

**Policy Statement**  
**Department of Blindness and Low Vision Studies**

**Article I. --Membership**

Section 1

Membership in the Department of Blindness and Low Vision Studies consists of all full time ranked faculty appointed by the Department.

Section 2

All full time staff personnel and adjunct faculty shall have the right to attend faculty meetings but will be non-voting participants.

Section 3

Such personnel, however, can be designated by the Chairperson to serve as voting members of appropriate committees.

**Article II. -- Meetings**

Section 1

Meetings of the Department shall be held at least once each month of the academic year.

Section 2

Special meetings can be initiated by the Department Chairperson, or by a majority of the members of the Department.

Section 3

Meetings will typically be held the first Friday of each month of the academic year.

Section 4

Meetings must be confirmed or rescheduled forty-eight hours prior to their scheduled time with an agenda announced and sent to each faculty member.

Section 5

A majority of the Department members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

**Article III. -- Appointment of Faculty**

In matters involving the appointment or reappointment of faculty, faculty members affirm their right to make relevant, germane and timely recommendations to the department Chairperson. Such recommendations will provide direction as to the professional competence and performance of candidates, as well as to their potential personal and professional contributions to the University, and shall be made in accordance with the Departmental Policy Statement.

### Section 1

The Chairperson, in consultation with the Committee of the Whole, will identify a Search Committee to oversee any search for a faculty member to fill an identified position. This committee will be made up of at least one faculty member from the program in which the identified position resides, at least one other faculty member from the Department, and at least one member from outside the Department but who holds credentials relevant to the identified position. The faculty member from the program in which the identified position resides shall serve as the committee chair.

### Section 2

The Search Committee will work with the Committee of the Whole in developing criteria, and for suggestions regarding required credentials for those considered to be eligible for appointment to the department, preparing a job description, and preparing a position justification.

### Section 3

After authorization from the Dean and the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Search Committee will advertise the position consistent with University Policy.

### Section 4

The Search Committee will screen credentials of all applicants and their relevant publications will be requested. The Committee Chair will maintain a position activity record summarizing all actions about each applicant. All applications will be acknowledged and handled in a uniform fashion.

### Section 5

Two weeks before the cut-off date, the Department Chairperson will submit a profile of the entire applicant pool to the Dean. Approval for diversity by the Dean and Academic Affairs is necessary before future processing can occur. Any applications that come in after the pool is submitted, and before the cut-off date, also will be included in the final pool.

### Section 6

Applications will be considered when all materials have been submitted. A written summary of decisions regarding the candidates will be maintained. After the closing date, the Search Committee will identify the most desirable candidates.

### Section 7

Before issuing invitations for any interviews, the Office of Institutional Equity must be consulted to assure that diversity questions have been adequately addressed and that candidates to be interviewed are appropriate for the rank and funding level of the position.

### Section 8

Interviews will be conducted by the Search Committee and by the Dean. In addition, each candidate will be asked to present a colloquium. After the last visit, the faculty will vote by individual ballot. The results of this vote will be tabulated immediately and the faculty's recommendation regarding the rank ordering of candidates (usually one, two, or three individuals) will be forwarded to the Dean.

## **Article IV. -- Selection of a Chairperson**

Recommendations regarding appointment of a chairperson will be made by the Committee of the Whole. The responsibility of the Committee shall be as follows:

### **Section 1**

When a new departmental chairperson is to be chosen, the Committee of the Whole will meet with the Dean of the College of Health and Human Services to discuss the present needs of the Department, potential sources of applicants and criteria for the position.

### **Section 2**

The Committee of the Whole will function as a Search Committee. In addition the Search Committee may choose to add other individuals who may be appropriate (e.g. field instructor, student, agency administrator). Furthermore, additional individuals may be asked to serve as consultants rather than full fledged members of the Committee. A Chairperson from another Department will assume the responsibility for coordinating the efforts of the Committee and in making their recommendations known.

### **Section 3**

The Search Committee Chairperson will consult with the Dean and all Department members in developing additional criteria, and for suggestions regarding required credentials for those considered to be eligible for appointment to the position.

### **Section 4**

After authorization from the Dean and the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Chairperson will advertise the position consistent with University and Affirmative Action Policy.

### **Section 5**

The Search Committee will screen credentials of all applicants and their relevant publications will be requested. The Committee will maintain a position activity record summarizing all actions about each applicant. All applications will be acknowledged and handled in a uniform fashion.

### **Section 6**

Two weeks before the cut-off date, the Search Committee Chairperson will submit a profile of the entire applicant pool to the Dean to ensure that candidates to be interviewed are appropriate for the rank and funding level of the position. Approval for diversity by the Office of Institutional Equity is necessary before future processing can occur. Any applications that come in after the pool is submitted, and before the cut-off date, also will be included in the final pool.

### **Section 7**

Applications will be considered when all materials have been submitted. A written summary of decisions regarding the candidates will be maintained. After the closing date, the Committee will identify the most desirable candidates.

### Section 8

Interviews will be conducted by the Committee, by the Dean, and where appropriate by other interested individuals (e.g. the Vice President for Academic Affairs, Chairs and Directors within the College, etc). In addition each candidate will be asked to present a colloquium. After the last visit, the faculty will vote by individual ballot. The results of this vote will be tabulated immediately and the faculty's recommendation regarding the rank ordering of candidates (usually one, two, or three individuals) will be forwarded to the Dean.

### **Article V. -- Chairperson**

The duties, method and selection, and review of the Chairperson shall be in accordance with those provided in the WMU Personnel Policies. In addition, he/she shall have such duties as described in the policy statement of the Department.

#### Section 1 -- Recording Secretary

The Chairperson shall appoint a member to record the minutes of all faculty meetings. Such appointee will serve for the academic year and be responsible for distributing copies of minutes to all members.

#### Section 2 -- Program Coordinators

The Chairperson shall appoint a program coordinator for each of the following areas. He/she shall have the power to make such other appointments as shall be necessary for the effective administration of the Department. Each of the identified positions below will typically carry the following credit assignments:

- a. Coordinator for Vision Rehabilitation Therapy (VRT) - 4 credits
- b. Coordinator for Orientation and Mobility (O&M) - 4 credits
- d. Coordinator for Rehabilitation Counseling/VRT - 4 credits
- e. Coordinator for Teachers of Children who are Visually Impaired/O&M - 4 credits

As in the departmental workload policy manual, the 4 credits of Workload associated with co-ordination of a program is broken down into the following components:

writing reports for federal agencies: 1 WH  
departmental and university paperwork: 1WH  
recruitment and admissions: 1 WH  
administration of the program: 1 WH

Co-ordination of 5950 adjunct instructors is a task also associated with 1 WH.

Further description of the departmental workload assignment policies and procedures can be found in Appendix A of this document.

#### Section 3 -- Salary Recommendations

All salary recommendations are made in accordance with the AAUP governing contract. Faculty merit will be determined by the Committee of the Whole as specified in the Departmental Merit

Policy and as specified in the AAUP contract. Special Provosts/Deans merit will be recommended by the Chairperson to the Dean.

#### Section 4 -- Assignment of Work Load

The Chairperson will assign each faculty member no more than 12 credit hours of assignment during Fall/Winter semesters and 6 credit hours in a Spring or Summer Session.

Courses will be assigned in the following way:

- 1) the designated credit hours do not directly correspond to the credit hours recognized by the department as a full work load (some translate into less than the stated number of hours). This occurs because certain technical and clinical courses require less preparation and thus are credited to the faculty at a lesser rate than the credit hours in the catalog would suggest. Likewise some of the clinical courses are highly individualized, and the credit assigned will depend upon the number of students who are supervised.
- 2) credit hours are assigned for certain tasks that support teaching but are not themselves a part of teaching. These may include practicum and internship coordination.

For a complete sequence and rationale for developing workload assignments for each semester, consult the Departmental workload policy. The following points highlight some aspects of departmental workload assignment particular to the Department of Blindness and Low Vision Studies.

1. Six catalog credit hours of internship supervision are assigned as 2 workload credit hours in each curriculum track. While the credits for this course in the catalog are designated at 6 credit hours, the time commitment is less demanding since field supervisors take on much of the responsibility leaving the university supervisor to maintain only telephone contact and usually one on-site visit per student each semester.
2. Program Coordination is credited as a 4 credit hour workload assignment. This is a specially assigned task for one faculty member in each track. The assignment requires the individual to recruit potential students, interview applicants, plan student programs, provide overall advising while students progress through the program, review curriculum issues, coordinate practicum activities, and provide a weekly practicum seminar. In some situations these activities may be divided up among two individuals and the credit assignment is commensurate with the amount of work of the assignment.
3. Four catalog credit hours of instruction of 5950 methods students are assigned as 2 workload credit hours per student. The course is time intensive but does not require extensive preparation. All instruction is conducted with a one-to-one student/faculty ratio for reasons of safety. This is necessary because each student is taught to travel throughout the city of Kalamazoo wearing a blindfold and using a cane.

4. Practicum supervision is assigned as a 1 credit hour course. The faculty member critiques student lesson plans, discusses progress with the supervisor each week, and meets individually with students to discuss their progress. This does not include practicum coordination or teaching of the practicum seminar.
5. One half credit hour is assigned for each student enrolled in 6100 or 7100 Research. Independent research complements the 6010 course. The faculty give direction to the literature review, assist the student in developing a methods section, plan for and assist with analysis of the data, and critique the study through its various revisions.
6. All other courses are credited at officially designated credit hour values.

In situations where an overload exists during a given semester, a compensatory adjustment in pay will be made in that semester.

A reduction in teaching load may be requested for a special project or extraordinary research. A request for such reduction in teaching load must be made to the Chairperson at least one month before the schedule for the semester affected is submitted to the College. A brief description of the project and indication of its potential for publication or direct benefit to the university must accompany the request. Approval for the release time must be approved by the Chairperson and the Dean.

#### Section 5 -- Spring Summer Assignments

Assignment of Spring or Summer assignments will be made with the approval of the Office of the Dean on an availability basis. Members with the greatest seniority who can fulfill the requirements will be given the first opportunity for participation.

#### Section 6 -- Departmental Budget

The Chairperson has the responsibility of reviewing all grant applications that impact upon the budget of the Department. All non-salary funds in the department budget shall be administered by the Chairperson. This includes funds for supplies, secretarial help, travel, equipment, and other items.

- a. Upon availability of funds, each faculty member shall receive a percentage of expenses towards the attendance of one national or regional meeting each year. Additional compensation for such travel will be provided to members who are presenting the results of their research or scholarly endeavors, are involved in national committee meetings, or hold divisional or national offices.
- b. Reimbursement for attendance at additional meetings will depend upon budget considerations.

### **Article VI. -- Evaluation of Teaching**

#### Section 1

Evidence of competence in teaching is essential in order for a teaching faculty member to be favorably recommended for promotion and/or tenure. Therefore, all promotion and/or tenure recommendations for teaching faculty shall include summaries of student evaluations.

## Section 2

Each faculty member shall provide for student evaluation of each of his or her courses at least once each year. The evaluations will be conducted during the last quarter of a session in which the course is taught. With the instructor not present, evaluation forms will be distributed during a class meeting by a student; the forms will be completed during the meeting, collected by the student and delivered to the Department secretary who will send them to Testing and Guidance for analysis. In the case of new faculty, the results of teaching evaluations will be shared with the Department Chairperson each semester prior to the time of the second year review.

## Section 3

Peer evaluation and external evaluation by professional colleagues is encouraged.

## **Article VII. -- Standing Committees**

### Section 1

Standing committees of the Department of Blindness and Low Vision Studies shall include the following:

- a. The Committee of the Whole
- b. The Department Promotion Committee
- c. The Tenure Review Committee
- d. The Recruitment Committee
- e. The Scholarship Committee
- f. The Search Committee
- g. The Sabbatical Leave Committee
- h. The Library Representative

### Section 2

The terms of office of all standing committees shall begin on September 15th and end on September 14 of the following year.

### Section 3

New members shall be elected or appointed for the following year during the first regular faculty meeting during Fall Semester.

### Section 4

Self nomination for committees will be solicited at the faculty orientation at the beginning of the academic year.

### Section 5

Each standing committee, except where specified otherwise in the policy statement shall, when deemed appropriate, allow student representation.

- a. All student representatives shall have all rights and privileges due committee members
- b. Student representatives shall be notified by the respective committees of scheduled meetings or changes thereof.

#### Section 6

Vacancies on standing committees which occur during the year may be filled by appointment by the Chairperson.

#### Section 7

The chairpersons of the various standing committees shall be elected at the committee's first meeting.

#### Section 8

It is the responsibility of all committee chairpersons to select meeting times which are suitable for the committee members.

#### Section 9

The Department Promotion Committee shall consist of the Committee of the Whole minus the candidate in question.

#### Section 10

The Tenure Review Committee shall consist of the Committee of the Whole minus the applicant.

#### Section 11

The Recruitment Committee shall consist of volunteer member of the Committee of the Whole.

#### Section 12

The Scholarship Committee shall consist of the Chairperson and each of the program coordinators.

#### Section 13

The Search Committee shall be chaired by one faculty member (preferably from the program in which the identified position resides), and include one other departmental faculty member and one member from outside the department.

#### Section 14

The Sabbatical Leave Committee shall consist of the Committee of the Whole minus any individuals applying for Leave.

#### Section 15

The Library Representative will represent the Department on the University Library Committee.

#### Section 16

The Committee of the Whole shall consist of all full time faculty members who hold rank. The Committee will have the following functions:

- a. Render decisions regarding student issues.
- b. Make recommendations concerning the establishment, alteration or abolition of curricula offered by the Department, and the reviewing of courses offered by other departments which are required for graduation by this department.
- c. Initiate and coordinate the Chairperson evaluation.

- d. Render other decisions as specified in this policy statement.

## **Article VIII. -- Special Committees**

### Section 1

Special Committees may be appointed by the Chairperson at any time during the year for the purpose of considering business not already under consideration by a standing committee.

### Section 2

Special Committees may be comprised of full time faculty members or other personnel as designated by the Chairperson.

### Section 3

Dissolution of a Special Committee shall take place upon completion of the assigned task or upon the motion of the Chairperson.

## **Article IX. -- Faculty Tenure Reviews**

### Section 1

All tenure reviews will be conducted in accordance with the principles specified in the Contract.

### Section 2

Tenure reviews will be conducted by the Tenure Review Committee for faculty in their second, fourth, and sixth years.

### Section 3

Tenure reviews serve the dual purpose of informing the candidate of progress toward tenure and to enable the faculty to review and evaluate the performance of the candidate as to provide constructive advice and assistance.

### Section 4

No faculty member in the Department of Blindness and Low Vision Studies will be considered for final tenure review who has not received a doctoral degree (eg. Ph.D., Ed.D., Rh.D.).

### Section 5

The criteria for tenure evaluation is specified in the Contract. In addition, the following department judgmental criteria will be considered.

- a. Professional Competence. The Department of Blindness and Low Vision Studies concurs in considering "competence in teaching is a necessity for awarding tenure to teaching faculty" (Article XVII Tenure Policy, Section 5, item 1).
  - 1. Teaching: Record of courses taught including enrollments, summaries of student evaluation, letters of commendation or criticism.
  - 2. Directing student projects: Seminars, independent study, honors activities, theses, and dissertations.
  - 3. Curriculum and course development: Reports, syllabi, instructional computer programs, and manuscripts.

4. Coordination of a departmental program (e.g., VRT, OMA, OMC, TCVI, RCT) or a portion thereof (e.g. internship coordination, practicum coordination).
  5. Self-education: Reports of activities.
- b. Professional Recognition
1. Research: Publications, correspondence with editors concerning manuscripts, reprints, research grants, research reports, personnel preparation grants, letters of evaluation of research by colleagues and outside professional consultants, reviews, and reports of research in process.
  2. Exposition: Publications and books, letters of evaluation, reviews, reports and abstracts of presentation in departmental colloquia here and elsewhere and of talks at meetings and conferences, and reports of activities in process.
  3. Service: Directing Student research activities and reports of internal and external consulting projects, editing and refereeing for journals, writing reviews, organizing and directing special conferences and editing the proceedings therefrom, and service on national or regional committees of various professional organizations related to Blindness and Low Vision Studies.
- c. Professional Service
1. Department: Participation in committees, advising and other assigned duties.
  2. College: Participation on Committees and task forces.
  3. University: Participation in councils, committees, the Faculty Senate, and task forces; major efforts on behalf of the Chapter; and representation of the University at official academic and educational functions.
  4. Community: Contributions to the public and private sector which relate to academic and scholarly enterprises.
  5. With regard to Professional Service, the absence of contributions in a particular area shall not by itself be prejudicial to the candidate.

The Department of Blindness and Low Vision Studies considers a combination of all three criteria essential to a satisfactory Tenure Review. However, it is understood that Professional Recognition and Professional Service require time to develop and grow. Therefore, certain lacks in these two areas may be considered more acceptable in the earlier probationary reviews. Certain problems in teaching may also be encountered by the novice faculty member. While the Department of Blindness and Low Vision Studies considers all three criteria of great significance, each candidate will be evaluated on his/her merit. There must be achievement in all three areas with significant performance in at least two of the areas. Something less than significant accomplishment may be accepted in Professional Recognition or Professional Service, if 1) there is at least some positive evidence for the weak area; and 2) the remaining criteria are considered to be outstanding.

In no case will a candidate be recommended for Tenure who has had a significantly poor record in teaching, with no evidence of improvement during the probationary period.

### Section 6

The Chairperson will notify all eligible faculty members of the pending tenure reviews by the middle of November.

### Section 7

The Chairperson will convene the initial meeting of the Tenure Committee by the middle of November, confirm the names of candidates eligible, and provide the Committee with the files of all eligible candidates.

### Section 8

The candidate shall be asked to submit to the Chairperson of the Tenure Review Committee, by the end of the Fall Semester, a current curriculum vitae and other pertinent, supporting information.

### Section 9

The Department Tenure Committee has the following responsibilities:

- a. State clearly the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate in relation to Professional Competence, Professional Recognition and Professional Service.
- b. Any recommendations to deny tenure must include clear statements of the reasons communicated in writing to the candidates.
- c. When the recommendation is to continue the appointment with conditions, specify clearly any identified deficiencies which, if not corrected, could lead to a negative recommendation in the future.
- d. When the recommendation is to discontinue the appointment or to deny tenure, state clearly and precisely the reasons for the recommendation.
- e. The committee must address any issues which were raised by a previous committee and by the Dean or Provost.
- f. Each candidate's materials should be assembled in a file folder in the order indicated on the checklist, including summaries of teaching evaluations and other pertinent documentation. The committee should assist the candidate to assemble the necessary documentation.

### Section 10

The Department Tenure Committee must complete its reviews and inform the candidates within a period sufficient to allow appeals prior to submitting recommendations to the Department Chairperson (January 15th).

### Section 11

The Chairperson will complete an independent review and inform the candidates within a period sufficient to allow appeals prior to submitting recommendations to the Dean (February 10). The Chairperson will forward the Tenure Committee recommendations to the Dean at the same time.

### Section 12

The Dean will provide brief written statements to the candidates explaining his or her recommendations and will be available to meet and discuss them with the candidates prior to forwarding materials to the Provost.

## **Article X. -- Promotion of Faculty**

### Section 1

All promotion reviews will be conducted in accordance with the principles specified in the Contract.

### Section 2

The Chairperson will notify all eligible faculty members of the pending promotion reviews by the middle of November.

### Section 3

The Chairperson will convene the initial meeting of the Promotion Committee by the middle of November, confirm the names of candidates eligible, and provide the Committee with the files of all eligible candidates. In addition the Chairperson will request that all eligible faculty members assist in developing the files for review and certify their completeness prior to submission to the Promotion Committee. A potential candidate's failure to assist in assembling the required documentation will suffice to eliminate that faculty member from consideration.

### Section 4

The qualifying criteria in the Contract forms the basis for evaluation with the inclusion of the following:

- a. Educational Attainments. No faculty member in the Department of Blindness and Low Vision Studies will be considered for promotion to any rank above the rank of Associate Professor who has not received the required terminal degree for this department (eg. Ph.D., Ed.D., Rh.D.).
- b. The question of credit toward promotion for full-time service at the same or higher rank at other institutions of higher learning will be considered and a recommendation will be made by the Promotions Committee to the Department Chairperson, the Dean, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs at the time of initial appointment. The Department will only consider the prior full-time service of individuals of established scholarly and professional accomplishment who have held at least the rank of assistant professor or equivalent at another institution.

Where probationary credit for prior service at time of hiring is a factor, the Promotions Committee will work in conjunction with the Tenure Review Committee in considering such service.

- c. The question of credit toward promotion for full or half-time service in the Department of BLS at WMU prior to acquiring a continuing Board appointment will be considered and a recommendation will be made by the Promotions Committee to the Department Chairperson, the Dean, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs, on the request of the

faculty member at the time consideration for such continuing Board appointment is being requested. (It is understood that two half-time academic years equal one full-time year of service for purposes of determining possible credit towards promotion).

Where probationary credit for prior service at time of hiring is a possibility, the Promotions Committee will work in conjunction with the Tenure Review Committee in considering such service prior to the Board appointment.

- d. The question of credit toward promotion for a non-Sabbatical leave of absence will be considered in conjunction with the Tenure Review Committee and a recommendation will be made to the Department Chairperson, the Dean, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

### Section 5

The judgmental criteria in the Contract forms the basis for evaluation with the inclusion of the following:

- a. Professional Competence
  1. Teaching: Record of courses taught including enrollments, summaries of student evaluation, letters of commendation or criticism.
  2. Directing student projects: Seminars, independent study, Honors activities, and theses.
  3. Curriculum and course development: Reports, syllabi, and manuscripts.
  4. Self-education: Reports of activities.
  5. Other professional duties: Reports, and letters of commendation or criticism.
- b. Professional Recognition
  1. Research: Publications, correspondence with editors concerning manuscripts, reprints, research grants, research reports, letters of evaluation of research by colleagues and outside professional consultants, reviews, and reports of research in process.
  2. Exposition: Publications and books, letters of evaluation, reviews, reports and abstracts of presentation in departmental colloquia here and elsewhere and of talks at meetings and conferences, and reports of activities in process.
  3. Service: Directing Student research activities and reports of internal and external consulting projects, editing and refereeing for journals, writing reviews, organizing and directing special conferences and editing the proceedings therefrom, and service on national or regional committees of various professional organizations related to Blindness and Low Vision Studies.
- c. Professional Service
  1. Department: Participation in committees, advising and other assigned duties.
  2. College: Participation in committees and task forces.
  3. University: Participation in councils, committees, the Faculty Senate, and task forces; major efforts on behalf of the Chapter; and representation of the University at official academic and educational functions.
  4. Community: Contributions to the public which relate to Blindness and Low Vision Studies.

With regard to Professional Service the absence of contributions by a candidate in a particular area should be by itself be prejudicial to the candidate.

#### Section 6

Faculty members who meet the eligibility criteria for nomination for promotion in any particular academic year and who wish to be considered for promotion in that year should provide the Chairman of the Department's Promotions Committee with an up-to-date curriculum vitae and other supporting data by the end of the Fall Semester.

#### Section 7

For promotion to associate professor, a developing publication record becomes most important. For promotion to a full professor, an individual must either have achieved outstanding professional recognition or have gained substantial professional recognition and have rendered significant service. A significant publication record is essential for promotion to full professor.

#### Section 8

The Department's Promotions Committee has the following responsibilities:

- a. State clearly the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate including reference to the performance areas of Professional Competence, Professional Recognition, and Professional Service.
- b. Any recommendations to deny promotion must include clear statements of the reasons communicated in writing to the candidates.
- c. Each candidate's materials should be assembled in a file folder in the order indicated on the checklist, including summaries of teaching evaluations and other pertinent documentation. The committee should assist the candidate to assemble the necessary documentation.

#### Section 9

The Department's Promotions Committee shall consider each eligible application for promotion and determine nominations and their rank order according to a simple majority vote of the Committee members; the vote will be in writing. The results of the review are submitted to the candidate within a period sufficient to allow for appeals (February 15th).

The results will then be transmitted to the College Promotion Committee on the forms and in the manner prescribed. Candidates for promotion may withdraw from candidacy at any time. If they withdraw, their files are not forwarded in the Review process. In that event, the Committee will not submit their names to the Department Chairperson and College Promotion Committee.

#### Section 10

The Chairperson will complete an independent review and inform the candidates within a period sufficient to allow appeals prior to submitting recommendations to the Deans (March 15th). The Chairperson will be available to meet with the candidates to discuss the written statements. The Chairperson will rank those candidates who he or she supports and forward the recommendations to the Dean.

#### Section 11

As specified in university policy, the Dean provides brief written statements to the candidates explaining their recommendations and is available to meet and discuss them with the candidates prior to forwarding ranked recommendations to the Provost.

## **Article XI. -- Merit Pay Policy**

### Section 1

All bargaining unit faculty are eligible for merit pay consideration in a given year (Article 32, Section 4). Department faculty who wish not to be considered for merit pay, shall submit a letter of withdrawal to the department committee.

### Section 2

Merit pay considerations shall be based on the evaluation of the performance of eligible faculty members in the following areas of judgmental performance: professional competence, professional recognition, and professional service.

The three stated areas of professional performance shall be viewed equally. Consideration shall be given to the prior twelve months of service, ending August 31.

### Section 3

The department's merit committee shall consist of the department's Committee of the Whole. The Chairperson of the Committee of the Whole may designate another faculty member as Chairperson for the Committee's merit pay deliberations.

### Section 4

The specified procedures recognized by the department shall be consistent from year to year. Any charges of substance shall result in a change of the department policy statement, subject to the appropriate approvals.

### Section 5

The department specifies the following dates:

- a. The merit pay committee shall be convened no later than September 15 by the chairperson of the Committee of the Whole.
- b. Eligible faculty who wish to withdraw in a given year must do so in writing to the committee by September 25.
- c. Eligible faculty shall submit their material to the merit committee no later than September 25.
- d. Faculty shall be notified of the committee's recommendation no later than October 5.
- e. Faculty who appeal the committee's recommendations must submit such appeal in writing no later than October 10.
- f. The committee shall make its recommendations to the Dean no later than October 15.

### Section 6

The department recognizes the WMU-AAUP Professional Activities Report (revised) as the uniform reporting instrument to be used for submission to the Committee. Applications received using other formats will not be accepted by the committee.

#### Section 7

The Committee shall notify faculty in writing of the committee's recommendations (See timetable above), so that appeals and or final recommendations can proceed in a timely fashion.

#### Section 8

Eligible faculty shall withdraw from the Committee at such time as his/her application is under consideration. Also, when a ranking system is used, such faculty member shall rank only the other faculty and not themselves. Similarly, a spouse shall withdraw when the partner's application is considered. Another faculty member may be substituted upon approval by the Committee.

#### Section 9

Faculty may appeal the recommendations of the Committee. (See timetable above). In such cases, the process is as follows:

- a. Faculty notifies Committee Chairperson in writing that appeal is requested.
- b. The Committee Chairperson supplies affected faculty with reasons for recommendations.
- c. If not resolved, the faculty may request a hearing with full committee.
- d. The Committee reconsiders and submits its recommendations to the faculty and the Dean.

### **Article XI. -- Sabbatical Leaves**

#### Section 1

Individuals are eligible for sabbatical leave who meet the following criteria:

- a. Tenured faculty members who have not had Sabbatical Leaves for a period of at least six years.
- b. Faculty members in the sixth and final year of probation for tenure and who receive positive recommendations for tenure.

#### Section 2

Faculty members interested in requesting Sabbatical Leave must submit their application to the Department Sabbatical Leave Committee by mid September.

- a. Applications must include a carefully defined project involving study, research, scholarship, and creative work of mutual benefit to the faculty member and the University.

#### Section 3

The Sabbatical Leave Committee will rank order all requests for Sabbatical leave and submit them to the Chairperson and the Dean of the College.

#### Section 4

The Department Chairperson shall review the applications and present recommendations to the Dean.

- a. The recommendations will reflect upon the response of the application to the criteria and the ability of the Department to find a suitable substitute for the applicant.

#### Section 4

As specified in university policy, the Dean provides a recommendation to the Provost who in turn transmits the material to the University Sabbatical Leave Committee.

#### Section 5

The University Sabbatical Leave Committee submits its recommendations and ranking to the Provost who after discussion with the President announces the recommendations that will go to the Board of Trustees for consideration.

#### Section 6

At each stage of the process those evaluating the applications will inform the applicants of the disposition and allow for timely appeals prior to forwarding their recommendations.

#### Section 7

At the completion of the sabbatical, the returning faculty member will make a report/presentation to the faculty.

### **Article XII. -- Student Issues**

#### Section 1

The first step should be informal discussion between the student and the person who made the decision.

#### Section 2

If informal discussion fails to resolve the issue, students may request a formal review of the decision by the faculty member or the academic official who made the original decision. A written statement regarding the decision must be filed in the student's folder. The student has the right to seek assistance from the University Ombuds in this process and in subsequent steps.

#### Section 3

When disputes have not been satisfactorily resolved, an appeals process may be utilized for issues which have occurred within the past 30 days. Appeals may be entered for the following issues:

- a. Grade disputes between faculty and students
- b. Disputes regarding application of program requirements
- c. Appeal of ineligibility for stipend and/or tuition assistance
- d. Dismissal from the Program
- e. Disputes regarding field placements
- f. Violation of Academic Integrity

The Committee of the Whole will function as the Appeals Committee.

Issues for which there is not an appeals procedure include:

- a. Non-admission (an applicant "not admitted" is not eligible for enrollment in courses or academic programs at WMU. Applicants who receive the "not admitted" status may reapply after 1 full calendar year for a reconsideration for admission at the university.)

#### Section 4

A student may be dismissed from his/her program when he/she fails to address the requirements of probation as listed in the graduate catalog. Within the department, a student may be placed on probation or dismissed based on program Grade Point Average and unprofessional behavior (as monitored by the Student Professional Behavior Form – see Appendix C). Students are expected to maintain a rating of 3 or 4 in all areas of the professional behavior form. A rating of 1 or 2 in 1 or more areas will be discussed with the student and if performance in these areas is not improved in the next rating, the student may be denied practicum or internship placement or removed from the program, depending on the advice of the student's faculty advisor.

#### Section 5

If the student remains dissatisfied, the matter will be referred to the University Appeals process, as governed by the Office of the Ombuds.

#### Section 6

Throughout the review process, a student may select a representative to provide assistance during all proceedings. However, the student must advise the University in writing of the name and role of the representative when requesting a review.

### **Article XIII. -- Faculty Responsibilities**

#### Section 1

Each full time faculty member has the obligation to share in the functioning of the Department in its cooperative efforts to provide excellence in teaching, service to the community, the Department, the College, and the University, and to continually expand the knowledge base.

#### Section 2

Specific responsibilities which will further these goals include but are not limited to the following:

- a. Attending Departmental meetings regularly
- b. Participating on Departmental Committees
- c. Holding office hours to meet with students
- d. Evaluating and improving teaching
- e. Representing the department at commencement

### **Article XIV. -- Rights of Members**

#### Section 1

Each member shall have access to any of his or her files which are being kept by the Department.

#### Section 2

Any member shall have the right to develop and submit to the Committee of the Whole any course such members feel to be essential. The Department shall review and evaluate each request.

#### Section 3

Each faculty member shall submit in writing any teaching and scheduling preferences for the next academic year to the Department Chairperson by the beginning of Fall Semester of the current year. Assignments shall be made fairly with an attempt to comply with individual requests.

#### Section 4 -- Grievances

It shall be the right of all members to bring any Departmental grievance to the attention of the Chairperson. In cases where such grievance is not satisfactorily resolved, a complaint may be filed in writing within 30 days after the event upon which the grievance is based. Grievances are resolved by following the AAUP procedures specified in the contract.

#### **Article XV. -- Ratification**

This policy statement shall be ratified by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members of the Department of Blindness and Low Vision Studies. The statement will become effective fourteen days after approval by the Provost of the University.

#### **Article XVI. -- Amendment**

Any proposed amendment to this policy statement shall be announced at a Departmental faculty meeting at which time the proposed amendment will be read and entered in the minutes. Discussion and action shall take place at the next regularly scheduled faculty meeting. A majority shall be sufficient for the adoption of the proposed amendment. Approval by the Provost will be necessary before the amendment becomes effective.

## Appendix A: Departmental Workload Assignment Policy

### Department of Blindness and Low Vision Studies Departmental Workload Policy Statement

#### Guiding Principles

The guiding mission of the Department of Blindness and Low Vision Studies is the preparation of professionals in the field of visual impairment. We believe that an important facet of this preparation is to maintain awareness of current developments in the field and to infuse these developments in the instruction of future professionals. We strive to educate professionals in assessment, planning, instruction, professionalism, research, and service. We recognize that just as professionals demonstrate strengths in different areas, faculty are often oriented more toward one area of endeavor than another. We seek to build on these differences to build a stronger department.

As a starting point, the WMU-AAUP Contract indicates that the maximum full-time faculty workload for traditional faculty is 24 credit hours or their equivalent per academic year or 6 credit hours in Summer I or Summer II (Article 42.§4) and 30 credit hours or their equivalent per academic year 7.5 credit hours in Summer I or Summer II for faculty specialists (Article 20.§2.3). These equivalencies will be met by assigning a combination of teaching, research, and service duties dictated by the evolving demands of individual faculty commitments and departmental needs.

General categories eligible for workload assignment include:

- classroom teaching (Article 42.§1.1)
- work on Master's theses (Article 42.§1.1)
- work on doctoral dissertations (Article 42.§1.1)
- work on comprehensive exams (Article 42.§1.1)
- clinical supervision (Article 42.§1.1)
- practica supervision (Article 42.§1.1)
- internship supervision (Article 42.§1.1)
- work on independent studies (Article 42.§1.1)
- professional training workshops (Article 42.§1.1)
- advising, supervising, mentoring, and consulting with students (Article 42.§1.2)
- research (Article 42.§1.3)
- writing (Article 42.§1.3)
- publication and creative artistic activities (Article 42.§1.3)
- maintaining and developing the department (Article 42.§1.4)
- university committee work (Article 42.§1.4)
- consultation to the university and its committees (Article 42.§1.5)
- supporting the proper and efficient functioning of academic and professional societies through leadership roles, editorial work, conference organization, and committee and board work (Article 42.§1.6)

Articles 42.§5.1 and 42.§5.2 indicate that adjustments to workload may be made for:

- advising more than 20 students
- teaching large classes
- substantial creative, scholarly, or research activity
- chairing/supervising doctoral dissertations
- directing Master's theses
- directing independent studies
- supervising field experiences or clinics
- mentoring new faculty
- course or program development
- departmental, college, university, community service
- service to professional or academic organizations

### **Workload assignment variables**

With these understandings, the faculty of the Department of Blindness and Low Vision Studies has developed the following guidelines for assigning workload within the department. Faculty will be able to be assigned load in any of five broad categories: academic teaching, advising, clinical practice, research and scholarship, and service.

#### 1. Academic teaching

Academic teaching encompasses classroom instruction, including supervision of practicum and internship students. The basic metric is that 1 Credit Hour (CH) equals 1 Workload Hour (WH). However, this metric may be altered in consideration of large class size (more than 50 students), new course development, course revision (ex. modification for on line delivery), or an intensive writing component. Specific alterations to the metric for particular courses are:

BLS 5950: 4 CH = 2 WH  
BLS 6950 seminar: 1 WH  
BLS 6100: .5 WH/student  
BLS 6910 seminar: 1 WH

#### 2. Advising

An important component of being a university faculty is advising students in their choice of coursework and guiding them through their programs. In this section, advising refers mainly to the ongoing administration of masters students through their coursework to program completion. As such, every student would have a faculty member assigned as an advisor.

Advising of up to 20 students: 1 WH (+.5 WH for every 10 students above 20)

Faculty may also play the role of an advisor for masters or doctoral students completing independent study courses, theses, or dissertations. Faculty will be assigned 1 WH for every 3

CH of BLS 7100, IHS 7100, or related coursework for which the faculty member is the principal instructor. Faculty will receive 1 WH for chairing a masters thesis committee or doctoral dissertation committee (to be granted in the semester in which the thesis or dissertation is defended). A faculty member may make a case for being granted 1 WH if he/she is a member, but not chair, on more than 5 masters and doctoral committees simultaneously.

### 3. Clinical Practice/Supervision

The faculty member designated as the low vision clinic co-ordinator will receive 2 WH for running the clinic, including supervising student placement and experiences in the clinic. Co-ordination of practicum placements and supervision and co-ordination of internship placements and supervision will each be associated with 1 WH. The actual supervision of practicum and internship students will be as follows:

BLS 6950: .5 WH/student  
BLS 6910: .5 WH/student  
BLS 7120: .5 WH/student  
SPED 6740: .5 WH/student  
CECP 6120: .8 WH/student  
CECP 6130: .8 WH/student

Teaching the program seminar related to practicum will be associated with 1 WH.

### 4. Research and Scholarship

This area includes conducting research, writing research grants, writing personnel preparation grants, developing research agendas, maintaining laboratory procedures, and scholarly writing. Within the ability of departmental needs, all faculty will be assigned 3 WH in each of the fall and spring semesters to devote to these activities. Additional WH may be assigned in this category for heavy responsibilities in grant administration, active research, scholarly writing responsibilities, or research grant proposal development and writing. The assignment of 3 WH is not applicable to faculty who are designated as holding “research intensive” positions. These positions remain as they were initially designated. A plan for these WH will be discussed between each faculty member and the chair before each semester.

### 5. Service

All faculty are required to perform certain duties as service to their department, university, profession, and field. A basic level of service includes membership on a university committee, involvement in departmental meetings required for the running of the department, and involvement in one community activity related to the profession. Because faculty in the Department of Blindness and Low Vision Studies at Western Michigan University is traditionally seen as being heavily involved in leadership roles in the field of visual impairment, faculty in the department will be awarded 2 WH each semester to allow for service involvement beyond the basic level. Examples of heavy responsibilities include holding a significant leadership post in a professional organization, being editor for a professional journal, or leading a

university task force on governmental relations. A plan for these WH will be discussed by each faculty member with the chair for each semester when the faculty meets with the chair to discuss workload designations for the semester.

## 6. Program Co-ordination

Faculty designated as program co-ordinators perform certain duties as a result of their roles that other faculty either do not perform or perform at a much reduced level. Program co-ordinators will receive workload for the following tasks:

writing reports for federal agencies: 1 WH  
departmental and university paperwork: 1WH  
recruitment and admissions: 1 WH  
administration of the program: 1 WH  
supervision of adjunct instructors (e.g., for BLS 5950): 1 WH

Each program in the department is developing or currently utilizing distance education components for providing coursework to students. Use of distance education models, both CD mailing and on line coursework, adds increased administrative pressure on faculty. Therefore, the logistics of administering distance education components across the departmental programs (e.g., mailing, answering questions, taping courses, organizing materials and students) will be associated with 2 WH.

### **Process for determining workload**

Workload assignments each semester will be designed to adequately meet departmental curricular demands, departmental goals and objectives, faculty commitments, and faculty needs. To ensure that departmental needs are met, the Chair and the faculty will discuss workload assignments at least 3 times each year in faculty meetings. Faculty who wish to apply for specialized workload assignments (due to heavy teaching, advising, research, or service commitments) will bring up these proposals for discussion at these workload planning meetings. It is at these meetings that faculty members will submit their plans for how they will use their 3 WH of Research and Scholarship and potential 2 WH of Service. The Chair will have the final determination of workload assignment after discussions with all faculty members. The Chair will pass a written proposal of workload assignment to a meeting of the faculty for review. Any deviations from the policies outlined in these policy guidelines must be accompanied by a supporting argument. Faculty will be given 10 days to respond.

Note: certain duties will be identified as being adjunct directed. Adjuncts will be contacted early to “save the date” but be open to changes in workload allocation.

## Appendix B: Policy for Dual Enrollment

There are two options for those students wishing dual preparation within the Vision Rehabilitation Therapy, Teacher of Children with Visual Impairments, and Orientation and Mobility Programs.

The first (Option A) requires the student to enroll in the program of first preference, complete it in the standard period and subsequently return to complete the second program. The penultimate semester will consist of all remaining academic courses along with a carefully monitored practicum. The final semester will be a full time internship placement.

In the second option (B), the student takes both programs simultaneously i.e., enrolls in the required courses of both programs during each of the first semesters. In this case, both internships are taken back to back during the final semesters. Also under option B, the practica of both programs would be taken over two semesters. Also under option B, the practica of both programs would be taken over two semesters, rather than in one, as in Option A.

Those students whose records demonstrate a history of academic excellence (GPA of 3.5 or higher) will be enrolled under Option B, while those with less proven academic skills will begin under Option A. Dual students are required to complete only one 6100/7100 project. Under option A new enrollees will be given priority.

# Appendix C – **Professional Development Assessment**®

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator (other than self): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions: For each professional behavior, review the descriptors and rate 1 through 4 by circling the selected number.

Rating Scale:      1. Rarely (50% or less of the time).  
                          2. Occasionally (50 to 75% of the time).  
                          3. Frequently (75 to 95% of the time).  
                          4. Consistently (95% or more of the time).

## 1. Dependability as demonstrated by:

- |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Being on time for classes, work, meetings                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b. Handing in assignments, papers, reports and notes when due | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c. Following through with commitments and responsibilities.   |   |   |   |   |

Comments:

## 2. Professional Presentation as demonstrated by:

- |  |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| a. Presenting oneself in a manner that is accepted by peers, clients, and employers. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b. Using body posture and affect that communicates interest or engaged attention.    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c. Displaying a positive attitude towards becoming a professional.                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Comments:

## 3. Initiative as demonstrated by.

- |  |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| a. Showing an energetic, positive, and motivated manner. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b. Self-starting projects, tasks and programs.           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c. Taking initiative to direct own learning.             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Comments:

## 4. Empathy as demonstrated by:

- |  |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| a. Being sensitive and responding to the feelings and behaviors of others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b. Listening to and considering the ideas and opinions of others.          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c. Rendering assistance to all individuals without bias or prejudice.      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Comments:

5. Cooperation as demonstrated by:

- |  |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| a. Working effectively with other individuals.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b. Showing consideration for the needs of the group.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c. Developing group cohesiveness by assisting in the development of the knowledge and awareness of others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Comments:

6. Organization as demonstrated by:

- |  |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| a. Prioritizing self and tasks.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b. Managing time and materials to meet program requirements.             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c. Using organization skills to contribute to the development of others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Comments:

7. Clinical Reasoning as demonstrated by:

- |  |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| a. Using an inquiring or questioning approach in class and clinic. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b. Analyzing, synthesizing, and interpreting information.          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c. Giving alternative solutions to complex issues and situations.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Comments:

8. Supervisory Process as demonstrated by:

- |  |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| a. Giving and receiving constructive feedback.                                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b. Modifying performance in response to meaningful feedback.                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c. Operating within the scope of ones own skills and seeking guidance when needed. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Comments:

9. Verbal Communication as demonstrated by:

- |  |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| a. Verbally interacting in class and clinic.                             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b. Sharing perceptions and opinions with clarity and quality of content. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c. Verbalizing opposing opinions with constructive results.              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Comments:

10. Written Communication as demonstrated by:

- |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Writing clear sentences.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b. Communicating ideas and opinions clearly and concisely in writing papers, notes, and reports.                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c. Communicating complex subject matter clearly and concisely in writing, with correct punctuation and grammar. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Comments: