

**DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS AND ASTRONOMY  
GUIDELINES FOR FACULTY EVALUATION, PROMOTION, TENURE,  
AND PERFORMANCE-BASED RAISES**

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

This Department-level document specifies those aspects of the Guidelines for Faculty Evaluation, Promotion, Tenure, and Performance-Based Raises that are unique to the Department of Physics and Astronomy at West Virginia University. The topics in this document are arranged in the same order as is found in the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences document so as to provide consistency in the organizational structure between the documents. Those topics already described in the *West Virginia University Policies and Procedures for Annual Faculty Evaluation, Promotion, and Tenure* and the *Eberly College of Arts and Sciences Guidelines for Faculty Evaluation, Promotion, Tenure, and Performance-Based Raises* are not duplicated here. Since the basic and fundamental review of faculty takes place within the Department, the purpose of this manual is to describe and elaborate upon the criteria and policies for faculty assignments, faculty evaluation files, faculty evaluation, performance-based salary increases, promotion, and tenure at the Departmental level. Departmental policies are intended to conform to those of the West Virginia University Board of Governors, those of West Virginia University, and those of the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences. Therefore, it is important for faculty to study carefully the criteria, requirements, and procedures outlined in this manual and in the Board, University and College documents. In event of conflict among documents, the precedence is Board, University, College, and then Department.

Note that the evaluation of fellow faculty is a process that requires trust, mutual respect, and a commitment to objective analysis. Faculty are reminded that completing evaluations or performance reviews that are factually inconsistent with the material in the faculty files, in the opinion of the Department Chair and the Dean of the College, will result in a letter of reprimand from the chair in their annual file and may be subject to further disciplinary action consistent with the University's policies.

## **II. APPOINTMENT LETTER AND ASSIGNMENTS**

The definitions for various categories of faculty (e.g., tenure-track, teaching, research, adjunct, etc.), expectations for research and teaching, and assignment percentages are described in the *Eberly College of Arts and Sciences Guidelines for Faculty Evaluation, Promotion, Tenure, and Performance-Based Raises*. Each faculty member's Letter of Appointment defines the specific expectations for their position unless it has been changed by an officially approved Memorandum of Understanding between the faculty member of the Dean of the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences.

## **III. ANNUAL WORKLOAD PLAN**

Annual faculty assignments recognize that different faculty members contribute in different ways. Annual assignment plans reflect collaborative discussion between faculty and Chair. They provide opportunity to review progress, set goals, guide faculty toward success, and clarify metrics of evaluation. All Tenure-track faculty, Teaching faculty, Service faculty, and Research faculty participate in formalized annual assignment planning and the annual assignment is codified in the Annual Workload document signed by both the faculty member and the Department Chair by March 31<sup>st</sup> of each academic year.

For faculty members approved for a leave or a Modification of Duties, the approved leave or Modification of Duties plan is considered a Memorandum of Understanding temporarily adjusting the faculty member's assignment for the leave or modification period. Copies of the approved leave or Modification of Duties (or Memorandum of Understanding) and follow-up report are to be included in the annual evaluation file and taken into account during the annual evaluation.

For the purposes of guiding the development of workloads for tenure-track faculty, the Department of Physics and Astronomy identifies three levels of research activity: Research Intensive, Research Active, and Research Inactive.

Research Intensive: the faculty member has, over the past three years, engaged in an intensive level of research activity as demonstrated by the publication of physics, astronomy, or physics education research papers in peer-reviewed, archival journals AND the support of their research program by funding from agencies outside of West Virginia University AND mentoring of West Virginia University graduate students

(primarily), as well as undergraduates and postdocs, in research. Tenure-Track Assistant Professors are assumed to be Research Intensive throughout their pre-tenure period.

Research Active: the faculty member has, over the past three years, engaged in an active level of research as demonstrated by activity in at least two of the three following areas: the publication of physics, astronomy, or physics education research papers in peer-reviewed, archival journals; the support of their research program by funding from agencies external to West Virginia University; mentoring of West Virginia University graduate students (primarily), as well as undergraduates and postdocs, in research.

Research Inactive: the faculty member has, over the past three years, engaged in a low level of research activity as demonstrated by activity in only one or none of the three following areas: the publication of physics, astronomy, or physics education research papers in peer-reviewed, archival journals; the support of their research program by funding from agencies outside of West Virginia University; mentoring of West Virginia University graduate students (primarily), as well as undergraduates and postdocs, in research.

Normally, Research Intensive faculty will be assigned to teach two formal courses per academic year and the remainder of their teaching assignment will be fulfilled through their mentoring of students in research; Research Active faculty will be assigned to teach three courses per academic year the remainder of their teaching assignment will be fulfilled through their mentoring of students in research; and Research Inactive faculty will be assigned to teach four to six courses per year depending on the status of their research program and on other departmental responsibilities they may be assigned by the chair. The annual workload assignments (fractions of time) of faculty shall reflect their teaching assignment.

The teaching assignments of Teaching, Service, Visiting, and Research faculty are determined by their letters of Appointment and any subsequent memoranda of understanding.

#### **IV. THE FACULTY EVALUATION FILE**

Faculty members are responsible for reporting and documenting their achievements in teaching, research, and service in the departmental Faculty Evaluation File. It is incumbent upon faculty members to provide for the file evidence that: (a) demonstrates that they have carried out their assignment, and (b) informs the reviewer(s) of the quality of their work. For Physics and Astronomy, the file shall be closed for the review period on December 31. Only materials generated by the faculty evaluation process shall be added to the file after the deadline date. At this time of this writing, all faculty are required to update their productivity information each year in the Digital Measures electronic system and the annual productivity report will be generated from the Digital Measures system. The term "annual file" includes the electronic Digital Measures system. The electronic system may not completely replace the paper system until all supporting documentation, such as copies of proposals, course materials, etc. can be uploaded into the electronic system.

Specific to the Department of Physics and Astronomy, the teaching file for each untenured assistant and untenured associate professor and for each teaching assistant professor should include a peer-evaluation of their teaching in each regular course (non-research course). It is the responsibility of the faculty evaluation committee to assign a member of the faculty to perform the peer review. The significance of a particular teaching activity is not determined by the number of students served. It is recognized that research supervision and mentoring of individual students is particularly time-consuming for physics and astronomy. Consistent with the Eberly College Guidelines, the Department of Physics and Astronomy avoids sole or excessive reliance upon the student evaluation forms provided by the Faculty Senate. This is particularly important in the Department of Physics and Astronomy because PHYS/ASTR courses challenge students to a level to which they may not be accustomed. Both clarity of presentation and maintaining the necessary academic rigor in each course are essential. Peer review by faculty in the Department of Physics and Astronomy will be given significant weight by the Department in the evaluation of teaching. While this review is primarily carried out for all untenured faculty members, peer review of any faculty member's teaching may be requested by the individual to be reviewed in any year.

Specific to the Department of Physics and Astronomy, publications of research articles, books, and other manuscripts shall be counted as scholarly activity in the year they appear in print, i.e., the date that would appear in a citation of the work. Private consulting outside the University should normally not be considered as part of a productivity dossier. Faculty are encouraged to work with the Office of Sponsored Programs to structure consulting work as a contract to the University when appropriate. Exceptions should be clearly defined in the annual assignment document. Evidence of an active research program may include, but is not limited to: publication of research in peer-reviewed, archival journals; pursuing, and ultimately obtaining, adequate financial support from external sources to carry out research; developing research projects for students and postdocs that result in publications; filing patents, patent applications, and intellectual property disclosures; being invited to give external talks about one's current research; presenting research results at conferences; preparing conference proceedings for publication; receiving professional recognition for recent scientific accomplishments; and receiving positive citations in the scientific literature. It is expected that faculty will include in the annual file copies of all publications and patent-related materials (included commercial licenses) to be counted for the review period.

Research faculty assignments are defined to be at the level of 100% research. As such, these appointments normally include only teaching directly related to their research program: i.e. guiding those graduate, post-doctoral and undergraduate students who are directly involved in the research faculty's research program. If the research faculty member performs other teaching activities (e.g. classroom teaching), these will not be considered when evaluating their record for their annual evaluation. Research faculty are expected to establish and maintain an active, externally funded research program consistent with the terms of their letter of appointment. Evidence of an active research program may include, but is not limited to: publication of research in peer-reviewed, archival journals; pursuing, and ultimately obtaining, adequate financial support from external sources to carry out research; developing research projects for students and postdocs that result in publications; filing patents, patent applications, and intellectual property disclosures; being invited to give external talks about one's current research; presenting research results at conferences; preparing conference proceedings for publication; receiving professional recognition for recent scientific accomplishments; and receiving positive citations in the scientific literature.

Teaching faculty assignments normally do not include a research component. However, all faculty members are expected to undertake a continuing program of studies, investigations, or creative works. For Teaching faculty, this is defined as ongoing engagement in assessment-based advancement of instructional processes. To achieve a record of meritorious contribution in teaching/instruction, and to be promoted, it is expected that in addition to a sustained record of classroom teaching excellence, the annual file will include evidence of significant programmatic contribution to the University's teaching mission. Such evidence will normally include systematic assessment of instructional processes/outcomes, application of findings to enhancing course and program effectiveness, and evidence of ongoing contribution to solving problems and addressing priorities of the Department, College, or University.

The Department of Physics and Astronomy values service to the Department, the College, and the University; service to the physics profession (e.g., refereeing papers, reviewing proposals, organizing conferences); and service in representing the profession and the University in the broader community. When evaluating Research Faculty, the Department of Physics and Astronomy values service to the physics profession such as refereeing papers, reviewing proposals, and organizing conferences.

## **V. FACULTY EVALUATION COMMITTEE**

The Faculty Evaluation Committee serves as an evaluating body for annual reviews, and for recommendations of tenure, promotion, and (rarely) termination. Its responsibility is to ensure that the review process is fair and that the final recommendation is based on sound documentation. The committee's conclusions must be substantiated by direct reference to material in the faculty evaluation files.

The Faculty Evaluation Committee in the Department of Physics and Astronomy consists of all of the Department's tenured faculty and teaching faculty at the rank of associate professor or higher of the Department of Physics and Astronomy, but excludes any faculty member being considered for promotion,

the department representative to the Eberly College Promotion and Tenure Committee, any member of the University Faculty Advisory Panel, the Board of Governors, the Chair of the Department, any person holding a position in the Eberly College administration or the University administration. Tenured faculty will not be members of the Faculty Evaluation Committee during any semester in which they are on an approved leave or Modification of Duties.

In the Department of Physics and Astronomy, the chair of the Faculty Evaluation Committee is selected by a vote of the committee. The chair will normally be a tenured faculty member and will normally have at least one year of recent prior experience on the Faculty Evaluation Committee. Members must recuse themselves when the committee is evaluating anyone for whom there may be a conflict of interest such as their partner, spouse, or other immediate family member. When this proviso affects the chair of the committee, another member of the committee serves as acting chair for that single deliberation.

Assistant professors are evaluated by the entire committee. Associate professors are evaluated by the full professors on the committee. Full professors, when requesting evaluation, are evaluated by the full professors on the committee. In the interests of transparency and to provide an opportunity for insight into the tenure review process, assistant professors and untenured, tenure-track, associate professors are encouraged to serve as observers at meetings of the faculty evaluation committee before tenure (even non-voting members are subject to the conflict of interest rules described above). Observers are not granted access to the faculty evaluation files, nor are they allowed to participate in the committee's deliberations.

All voting members of the Faculty Evaluation Committee must sign the committee statement to verify the vote and recommendation, even in the rare case in which a member abstains from voting. If a member is recused from a case, the member does not sign; instead, the term "Recused" is written in the signature area.

When unavoidable, members of the Faculty Evaluation Committee may participate in Faculty Evaluation meetings electronically as long as such participation meets the standards described in the *Eberly College of Arts and Sciences Guidelines for Faculty Evaluation, Promotion, Tenure, and Performance-Based Raises*. However, at least two-thirds of the Faculty Evaluation Committee (or just the full professors for evaluations of associate professors) must be physically present for every meeting of committee.

It is understood that members of the Faculty Evaluation Committee will keep committee deliberations and all information contained in evaluation files strictly confidential.

## **VI. REVIEWS FOR TENURE AND/OR PROMOTION**

Promotion to Associate Professor with Tenure. Promotion to associate professor with tenure normally requires significant contributions in both teaching and research and at least reasonable contributions in service. An exception occurs when prior approval has been received to change the areas requiring significant contributions, as prescribed in the University guidelines. The term "significant contributions" in teaching means performance in classroom teaching, in academic and research advising, or in other settings which meets or exceeds that of peers recently achieving tenure in the Physics and Astronomy Department. The term "significant contributions" in research means performance in quality and quantity which meets or exceeds that of peers recently achieving tenure in this Department and in Physics and Astronomy departments at peer universities. The quality of the research, as measured by its impact on the field, is more important than the mere quantity.

With appropriate written verification, work literally "in press" or unequivocally accepted for publication may count for the tenure decision, but the majority of the work presented for a tenure decision should normally be in print.

Promotion to Professor. Promotion to full professor is based on accomplishments while an associate professor and is not granted merely for years of service. It requires a consistent record of achievement at a level that indicates many strengths and few weaknesses. While not all faculty may attain the highest

possible rank, annual evaluations should guide faculty toward that achievement. For the Department of Physics and Astronomy, the criteria for promotion to full professor are different from those for promotion to associate professor. An important aspect of a Ph.D.-granting department is its research and the associated graduate program. Graduate education necessarily implies an important research component. For this and other reasons, there is added emphasis placed on research for promotion to full professor in the Department of Physics and Astronomy. Research accomplishments are externally reviewed in an objective fashion by scholars of national standing.

Because graduate instruction is so essential in maintaining a Ph.D.-level physics program, promotion to full professor in the Department of Physics and Astronomy also requires one of the following since the previous promotion: (i) demonstrated success in teaching at least one PHYS or ASTR graduate course at the 600 or 700 level (not counting 797); (ii) the supervision of at least one West Virginia University Department of Physics and Astronomy Ph.D. student to completion.

Promotion to Teaching Associate Professor. For teaching faculty, promotion to teaching associate professor requires significant contributions in teaching. The term "significant contributions" in teaching means performance in classroom teaching, academic advising, or in other settings which meets or exceeds that of tenure-track faculty recently achieving tenure in the Department of Physics and Astronomy. To achieve a record of meritorious contribution in teaching/instruction, and to be promoted, it is expected that in addition to a sustained record of classroom teaching excellence, the annual file will include evidence of significant programmatic contribution to the University's teaching mission. Such evidence will normally include systematic assessment of instructional processes/outcomes, application of findings to enhancing course and program effectiveness, and evidence of ongoing contribution to solving problems and addressing priorities of the department, college, or university.

Promotion to Teaching Professor. Promotion to full teaching professor is based on teaching accomplishments while a teaching associate professor and is not granted merely for years of service. It requires a consistent record of achievement at a level that indicates many strengths and few weaknesses. While not all teaching faculty may attain the highest possible rank, annual evaluations should guide teaching faculty toward that achievement. To be recommended for promotion to full teaching professor, a teaching associate professor is normally expected to demonstrate significant contributions in teaching. Specific guidelines for promotion to Teaching Full Professor are described in the *Eberly College of Arts and Sciences Guidelines for Faculty Evaluation, Promotion, Tenure, and Performance-Based Raises*.

Promotion to Research Associate Professor. For research faculty, promotion to research associate professor requires significant contributions in research. The term "significant contributions" in research means performance which meets or exceeds that of research faculty and regular faculty recently promoted in this Department and at peer universities, as evidenced by external reviews. The quality of the research, as measured by its impact on the field, is more important than the mere quantity.

Promotion to Research Professor. Promotion to full research professor is based on research accomplishments while a research associate professor and is not granted merely for years of service. It requires a consistent record of achievement at a level that indicates many strengths and few weaknesses. While not all research faculty may attain the highest possible rank, annual evaluations should guide research faculty toward that achievement. To be recommended for promotion to full research professor, a research associate professor is normally expected to demonstrate significant contributions in research. The term "significant contributions" in research means performance which meets or exceeds that of research faculty and regular faculty recently promoted in this Department and at peer universities, as evidenced by external reviews.

## **VII. PERFORMANCE-BASED SALARY INCREASES**

The Performance-Based Salary Committee is an elected committee of tenured, tenure-track, teaching, and research faculty in the Department of Physics and Astronomy. The membership is therefore different than the Faculty Evaluation Committee.

Input from the faculty is provided to the Chair of the Department by this process and is forwarded to the Dean of the Eberly College along with the Chair's recommendations.

1. The Performance-Based Salary Committee consists of seven faculty. Three are selected from the Professor rank. Another three are selected from the tenure-track Assistant Professors and Associate Professors. One is selected from among the Teaching Assistant Professors, Teaching Associate Professors, Teaching Professors, Research Assistant Professors, Research Associate Professors, and Research Professors. Through individual ballots, the faculty recommend to the chair the members of the committee. All faculty members who are eligible for performance pay, with the exception of the Chair of the Department, are eligible to participate in the balloting. The Chair of the Department is responsible for being responsive to the guidance of the faculty vote results while also making sure that the diversity of research areas, the diversity of ranks, the workload of the faculty, and the demographic diversity of the department are represented in the committee.
2. The committee members will perform their reviews annually and will base their decisions on the faculty productivity reports, ratings by the Faculty Evaluation Committee and the Department Chair, and any additional appropriate information in the faculty files. Since the objective of the performance pay process is to reward exceptional performance in research, teaching, and/or service, it is important to account for faculty achievements in these areas in years with zero or minimal performance pay allocations (a minimal performance pay allocation is defined as an allocation that, if spread equally among the tenure-track faculty, would result in an average raise of less than 1%). Therefore, in years following periods with less than 1% performance pay allocations, the cumulative rankings in research, teaching, and service will be based on a simple average of the annual rankings for all the years since the last performance pay allocation exceeding the 1% threshold.
3. Consistent with the spirit of the review process outlined in the Introduction of this document, the committee members will individually assign a rating A, B, C, or D in each of the other faculty members eligible for performance pay (in each of the mission areas (teaching, research, and service) for which they have an assignment). The committee members will enter their ratings on a form provided to them by the Department Senior Administrative Secretary. They will sign their respective forms and return them to the Secretary, who will then tabulate the results (except for the results for the department Chair) and forward them to the Chair and (with identification of evaluators and the rankings of the committee members removed) to the entire Committee. The highest and the lowest of the seven rankings will not be used. The committee members and the Chair are then responsible for identifying any gross inconsistencies in the Performance Based Salary recommendations. If such inconsistencies are identified, the Chair will, with the concurrence of the Dean, form a new committee (per the guidelines of part 1 of this section) and the new Committee will be tasked with providing a Performance Based Salary recommendation for each member of the faculty. Using the committee's recommendations, the Chair will then calculate an overall rating for each faculty member in teaching, research, and service. The ratings, in combination with the appointment information from the workload document for each faculty member, will be provided to the Dean for determination of the salary increase. The Department Senior Administrative Secretary will send the recommendation of the Committee for the Department Chair directly to the Dean. The ratings translate to points as follows: A=3, B=2, C=1, D=0. The total score is calculated by multiplying the appointment distribution by the rating as the following examples illustrate.

40% teaching =  $40 \times 2$  (rating of B) = 80  
40% research =  $40 \times 3$  (rating of A) = 120  
20% service =  $20 \times 1$  (rating of C) = 20  
Merit Score = 220

30% teaching =  $30 \times 2$  (rating of B) = 60  
50% research =  $50 \times 3$  (rating of A) = 150  
20% service =  $20 \times 1$  (rating of C) = 20  
Merit score = 230

80% teaching =  $80 \times 2$  (rating of B) = 160  
20% service =  $20 \times 2$  (rating of B) = 40  
Merit Score = 200

A faculty member receiving the highest possible rating in all categories would receive a merit score of 300 in the Department of Physics and Astronomy.

#### **VIII. PROCEDURE FOR MODIFICATION OF THIS DOCUMENT**

A member of the faculty can propose a change or an addition to this document by making a recommendation to the Faculty Evaluation Committee and to the Chair of the Department. The Committee and the Chair will then discuss the proposal and make a recommendation to the Faculty. If the Faculty approves the proposal by a majority vote, the change or addition will be forwarded for approval by the Dean and the Provost. Upon such approval, the change will be adopted.