

## DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY AND EVOLUTIONARY BIOLOGY

### POLICIES FOR CURATORS IN THE MUSEUM OF ZOOLOGY AND THE HERBARIUM

The research collections housed in the Herbarium and Museum of Zoology are a world-class resource for biodiversity scholarship, teaching and outreach. Curation of these biodiversity collections is a critical departmental function and one that requires faculty-level expertise. Thus, the department appoints certain faculty with appropriate expertise as curators with oversight responsibilities for the collections. Curators have responsibilities for the collections that are quite distinct from their own research and teaching and therefore curatorial activities are in lieu of some of the teaching effort expected for faculty in EEB. This policy outlines procedures for appointment of curators, describes the types of activities in which they are expected to engage, explains the process by which the balance of curation and teaching is determined for each curator, and describes evaluation procedures for curatorial efforts by faculty. Because curators work closely with staff appointed as collection managers or coordinators, this document also describes this staff role.

**Appointment:** All ads for open faculty positions in EEB (unless completely inappropriate) will contain language about the availability of the collections as an valuable resource for research and teaching and the possibility of taking on curatorial responsibilities as part of the faculty position. Once the search committee has developed the “long-short list” of candidates to be reviewed by the faculty, the Director(s) of the UMMZ and/or Herbarium as appropriate will specifically review the list for potential curators, including whether the candidate has expressed interest in this role in his or her cover letter and provide this information to the search committee and the department chair. If any potential curators are asked for an interview, the search committee will ensure that that candidate meets with the Director of the appropriate museum and with other curators during the interview. If the faculty votes to make an offer to a candidate who is a potential curator, the curators in the department will have a separate vote (convened by the director of the appropriate museum) on whether to also make an offer of a curatorial appointment.

**Curatorial Activities:** Curators are responsible for establishing the direction, vision, and funding support necessary to maximize the research and educational use of the collections by the department, the entire university, the broader national and international research community and the public.

Typical functions of a **curator** will include some or all of the following:

- Establishment of strategic priorities and implementation strategies for collection development, digitization, and networking
- Oversight of collection managers to ensure proper curation and use of the collections, and aid in making decisions about priorities for museum staff activities.
- Oversight of the accessioning process to ensure that all additions to the collections are compliant with appropriate permitting requirements.

- Consultation with collection managers on a regular basis concerning policies, loan approvals, databasing, student supervision, or other specific projects.
- Work with faculty and other instructors to make optimal use of the collections in educational activities.
- Oversight of updating and implementation of taxonomic changes to be consistent with current scientific understanding
- Obtaining funding for collection improvement projects.
- Providing expertise to government agencies, NGOs, and the public in particular areas of specialization.
- Engagement in outreach activities to the public, e.g., through participation in Museum of Natural History activities and exhibits.
- Mentoring graduate and undergraduate students to help prepare the next generation of biodiversity curators.

These faculty curatorial duties are distinct from those of Research Museum Collection Manager positions (typically called collection managers or collection coordinators). Collection coordinators also play an essential role in the Museum of Zoology and Herbarium by managing the daily operations of the collections. They typically also have expertise in the organisms in the specific collections for which they have responsibilities and may have relevant Masters or Ph.D. degrees. In the latter case, collection managers may also be appointed on the research scientist track and therefore able to serve as PIs on, for example, collection enhancement projects. Collection managers are supervised by museum curators, and they in turn often supervise students or project assistants.

Typical functions of collection managers include:

- Proper care and conservation of the collections or area of the collection to which they are assigned.
- Maintenance of permanent and proper records of all accessions and other transactions involving the specimens.
- Management of compliance with all permitting requirements for accessions to the collections.
- Management of collection databases and web page updates.
- Assistance with loans and other requests from students, staff, the external research community and the general public.
- Supervision and training of assistants in museum-related activities.
- Assistance and monitoring of visitors to the collections.

**Balance of teaching and curation:** High-quality curation demands a substantial time commitment by faculty curators. Therefore each curator engaged in activities associated with maintenance and enhancement of the collections will have a reduction in expected teaching effort of, **on average**, 0.5 course equivalents, i.e., they will teach the equivalent of 75% of the effort of non-curatorial EEB faculty. However, the actual balance of teaching and curatorial effort will be flexible for each individual and will be determined for three years at a time in conjunction with the triennial development of a three year teaching plan for the department. The Chair of EEB and the Director of the appropriate museum unit will meet with each faculty curator to discuss his or her proposed curatorial efforts over the

next three years, in light both of the needs of the collection over which they have oversight and teaching needs of the department. This plan will be reviewed each year as part of an annual meeting with the department chair. As with the teaching plan developed for each individual during this triennial department planning exercise, curatorial efforts determined in this way will nevertheless be flexible as opportunities arise and collection and teaching needs shift.

**Evaluation of curatorial activities:** As part of their annual departmental review, Professors with curatorial appointments will provide a summary of their curatorial activities with their Annual Faculty Report to the department and to the UMMZ or Herbarium Director. The summary should address contributions in the areas described above, as well as any other relevant activities. The Director assesses curatorial activities and provides input to the Promotion and Merit Committee in their annual evaluation of all faculty, which in turn advises the chair on faculty performance for determination of merit pay.

*Approved by Executive Committee:*

*December 12, 2011*