; supervising design and updates to the website; coordinating course schedules and enrollment; organizing outreach and recruitment activities; managing graduate applications; arranging interviews for applicants; facilitating contacts with international partners; coordinating logistics for field courses and on-campus events; working to arrange internships at participating partner institutions; helping implement student recruitment strategies; tracking student progress; coordinating program assessment activities and compiling assessment data. The coordinator will also help implement new programs to increase undergraduate participation in EEB. Finally, the Program Coordinator will be a non-voting member on all standing committees.

I. Financial administration. Any Executive Committee member may authorize an expenditure under \$500, through administrative staff or other authorized account holders. Expenditures, \$2500 and over, and all personnel decisions, require a majority vote of the Executive Committee. Any expenditure that is over \$1000 of an approved budget requires a majority vote of the Executive Committee.

#### J. Curriculum Additions and Substitutions

1) Prescribed Elective Addition: Faculty members may petition the EEB Curriculum Committee to add a course they teach (or co-teach) to the EEB prescribed electives list by sending an updated syllabus and justification letter to the EEB Curriculum Chair. The justification letter is a brief statement (a few sentences) about how the course is relevant to EEB graduate education. The EEB Curriculum Committee will then vote to add this course to the prescribed electives list.

2) Substitution of Prescribed Elective: An EEB student can petition for a 1-time substitution of a prescribed elective course. The student needs to send a short justification (a few sentences) for why the substitution is needed. In addition, a syllabus for the course to serve as the substitute needs to be attached. The EEB curriculum committee will vote to accept the substitution.

K. Amendments to Bylaws. Amendments to the Bylaws are required to be submitted to the core members of the Faculty of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology for final approval or disapproval. Approval for solicitation of a full Faculty vote will require either approval by a majority of the Executive Committee or a written petition to the Executive Committee by a minimum of the lesser of five members or 25% of the core faculty. Final approval of an amendment will require a two-thirds majority of the core members of the Faculty. All amendments will be discussed at a meeting of the full faculty and/or via the faculty listserv, and voting will follow the procedure outlined in Part III.E.3.