

# Physics Department By-Laws

May 8, 2002

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## **I. Definitions; Organizational Structure; Faculty Appointments, Promotion, and Tenure; Rights, Privileges, and Responsibilities of the Faculty**

### **I.A. Definitions**

For purposes of simplicity within this document we define “Faculty” to be individuals who are full-time university employees, and have tenure or are on tenure track within the University of Arkansas Physics Department. Note, the definition of the term “Faculty,” for purposes of this document, can be broadened to include other individuals or groups of individuals by a 2/3-majority vote of the tenure and tenure track faculty.

### **I.B. Organizational Structure**

Departmental policies and goals are discussed and established at departmental faculty meetings. The chairperson of the physics department, referred to as chairperson in the rest of this document, holds the highest administrative position in the department and oversees these meetings. The chairperson shall serve as the primary spokesperson for and representative of the physics faculty. If the chairperson is absent the vice-chairperson will be in charge, followed by the secretary of the advisory committee. If none of these individuals is available the chair will appoint another member of the faculty.

### **I.C. Faculty Appointments, Promotion, and Tenure**

The faculty of the physics department recognizes that individual achievement in physics research, teaching or service shall be the primary criteria employed in cases of initial appointment, promotion and tenure consideration as well as for annual merit salary increases. Faculty members are expected to make substantial contributions to research, teaching and service throughout their careers. Initial appointments can only be made to individuals that have a Ph.D. in Physics or other closely related fields. Substantial contributions to research, teaching, or service shall be evidenced by the publication of refereed papers or books; invited lectures, papers and talks; the development of new educational materials; the development and implementation of new physics programs or curricula; outstanding classroom performance; and the effective administration of local, regional or national physics programs.

The physics faculty considers it to be the professional responsibility of its members to provide leadership in the areas of community service, public education and university governance. In addition, each faculty member is expected to assume responsibility for an equitable share of the department's service activities. The faculty recognizes that the solicitation of financial support external to the University for individual and departmental research and educational activities is a continuing obligation of each of its members.

The criteria for initial appointment, promotion and tenure are described in the University faculty handbook, the college personnel document, and the department's personnel document.

#### **I.D. Rights, Privileges, and Responsibilities of the Faculty**

The rights of the faculty are to vote at faculty meetings.

The privileges of the faculty are to have access to space and facilities contained within the oversight of the physics department.

The responsibilities of the faculty are as follows (in no particular order):

- Each faculty member is responsible for the overall success of the department.
- Each faculty member is responsible for building a department strong in scholarship, teaching capacity, research activity, and other professional activities.
- Each faculty member must cooperate with the chairperson to achieve our departmental goals.
- Each faculty member is expected to carry out his or her teaching, research, and service activities in a professional manner.
- Each faculty member is responsible for making sure his/her own graduate research assistants receive the same “graduate school stipend” as each graduate teaching assistant (exceptions include when the student receives no financial support, and when the student is awarded a “qualified” fellowship – i.e., the stipend is not within the control of the advisor).
- Each faculty member will consult with the appropriate committees or faculty members, before submitting proposals for external funding that may result in changes to our graduate program, undergraduate program, staff, faculty numbers, space utilization, or affect other faculty.

- Each faculty member will seek approval, from the appropriate committee, before implementing substantial changes to the content of a course.
- Each faculty member is responsible for making sure that personnel transfers from one faculty member to another will be done only after careful discussion between the involved faculty members to ensure a collegial working environment is maintained.
- Each faculty member is expected to teach at least one course per year (unless on an off-campus duty assignment or a research appointment), to highlight the extraordinary value we place on teaching in our department.
- Each faculty member is expected to follow the by-laws and participate in departmental activities including attend all faculty meetings, colloquia, special events, candidacy exam, etc.

## **II. Selection of Chair and Vice-Chair**

The Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences appoints the chairperson of the department in consultation with the department faculty, which has the primary responsibility for recommending a person or persons to the Dean. The person or persons recommended must be a member or become a member of the physics faculty.

The chairperson is appointed for a three-year term that normally begins on the first of July after his/her selection. The faculty may recommend continuing appointment for subsequent terms.

In the event of a vacancy in the chair's position prior to completion of the chair's term, the vice-chair will assume the position, while a new chairperson is selected using the procedures outlined above.

The chairperson will be aided in his/her effort by a vice-chairperson who is appointed by the chairperson. The vice-chairperson must be a member of the physics faculty.

## **III. Standing Committees**

The physics faculty recognizes the need for maximum participation in the administrative affairs of the department and the need for an equitable distribution of administrative duties among the

entire faculty. It is the responsibility of the chair to make sure the workloads of the faculty are equitable when considering teaching, research, and service duties.

The chairperson and vice-chairperson are non-voting ex officio members of all committees. The chairperson shall appoint individual faculty members to specific administrative duties that shall be made only after consulting the faculty members involved. Administrative assignments will be made for a period of one to three years. Standing committee meetings are open to all interested faculty members, except when personnel issues are being discussed. The committee must recognize any non-committee member in attendance. However, voting rights will be accorded to committee members only. If a committee chair is not elected by the faculty, then the members of the committee must elect a chair amongst themselves.

### **III.A. Chair's Advisory Committee**

The chair's advisory committee shall consist of four members of the departmental faculty to be identified no later than the third week of classes of each academic year, and may be selected during the last two weeks of classes of the spring semester if desired and practical. Two of the members of the advisory committee will be the elected chairpersons of the undergraduate affairs committee and the graduate affairs committee. The chairperson will select the remaining two annually so that the committee contains members of different ranks (assistant professor, associate professor, and professor), when possible. The committee members will appoint one to be the secretary. The department chairperson will convene and chair the advisory committee meetings.

### **III.B. Graduate Affairs Committee**

The graduate affairs committee shall consist of four members of the faculty normally serving for a term of three years. Every three years, normally after the department chairperson is officially appointed, the faculty will select a chairperson for the graduate affairs committee. The department chairperson, after consultation with the graduate affairs committee chairperson, will then appoint three other members to serve on the committee.

### **III.C. Undergraduate Affairs Committee**

The undergraduate affairs committee shall consist of four members of the faculty normally serving for a term of three years. Every three years, normally after the department chairperson is officially appointed, the faculty will elect a chairperson for the undergraduate affairs committee. The department chairperson, after consultation with the undergraduate affairs committee chairperson, will then appoint three other faculty members to serve on the committee.

### **III.D. Personnel Committee**

The three members of the personnel committee are chosen by faculty vote. The members consist of one individual from each rank: assistant professor, associate professor, and professor, at the time of appointment, if possible. Each appointment is for two years. Appointments must be staggered, so that at least one member served on the committee in the prior year.

### **III.E. Research Services Committees**

The three members of the research services committee are chosen by faculty vote. The members consist of one individual from each rank: assistant professor, associate professor, and professor, at the time of appointment, if possible. Each appointment is for two years. Appointments must be staggered, so that at least one member served on the committee in the prior year.

### **III.F. Ad Hoc Committees**

The departmental chairperson shall appoint ad hoc committees as the need arises. The committees shall report their findings and recommendations to the department chairperson. The committees will cease to exist upon the completion of their specific duties. Examples include, faculty and staff search committees, departmental publicity, supervision of elementary laboratories, and college relations.

## **IV. Other Faculty Responsibilities**

### **IV.A. Colloquium Organizer**

The colloquium organizer is selected in descending order of departmental seniority.

### **IV.B. Graduate Recruiter**

The chairperson appoints the graduate recruiter.

#### **IV.C. Faculty Mentors**

With all new faculty hires, the chairperson appoints a faculty mentor.

#### **IV.D. Graduate Student Advisor(s)**

The chairperson appoints the graduate student advisor(s).

#### **IV.E. Undergraduate Student Advisor(s)**

The chairperson appoints the undergraduate student advisor(s).

#### **IV.F. Library Liaison**

The chairperson appoints the library liaison.

#### **IV.G. K-12 Liaison**

The chairperson appoints the K-12 liaison.

#### **IV.H. SPS/ΣΠΣ Advisor**

The chairperson appoints the SPS/ΣΠΣ advisor.

### **V. Faculty Meeting Procedures**

Departmental faculty meetings will be held throughout the academic year when necessary. Meetings shall be called by the department chairperson on his/her own volition or at the request of a committee or any two individuals. The teaching activities will be arranged if possible so that a customary reasonable time can be set aside for departmental meetings. Unless special circumstances warrant an exception, each faculty member shall be provided with at least three days written or e-mail notice of the meeting date, and include an agenda of the subjects to be considered at the meeting.

The departmental chairperson shall preside at all departmental faculty meetings and shall conduct the meetings in an informal manner with Robert's Rules of Order being used as the general organizational guideline. A quorum of 2/3 of the faculty shall be required to conduct a departmental meeting. In any meeting a majority of the votes cast shall carry any motion dealing with department policy. However, changes in by-laws, a yea vote equal to 2/3 or more of the entire faculty shall be required. Voting shall be normally by voice vote, but secret ballot shall be used if requested. Voting by proxy shall not be allowed. Written absentee ballot voting is only allowed when a faculty member cannot be present due to extenuating circumstances and then only at the chairperson's discretion, except when voting on issues described in Section VI of this

document. The faculty can approve by two-third-majority vote the inclusion of other locally appointed, full-time university employee for purposes of voting, on an issue-by-issue basis.

At faculty meetings, recommendations for new faculty positions, appointments of research faculty, adjunct faculty, election of members to the standing committees, long term teaching personnel hires (terms longer than one year), and other decisions affecting the department governance are made.

A 2/3-majority faculty vote is required to override a chairperson's decision, while a simple majority faculty vote will override an individual or committee decision.

## **VI. Violations of the By-Laws**

Any faculty member who shows a consistent disregard for the by-laws will have his/her privileges (see section **I.D.** of this document) systematically removed. This action is taken after the advisory committee has confirmed a violation was made and then determines an appropriate action to be taken.

If the chairperson violates the by-laws, willfully disregards the faculty desires, or if the faculty is dissatisfied with the performance of the chairperson, the faculty at a meeting called by at least two faculty members may vote on a no-confidence motion. If 2/3 of all faculty (excluding the chairperson), present or not, are in agreement, the result is communicated to the Dean with a recommendation to terminate the chair's appointment and begin the process of finding a new chair.

## **VII. Adoption of New By-Laws or Changes to the By-Laws**

The following procedure is to be used to adopt new by-laws or amend this document.

- (1) A draft of the new by-laws or the proposed amendment will be circulated to the faculty.
- (2) A faculty meeting is called for the discussion of the proposal no less than one week following circulation. All proposed changes should be submitted in writing to the appropriate committee to be circulated among the faculty. The consensus of the faculty will be ascertained by vote on each such proposed change.

(3) Following this meeting the by-laws committee (or Advisory Committee if no by-laws committee exists) shall meet to consider the written suggestions as approved and to write the final version of the proposal.

(4) This final version is circulated to the faculty. A second meeting will be called for the faculty members for any further discussion and for a vote by secret ballot. The statement will be adopted if 2/3 of the faculty vote for its acceptance.

## **VIII. APPENDIX: Job Descriptions**

### **A.I. Duties of Chair and Vice-Chair**

The chairperson is responsible for the general conduct of the affairs of the department and is obligated to work to build a department strong in scholarship, teaching capacity, research activity, and other professional activities. In carrying out these responsibilities the department chairperson is an administrative official as well as a departmental representative and thus must establish effective working relationships with both the physics faculty and the college and university administrative officials.

The chairperson is responsible for communicating to the faculty their responsibilities. During the beginning part of the fall semester the chairperson shall meet with the faculty and initiate the following: (1) announce the names of the individuals appointed to the various service tasks; (2) call for a faculty vote to nominate and select individuals to serve on the various committees; (3) provide each faculty member with a calendar of personnel deadlines and related university dates; (4) explain the procedures that will be used for promotion, tenure, and annual merit evaluations; (5) highlight the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of each faculty member as specified in these by-laws. All appointments made by the chair will end when the chair decides to end the appointment or when the chair's term ends.

Only the chairperson as a representative of the faculty initiates requests for new faculty and staff positions. Once approved, the chairperson may consult the advisory committee on the selection of the members who serve on the faculty and staff search committees.

The chairperson is responsible for the departmental budget. Any substantive change in the resource allocation that will affect the implementation of the departmental goals shall be presented to the faculty for discussion and approval before implementation by the chairperson. During the latter part of the spring semester the chairperson shall meet with the faculty and provide them with an annual report of the department's activities, including a fiscal summary.

The chairperson is responsible for arranging a faculty retreat to take place around the end of the spring term (typically it will be on the morning of the first Monday after the commencement ceremony). The chairperson shall also solicit faculty opinion on an individual basis concerning teaching, research, and service needs for the coming academic year. The faculty, in general discussion, will then establish a set of departmental goals for the following academic year. The advisory committee will counsel the chairperson in the establishment of guidelines that will allow him/her to effectively promote these goals.

The chairperson is responsible for supervising the office other support staff, but may be aided by appropriate committees. This includes an annual evaluation that summarizes the opinions of the faculty in a face-to-face meeting with each staff member.

The chairperson is responsible for requesting that each faculty member submit materials for annual merit evaluations, promotions, and/or tenure. For promotion and tenure cases, the appropriate faculty members will review the qualifications of each candidate following the guidelines of this document, the departmental personnel document, and the faculty handbook. The chair and the faculty committee will each prepare a memorandum summarizing their recommendation. These recommendations are forwarded to the Dean along with the promotion materials. The chairperson will notify each candidate of the outcome of the committee's deliberations as well as his/her own recommendation. As part of the annual evaluation, the chairperson must meet individually with each faculty member in the spring semester to discuss his/her performance and future direction.

The department chairperson in consultation with the advisory committee will convey his/her recommendation to the Dean on faculty off-campus duty assignments and research appointments.

The chairperson is responsible for overseeing the fair and appropriate use of space and approves the allocation and re-allocation of research and teaching space.

The chairperson is responsible for making all the faculty and student teaching assignments. Faculty teaching assignments are made after consultation with the faculty. As part of the process, each faculty member will be provided with a list of courses that will probably be taught the next term and asked to indicate his/her preferences. Preference will be given to a teacher who has a strong desire to continue teaching a particular course for the first few times if a continuance in the course is requested, and if it is evident that he/she is an effective teacher for the course, and they are devoting considerable attention to the course. However, beyond the first few times, preference will be given to a new teacher. Each faculty member is notified in writing of his/her assignment by the end of April before the fall term begins. The complete department assignment is also made available to all faculty members.

The chairperson is responsible for TA supervision, TA workshop, and negotiating a proper annual salary increase for the TA appointments with the Dean's office.

The chairperson is responsible for the overall success of the undergraduate program. This includes undergraduate recruiting, retention, as well as overseeing course offerings, web information, printed literature, fellowship awards, honors' program, alumni news letter, Maurer lecture, etc.

The chairperson is responsible for the overall success of the graduate program. This includes graduate recruiting, retention, as well as overseeing course offerings, web information, printed literature, fellowship awards, etc.

The chairperson will be aided in his/her effort by a vice-chairperson who is appointed by the chairperson. The appointed individual must be a member of the physics department. The chair will decide the duties of the vice-chair after consultation with the vice-chair.

## **A.II. Duties of the Standing Committees**

### **Chair's Advisory Committee**

The department chairperson will consult the advisory committee from time to time, and while all final decisions will be the chairperson's responsibility, the committee will advise in basic decisions affecting the general policies and conduct of this department. The department chairperson may also consult the committee on proposed agenda items for departmental meetings.

The advisory committee has the primary responsibility of communicating the dissatisfaction of the faculty to the chairperson. This should be done, if possible, in an anonymous, constructive manner.

### **Graduate Affairs Committee**

The committee shall have responsibility for the general administration of the graduate program including changes in the degree programs, which are then recommended to the entire faculty for their approval. Among the committee's specific duties are curriculum review, course offerings, supervision of the graduate examinations, and graduate student reviews. Members of the graduate affairs committee must strongly encourage a student-elected graduate student or a representative graduate student (if there is no elected student available) to attend the meetings.

### **Undergraduate Affairs Committee**

The committee shall have responsibility for the general administration of the undergraduate program including changes in any of the degree programs, which are then recommended to the entire faculty for their approval. Among the committee's specific duties are curriculum review, course offerings, and review of the content and textbooks of the elementary courses and laboratories, and new course development at the undergraduate level. An instructor may ask the committee for advice on the conduct of particular courses. The committee will review all required and elected courses taught by other departments and communicate to these departments the needs of the physics department. Members of the undergraduate affairs committee must strongly encourage a student-elected undergraduate student or a representative undergraduate student (if there is no elected student available) to attend the meetings.

### **Personnel Committee**

The personnel committee reviews the annual resume updates prepared by the faculty and rates the teaching, research, and service elements according to the guidelines of this document, the departmental personnel document, and the faculty handbook.

The committee is also responsible for evaluating the non-tenure track long-term (more than one year) teaching personnel, and conveying their recommendations to the chair.

In the event that a personnel conflict arises between faculty members or between faculty and staff in the department the chair must try to resolve it. If either party is dissatisfied with the chair's decision, the dissatisfied party may appeal to the personnel committee.

### **Research Services Committees**

The research services committee is responsible for overseeing the operation of the department's multi-user facilities. The committee is also responsible for supervising and evaluating the non-tenure track research services personnel, and conveying their recommendations to the chair.

## **A.III. Duties for Other Faculty Responsibilities**

### **Colloquium Organizer**

One faculty member will be in charge of organizing the department's colloquiums for each academic year. Duties include working with the faculty and staff to compile a list of speakers, overseeing their accommodations and visitation schedule, advertising the talk, and refreshments. All faculty members are expected to participate in hosting visitors.

### **Graduate Recruiter**

The graduate recruiter's duties include working with the faculty and staff to recruit the best students possible. The graduate recruiter will oversee the distribution of flyers and application packets, receive applications, follow up on the application as it moves through the various approval stages, update web information, update printed literature, make doctoral fellowship nominations to the graduate school, and oversee potential graduate student visits. The faculty,

when appropriate, will assist the graduate recruiter. All faculty members are expected to participate in hosting and recruiting potential graduate students.

### **Faculty Mentors**

The faculty mentor's duties include giving advice on teaching, research, and service matters to non-tenured faculty.

### **Graduate Student Advisor(s)**

The graduate student advisor(s)'s duties include program advising for incoming graduate students and retaining current graduate students.

### **Undergraduate Student Advisor(s)**

The undergraduate student advisor(s)'s duties include program advising for incoming undergraduate students and retaining current undergraduate students as physics majors.

### **Library Liaison**

The library liaison works with the library personnel to convey faculty needs, ensure the proper technical staffing, collection content, and facilities are in the physics library.

### **K-12 Liaison**

The K-12 liaison oversees high school physics day, and maintains a working and ever-expanding relationship with the K-12 teachers of Arkansas, especially the high school physics teachers. The undergraduate affairs committee and the faculty, when appropriate, must assist the K-12 liaison.

### **SPS/ΣΠΣ Advisor**

The SPS/ΣΠΣ advisor oversees SPS/ ΣΠΣ program, facilities, and activities.