

# NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

## Statement of the Departmental Functions and Criteria of the **Department of Astronomy** Revision: February 2016

Each faculty member is responsible for Teaching, Scholarship (Research), Service, and Outreach in the department as part of the department's responsibilities to the institution. The functions of the department in Teaching, Scholarship (Research), Service, and Outreach shall be:

**Teaching:** Teaching is a primary department responsibility. Our primary program is a graduate program, offering M.S. and Ph.D degrees. Graduate teaching involves both course-work and graduate advising. The Department does not offer an undergraduate major, but undergraduate teaching, to a large extent of general education courses, is also a significant component of our teaching responsibility.

The teaching loads of department faculty members will be assigned so that the necessary courses are offered each semester to meet the academic needs of the students at the lower and upper divisions, as well as graduate students. A faculty member budgeted exclusively from instruction and general funds will normally be responsible for the equivalent of teaching an annual minimum of 3 "contact" courses per academic year (9-12 credits), unless a reduced load is approved by the Dean. Balance between graduate and undergraduate courses can vary from faculty member to faculty member; both are equally valued.

**Scholarship:** Scholarship (Research) is, in any of its equally valued facets (Discovery, Integration, Application, Teaching), a primary responsibility of the department and its individual faculty. It also forms a core component of graduate education, so there is considerable interplay between teaching and scholarship.

**Service:** Service plays a significant role in the department's responsibilities to the institution and the broader academic and professional communities. Service activities include professional service (paper review, panel reviews, advisory committees, project management, etc.) in the faculty's various areas of expertise, as well as service to the University (Department, College, and University committee assignments, advisory boards, etc.) and community (activities where discipline provides appropriate expertise).

**Outreach:** The Department values outreach, particularly given the broad interest of the general public in astronomy and the recognition that much astronomical research is enabled by public funding. Outreach involves interaction with the public in the form of Observatory Open Houses, visits to/from local school and civic groups, responding to information request from the public and news organizations, etc.

# 1 CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

Each member of the faculty is expected to engage in Teaching, Scholarship (Research), Service, and Outreach activities within and on behalf of the department. Basic evaluation criteria are as follows:

## 1.1 FACULTY ASSIGNMENTS

1. Normal percentage-of-effort assignments for Teaching, Scholarship (Research), Service, and Outreach will be 45%, 40%, 12.5%, and 2.5%, respectively. Acceptable ranges will be 30% to 50% for each of Teaching and Scholarship (Research), 10% to 20% for professional service, and 2-5% for Outreach, depending on the strengths of faculty members and Departmental needs. Exceptions to this range will be allowed in cases of sabbatical leaves or other special circumstances, in consultation with the Dean.
2. Approved research buy-outs might be one reason for an adjustment of annual assignments, and are totally acceptable in terms of performance evaluation.
3. Percentage-of-effort for each faculty member for each calendar year will be agreed upon by the Faculty Member, Department Head, and College Dean at the start of each calendar year. These effort levels will account for sabbatical leaves, department needs, etc.
4. The sum of a faculty member's assignments to Teaching, Scholarship (Research), Service, and Outreach shall equal one-hundred percent (100%).

## 1.2 TEACHING

The quality and quantity of faculty teaching and student advising shall be taken into consideration when evaluating departmental faculty.

1. Quality: Evaluation criteria include:
  - teaching evaluation via student evaluation, peer evaluation, self-assessment, demonstration of teaching effectiveness, etc. Student course evaluations developed by the Department must be administered for each offered course at the conclusion of each academic term; mid-semester evaluations can also be appropriate and beneficial;
  - efforts towards improvement of teaching, including modification of teaching materials and development of innovative instructional approaches, participation in teaching workshops (e.g., Teaching Academy events), etc.;
  - progress of advised graduate students, student success in subsequent activities, etc.
2. Quantity: Criteria include:
  - total number of "contact" courses taught, should match annually-agreed upon course load and teaching percentage;
  - total student credit hours taught, so that individually-directed classes, e.g. independent research, dissertation research, etc., are recognized as important components of teaching;
  - number of graduate degree candidates supervised and their progress;

- to a lesser extent, student committee work load;
  - advising of undergraduate students, including undergraduate research advising.
3. Special Factors: Criteria include student participation in faculty research activities, special courses and seminars offered by the faculty member, development and implementation of new courses, teaching of courses to a broader audience (i.e., outside of NMSU), etc.

### 1.3 SCHOLARSHIP (RESEARCH)

1. Quality: Criteria will be those of peer evaluation and/or review on the basis of current professional standards. Specific areas to be considered, as defined by Boyer and all equally valued, will include:
- (a) Scholarship of Discovery: Those activities that increase knowledge within the faculty member's discipline; this is the traditional research in which all faculty members are expected to be engaged
  - (b) Scholarship of Integration: activities that make connections between discovery in the discipline and other disciplines, including interdisciplinary efforts that couple astronomical work with technology, computational science, engineering, etc.
  - (c) Scholarship of Application: activities that apply astronomical knowledge to societal, industrial, national, and international issues.
  - (d) Scholarship of Teaching: efforts that quantitatively address student learning and teaching methods within the discipline or in a broader science education context.

Scholarship activities should result in high-quality achievement of and dissemination of results (publications, meeting presentations, review articles, etc.) according to national standards, and should provide a basis for the highest quality education at the graduate level.

Interdisciplinary activities can be an integral component of Scholarship.

In the present structure of doctoral programs, grant support for scholarship (research) activities is an important part of efforts to maintain or improve upon the quality of the doctoral education and Scholarship productivity, and provides a community assessment of the quality of the faculty member's work.

2. Quantity and Communication:
- (a) Scholarship of Discovery. Criteria include:
    - the number and quality of publications (especially those in refereed journals). Note that, in astronomy, first (and often second or third) author papers generally represent a significantly larger fundamental contribution than appearing in a long author list, but that the latter can be relevant for a faculty member whose research is related to experiments conducted by a large group. Papers with a faculty member's student as first author should be considered equivalent to those with the faculty as first author, since they generally represent (at least) as large of an effort.
    - number of citations of published papers, although note that this can vary by sub-discipline, depending on the size of the sub-discipline;
    - meeting/conference presentations (especially invited presentations and papers);

- pursuit of and receipt of external funding focused upon scientific advancement, submission and success with other types of proposals (observing proposals, for example),
  - mission/project and scientific team involvement; selection for full proposal submission from white papers, etc.;
  - colloquia and special lectures presented at other institutions/departments, especially invited lectures;
  - efforts to establish and enhance University reputation through large project endeavors;
  - membership on conference organizing committees.
- (b) Scholarship of Integration. Criteria include the number of clearly identifiable interdisciplinary activities participated in (investigations, proposal submissions, meetings attended, papers published and presented, etc.) that would not have arisen from the faculty member working in isolation within their own discipline. If the result of the effort is not a peer-reviewed product (paper, proposal, etc.), the faculty member will provide documentation attesting to the evaluative process that results of the effort were subjected to. Other criteria include membership and/or chairing of interdisciplinary conferences or workshops.
- (c) Scholarship of application. Criteria include the number of activities (textbook development, expert testimony, algorithm development, etc.) in which the faculty member is engaged; if the activity engaged in does not lend itself to peer-review, the faculty member will provide documentation that the Scholarship of Application activity has received some form of external review by appropriate 'experts' in the area/field. Additional criteria include the creation of public databases/websites, and/or related data, for broad distribution to colleagues,
- (d) Scholarship of Teaching. Criteria will include peer-reviewed publications and submitted/funded proposals specifically focused upon the study of teaching methods and student learning methods in the discipline. Additional criteria could include external solicitation of student-learning tools developed by the faculty member.

## 1.4 SERVICE

1. Professional Discipline Service. Activities for evaluation include refereeing of papers for peer-reviewed journals, discipline-specific journal editing, evaluation of proposals for funding agencies/entities, professional organization/committee work (including meeting/conference planning), offices held in professional organizations in the faculty member's discipline, etc.
2. University/College/Departmental Service. Departmental committee work and university and college committee work are included; other factors are duties and responsibilities associated with management of university-connected research facilities and instruments, mission-related managerial responsibilities, etc. Fund raising activities on behalf of the Department, College, University, etc. are also a service activity.

## 1.5 OUTREACH

1. Public Engagement. Criteria would include the quantity of public lectures, observatory tours, public nights at the observatories, web-based public dissemination, etc. Testimonials of the quality of such activities from the inviting party are welcome.

2. Public Relations. Public relations activities on behalf of the department, college, and university are included. These include articles by or about the faculty member that are published in popular publications, newspapers, etc.

## **1.6 COLLEGE FACULTY**

College faculty may not be required to perform in all areas of teaching, scholarship, service, and outreach. When college faculty are hired, a written document will be developed and agreed upon by the faculty member and Department Head that outlines which areas, with relative percentages, will be used to evaluate performance. Within any given area, the evaluation criteria will be the same as for tenure-track faculty.

## **1.7 PROMOTION TO PROFESSOR**

Promotion to the rank of Professor is not automatic and should not be considered to be forthcoming merely because of years of service, or because tenure and promotion to Associate Professor was awarded. There is no specific number of years of service required to apply for promotion to Professor.

Above and beyond the criteria for promotion to Associate Professor, the qualities of a Professor would include:

1. Has demonstrated, through consistent and continuously growing accomplishments, that s/he has a mature intellectual command and view of the discipline as it relates to the candidate's primary subfield within the discipline.
2. Has established a record of engaging in various leadership roles within the candidate's profession and within the Department, College, and/or University in the areas of teaching, scholarship and creative activity, outreach, and/or service.
3. Has demonstrated a commitment to mentorship of faculty at lower ranks, empowering and enabling them to achieve their professional goals.
4. Since promotion to Associate Professor, has sustained and demonstrated civility, collegiality and professional integrity in all aspects of Department, College, and/or University Service.

When considering candidates for promotion to the rank of Professor, primary evaluation is given to performances in scholarship and creative activities, and leadership. There is no single definition of leadership; it is generally interpreted to mean that the candidate has engaged in some level of guiding, managing, directing, or supervising people or an organization. Serious evaluation is also given to teaching and advising/mentoring, service, and outreach.

Performance of a candidate for promotion to full professor is assessed in terms of how the above qualities and performances are sustained and on an assessment of the candidate's potential future contributions based on the candidate's record.

## **2 PROCEDURES OF EVALUATION:**

All tenure-track, tenured, and college faculty will be evaluated by the Department Head each year, based upon the information the faculty member provides in their Annual Performance Report (APR) submitted

during the Fall semester using the document/tool provided for that purpose. In all cases, the person being evaluated is responsible for supplying materials necessary for the evaluations. The Department Head will submit to the College each faculty member's submitted APR and the completed Department Head Evaluation of each faculty member, using the appropriate document/format. After discussion with the Dean's office, the Department Head will discuss with each individual faculty member the Department Head Evaluation of that faculty. The faculty member may submit a written statement in response to the Department Head's evaluation.

Each faculty member will meet with the Department Head annually to discuss and decide upon 'level of effort' percentages that the faculty member will direct toward Teaching, Scholarship (Research), Service, and Outreach during that calendar year. These percentage effort levels will be incorporated in to the "Goals and Objectives" statement that each faculty member will prepare at that same time, in consultation with the Department Head, to indicate their professional plans for the upcoming year.

All non-tenured tenure-track faculty will be annually evaluated by the Department Head and by the tenured faculty to assess progress toward promotion and tenure. The evaluation of non-tenured faculty by the tenured faculty occurs during the Spring semester through the departmental Promotion and Tenure committee. Membership of this committee is discussed in section 3 below. Both the Department Head and the Promotion and Tenure committee will prepare written evaluations of each non-tenured tenure-track faculty member's overall progress towards tenure and promotion and assessment of that non-tenured tenure-track faculty member's written "Goals and Objectives" statement for the year. These progress appraisals are separate from the Department Head's annual performance review (which occurs during the Fall semester). The Department Head will meet with the faculty member to discuss the faculty member's progress toward tenure as determined by the Department Head and the Promotion and Tenure committee. The faculty member may submit a written statement in response to the Promotion and Tenured Committee and/or Department Heads evaluation. These written evaluations plus any faculty response are thereafter delivered to the College Dean.

Faculty applying for promotion and/or tenure will be separately evaluated by the Department Head and by the Promotion and Tenure committee. Written reviews are prepared, based upon the candidate's portfolio of application materials, early during the Fall semester of the academic year during which the faculty member's application is submitted. See Section III in this document for additional information.

## **2.1 TEACHING EVALUATION PROCEDURES**

1. Annual Evaluation: evaluation of faculty teaching is based upon the teaching criteria listed above (section 1.2).
2. Evaluation for Promotion and Tenure: methods will include those employed for Annual Evaluation, although the assessment will also take in to account consideration of the multi-year progress of graduate students advised by the faculty member, the history/trending of student evaluations of course instruction, the breadth of courses taught during the faculty member's time in the department, faculty member involvement in securing financial support of graduate students, etc.

## **2.2 SCHOLARSHIP EVALUATION PROCEDURES**

1. Annual Evaluation. Evaluation of faculty research is based upon the criteria listed above (section 1.3).

2. Evaluation for Promotion and Tenure. Same as for Annual Evaluation, with the possible addition of demonstrated growth during the time toward tenure.

### **2.3 SERVICE EVALUATION PROCEDURES**

1. Annual Evaluation. Evaluation of faculty service is based upon the criteria listed above (section 1.4).
2. Evaluation for Promotion and Tenure: same as for Annual Evaluation, with the possible addition of demonstrated growth during the time toward tenure.

### **2.4 OUTREACH EVALUATION PROCEDURES**

1. Annual Evaluation. Evaluation of faculty outreach is based upon the criteria listed above (section 1.5).
2. Evaluation for Promotion and Tenure: same as for Annual Evaluation, with the possible addition of demonstrated growth in these activities during the time toward tenure.

## **3 PROMOTION AND TENURE APPLICATION PROCEDURES**

1. The department head will submit a written recommendation to the dean in matters of promotion and/or tenure.
2. A department committee, referred to as the Departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee, will be constituted to make recommendations of promotion and/or tenure. The committee will not include the department head but will consist of:
  - (a) a minimum of four tenured department faculty, plus one appointed (by the Dean) member from outside the department, when non-tenured faculty are being evaluated with regard to their progress toward tenure
  - (b) all departmental tenured faculty (who are not on leave), plus one appointed member from outside of the department, if the committee is to make a recommendation regarding tenure
  - (c) all department full and associate professors (who are not on leave), plus one appointed member from outside of the department, if the committee is to make a recommendation regarding promotion to associate professor.
  - (d) all department full professors (who are not on leave), plus one appointed member from outside of the department, if the committee is to make a recommendation regarding promotion to full Professor. Advice from other members of the faculty is encouraged.

Other issues pertaining to membership of the promotion and tenure committee:

The Dean, upon advice from the College Council, appoints at least one external full professor to each departmental promotion and tenure committee at all times. If the department faculty includes fewer than 4 members eligible for service on the promotion and tenure committee, the Dean will appoint more external members, to bring total membership to at least five (5) individuals. Membership of all tenured departmental faculty, as listed above, is only required for promotion and

tenure decisions. In the regular annual appraisals of progress towards tenure and promotion not all eligible faculty may need to serve, as long as the minimum membership of 5 (with one external full professor) is met.

Members of the tenure and promotion committee have the right and obligation to read candidate's files and take part in discussions and votes about annual progress reviews and for discussions and votes about tenure and/or promotion.

If requested, the Promotion and Tenure committee will meet with the Department Head, Dean, and/or other comparable administrator to discuss procedural matters.

3. The applicant for promotion and/or tenure is responsible for supplying relevant materials to the department head and to the committee, following college guidelines.
  - (a) The NMSU Policy Manual provides guidelines for application portfolio preparation in Section 5.90.5.5. The department can provide samples of portfolios, and will seek the written permission of previous portfolio preparers prior to making their samples available to the applicant.
  - (b) The applicant may not add to, subtract from, or modify application portfolio contents once the materials have been delivered to the Promotion and Tenure Committee for its evaluation, at a date agreed to by the Committee Chair and Department Head.
  - (c) The applicant's portfolio will be retained in the Astronomy Department main office and made available to the department Promotion and Tenure Committee membership.
  - (d) If the department Promotion and Tenure Committee would like to receive additional information from the applicant, the Committee will prepare a letter addressed to the Department Head indicating the additional information desired and a justification for its request for the information. The Department Head will consider the request, and, if in agreement, will convey the request to the candidate, who will have one week to provide the requested information or provide a response indicating why the information cannot or will not be provided.
4. The department head or the promotion and tenure committee chair will request additional written opinions by obtaining at least three (3) external letters of reference from professional peers and colleagues of the applicant; all solicited letters that are received by the deadline should be included in the package. These letters are not confidential. The letters should address the candidate's research qualifications, and, if applicable, other factors. Candidates may be requested to provide a list of potential outside referees to the department head and committee chair, but may not contact the external referees with regards to the tenure and/or promotion process. The tenure and promotion committee, in consultation with the department head, will select the external referees. Selection of suitable referees will primarily be based on the research area of the candidate in question, but may also include other factors if appropriately documented and explained by the promotion and tenure committee chair. The selection process of external referees will be documented in the recommendation on tenure and/or promotion to be forwarded to the College. It is acceptable if external letters are weighted more towards assessment of research performance than, e.g., to teaching performance. Potential referees will be contacted by email or mail, and will be provided instructions:
  - to provide a brief statement regarding the individual's qualifications for serving as a reviewer;
  - to provide a statement indicating the relationship between the candidate and reviewer;

- notification that the candidate may have an opportunity to read the letter of assessment;
  - notification that third parties may review the letter in the event of an EEOC or other investigation into a promotion or tenure decision.
5. Unsolicited external letters, should they be received by the department prior to or during the department Promotion and Tenure Committee's evaluation, will not be provided to nor considered by the Committee.
  6. The department head and the promotion and tenure committee will each submit written recommendations on promotion and/or tenure applications to the Dean with supporting materials. Any minority reports will be included. All materials supplied by the applicant or by the committee will be maintained in a file and will be available for inspection in accordance with college guidelines.
  7. Additional Promotion and Tenure Application Procedures
    - (a) University policies regarding promotion and tenure supercede College and Department policies should there be any difference among the policies of the different units.
    - (b) The University's criteria for promotion and tenure are described in Section 5.90.4 of the NMSU Policy Manual (December 2012).
    - (c) As stated in the NMSU Policy Manual, Section 5.90.3.6.2, extension of the probationary period (number of years prior to applying for tenure) is possible for specific situations as described in that section. A request for an extension must be initiated by the faculty member.
    - (d) Per University policy, a faculty member may request a mid-probationary review. This request should be made in writing to the Department Head.
    - (e) All materials submitted by a faculty member seeking promotion and/or tenure are considered confidential, as are the deliberations conducted by the department Promotion and Tenure Committee.
    - (f) The Department's Promotion and Tenure criteria and evaluation methods as spelled out in this document are to be reviewed and, if necessary, updated, every three academic years. This review will be initiated and conducted by the Department Head, in consultation with the rest of the faculty. If policies and or methods are changed, then-current faculty who have not yet earned tenure or promotion may select to retain the prior policies for the purpose of their evaluation, or they may choose to accept the new policies. Faculty members will indicate their choice in response to a letter of inquiry provided to them by the Department Head.
    - (g) During the evaluation process of a faculty member's application for promotion and/or tenure, the Department Head will meet with the departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee to discuss procedural policies the Committee will follow.
    - (h) The deliberations and votes of the departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee will be conducted in closed session and will remain confidential.
    - (i) When departmental Promotional and Tenure Committee members vote on applications for promotion or tenure, the member voting **MUST** be present in the meeting room, and individual's votes will be secret (written), and the numeric outcome of the vote (number of YES, NO, or ABSTAIN) will be recorded and retained by the Committee Chair.

- (j) The department Promotion and Tenure Committee Chair will prepare a letter, intended for delivery to the department head, which reflects the majority view of the Committee in regard to the application being considered. The letter should contain a numeric indication of the outcome of the vote. The letter should contain specific commendations, concerns, and recommendations addressing the department's criteria in each of the areas assessed in the evaluation process. Dissenting opinions should be acknowledged in the letter, with specific indications of which aspects of the criteria apply.
- (k) The department head will meet with the applicant and present a copy of the Committee's letter as well as the Department Head's own letter indicating her/his decision with regard to the application.
- (l) At any time during the application evaluation process, the candidate may withdraw the application for further consideration, as spelled out in the NMSU Policy Manual Section 5.90.5.6.
- (m) The Department will implement a post-tenure review process in conformity with the University's process as outlined in Section 5.87 of the NMSU Policy Manual (2008).
- (n) If an applicant wishes to appeal one or more aspects of the application review process, the policies outlined in Sections 4.05.40 of the NMSU Policy Manual will apply.

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Dean, Arts and Sciences

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Date

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Department Head, Astronomy

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Date