Statement of Functions and Criteria

Department of Physics
College of Arts and Sciences
New Mexico State University

April 6, 2011

1 General Remarks

This document provides the statement of Departmental Functions, Promotion and Tenure Process, and Annual Evaluation Procedures of the Department of Physics. The Department of Physics operates under the general criteria and procedures of the University as stated in the NMSU Policy Manual (Section 5.90) with regard to decisions involving promotion and tenure. University policies regarding promotion and tenure supersede department and college policies. Therefore this document includes by reference all statements made in Section 5.90 of the NMSU Policy manual. This document defines more clearly the Department’s procedures for the assignment of teaching, research and service loads, evaluation of performance, and policies for promotion and tenure, in a way that is appropriate to the discipline of Physics.

2 Statement of the Departmental Functions

The teaching functions of the Department are to provide 1) basic education in Physics and Engineering Physics for all students, 2) specialized training for our majors and students in some other disciplines, and 3) high quality graduate education at the Master and Ph.D. degree levels in Physics and Geophysics.

Faculty and student research at all levels is an equally important endeavor that is vigorously pursued to maintain the quality of the Department and University. The results of research performed in the Physics Department not only contribute to the knowledge base of the scientific community but ultimately to society at large.

Research at the forefront of current development is essential for successful teaching. The Department recognizes the important symbiotic relation that exists between teaching and research. The value of teaching without research diminishes rapidly with time as the knowledge imparted to the student becomes outdated and irrelevant. Conversely, the gain
of knowledge obtained from research is of little value if it is not passed on to the next
generation of physicists in a timely manner. The separation of these two endeavors is to
be avoided. It is the responsibility of the Department and College to provide, to the best
of their ability, the intellectual atmosphere and physical facilities and equipment to meet
the functions stated.

In order to achieve the goals stated above, organization and implementation are es-

cessential. This important activity is denoted as service. Service at the departmental level
is crucial for the future well-being of the Department and benefits both teaching and
research, often treating problems common to the two disciplines at the same time. Out-
reach activities benefit the larger educational community as well as recruiting efforts in
the Department. Service to the broader Physics community is also important for the
visibility of the Department and the health of the field as a whole.

The allocation of effort for standard tenured and tenure-track faculty appointments
is 40% for teaching, 50% research and 10% service, although the Department Head, in
consultation with individual faculty members, can modify the allocations. For example,
faculty members with major commitments to service can ask for reduced teaching or
research loads, faculty members with reduced research activities may be asked to take on
an increased teaching load, and faculty members with extensive research activities may
opt to buy out from teaching or service duties.

College Faculty will be evaluated in the same manner but without a research compo-
nent. Their standard allocation of effort is 95% for teaching and 5% for service, although
the Department Head, in consultation with individual faculty members, can modify the
allocations.

3 Basis for Evaluation

3.1 Teaching

Each faculty member is responsible for providing information on his/her teaching activity
and performance. In general, materials appropriate for evaluating teaching should include
3 out of the following 4 forms of evidence:

(a) evidence from the instructor,

(b) evidence from other professionals,

(c) evidence from students, and

(d) evidence of student learning.

The information used in evaluating teaching performance is chiefly obtained from course
materials and student evaluations. Course materials include samples of class lectures,
tests and solutions, work on lab manuals, work on new demonstrations, etc. Other items,
such as mentoring, student-faculty communication, course and experiment development,
course coordination and innovative methods in teaching may also be considered. Faculty
members are expected to keep class notebooks as required by accreditation agencies.
Undergraduate and graduate student advising are also important teaching activities.
3.2 Research

The Department is strongly committed to research. Each faculty member should be engaged in research activities which result in high-quality publications and presentations. Externally funded, peer-reviewed grants and contracts for activities form an important part of the effort of the Department to maintain and improve the quality of its research and educational program. An important measure of research activity is the degree of external peer recognition that a faculty member receives. All tenured and tenure-track faculty are expected to seek outside funding for their research and graduate program. The degree of success in obtaining grant funds is weighed against such factors as the variety of sources sponsoring a particular kind of research and the availability of funds. Tenured and Tenure-track faculty members are expected to contribute to the advancement of science through presentations at national and international meetings, publication in refereed journals and refereed proceedings. The quality of the publications is a decisive element in the evaluation of the publication record, not just the quantity of work produced.

3.3 Service

Service to the Department is a part of the responsibility of faculty members and is essential for the long-term prosperity of the Department. Tenure and tenure-track faculty members are expected to serve on assigned Departmental committees as well as work on the accreditation of the department as needed. Service to the University and outreach to the local community are strongly encouraged as is service to professional and government organizations. Service to the profession includes refereeing papers, reviewing proposals, organizing meetings, and editing for journals as well as serving as officers and committee members of professional organizations. Faculty members are expected to contribute to an academic atmosphere through participation in colloquia and other department functions and encourage their students to do the same. All need to contribute to departmental duties such as inventory, bookstore order forms, commencement, etc.

4 Procedure for Evaluation for Continuation and Tenure

4.1 The Promotion and Tenure Committee

Evaluations and recommendations regarding continuation and tenure are made separately by the Department Head and by the departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee. The Promotion and Tenure Committee consists of all tenured faculty members. Members of the committee have the right and obligation to read the files of the candidates under consideration and to be present for discussions and votes concerning the annual progress review.

4.2 The Committee and External Review Files

Each tenure-track faculty member should maintain a file containing publications, information on teaching and mentoring, grants and contracts, annual reports, a current extended
vitae and a summary of professional activities. Guidelines can be obtained from the Chair of the Promotion and Tenure Committee. This file should be updated at the beginning of each calendar year. The Department Head will maintain a separate file for sensitive material, in particular, letters of evaluation. In order to facilitate external review the candidate should provide an extended vitae, statement of teaching philosophy, a list of courses taught at New Mexico State University, a list of the five most significant papers and a statement of their broader impact, a list of successful grants and contracts in which the candidate is the main PI or Co-PI, a list of successful grants and contracts in which the candidate has an essential role, and a description of service and outreach activities.

4.3 Procedures for Continuation

At the beginning of the spring semester all tenure-track faculty members are asked to update their files. Individual members of the tenured faculty will study the files and make their professional assessments of the untenured faculty members. The Committee will present to the Department Head, in writing, its assessments in teaching, research and service, the overall progress toward tenure and their vote results for continuation or termination of each tenure-track faculty member. The Department Head makes a separate written recommendation on continuation or termination for each tenure-track faculty member and informs him/her of the results of the voting and the two written recommendations. Both letters of recommendation are transmitted to the Dean of the College in early April.

4.4 Procedure for Tenure

Tenure-track faculty members will normally be considered for promotion from Assistant to Associate Professor with tenure in their sixth year.

In early February in the fifth year after the hiring of a tenure-track member, the Promotion and Tenure Committee will convene to consider his/her candidacy for tenure. The committee will individually examine the files and annual reports of the candidate and may request additional information, if necessary. In late March, after appropriate discussion, the committee will vote on progress toward tenure; this recommendation for or against will be passed to the Department Head, who will write his/her own recommendation. Both letters, from the Committee and the Department Head will be conveyed to the candidate by the Department Head. The candidate may request consideration for tenure at that point, submitting to the Department Head a list of persons who are competent to evaluate their creative works. The Committee on Promotion and Tenure will select at least 3 persons from the list given by the candidate and decide on an additional 3-4 names for outside letters. It is the responsibility of the Chair and the Department Head to request outside letters from at least 6 selected referees. These letters need to be received by the Department head by mid-August. Unsolicited letters received by the Committee or Department Head will be discarded and ignored; only those letters specifically requested will be placed in the file of the candidate and used for evaluation. The results of the vote on continuous contract, promotion and tenure including the number of for and against votes shall be included in the Committee’s Letter of Recommendation and the Chair must
deliver this letter to the Department Head in early April (date to be set yearly by the Dean).

At the beginning of the fall semester, the faculty members under consideration for tenure will be asked again to update their files. The members of the tenured faculty will study the files, including the outside evaluations and will meet in early September to vote on a recommendation for tenure. The Committee will transmit the results of the vote, including the number for and against to the Department Head. The Chair and Department Head will assist the candidate for tenure in preparing documents to be presented to the College Faculty Affairs Committee.

The Department Head will maintain and store the portfolio of information supplied by the candidate, letters gathered by the Department Head and Committee, annual performance evaluations, and all other documents required to be included in the portfolio as outlined in Section 5.90 of the NMSU Policy Manual, the College of Arts and Sciences Policies, and as described above.

The candidate may review all items included in the portfolio. The Department Head will make these materials available for review in such a way that the contents of the portfolio may not be removed or modified, only reviewed.

The Department Head will make a separate written recommendation on tenure and will inform the concerned faculty member(s) of the results of the voting and the two written recommendations to be made to the Dean. The candidate(s) may respond in writing to the recommendations of either the Committee or the Department Head (under Faculty Policies).

### 4.5 Suspension of the Promotion and Tenure Process

A candidate may temporarily suspend the promotion and tenure time process in accordance with Section 5.90 of the NMSU Policy Manual.

A candidate may withdraw from further consideration in accordance with Section 5.90 of the NMSU Policy Manual.

### 5 Promotional Considerations

#### 5.1 Promotion to Associate Professor

Members of the tenure-track faculty in the Department of Physics recommended for promotion to the rank of Associate Professor will show evidence of successful activity in each of the following areas.

1. Conscientious and effective teaching in undergraduate and graduate courses, by presentation of at least 3 out of the following 4 forms of evidence:
   
   (a) evidence from the instructor,
   (b) evidence from other professionals,
   (c) evidence from students, and
   (d) evidence of student learning.
2. A creative, independent and productive program of research in an area of Physics, (including Geophysics, Engineering Physics, and Physics Education), leading to visibility in this field at a national and international level and the potential to sustain and improve this program, as usually evidenced by:

(a) A significant body of refereed publications in high impact primary journals in the field, and/or in general journals, reporting original research conducted at New Mexico State University that has substantially enriched his/her field of specialization.

(b) Appropriate peer-reviewed grant support from one or more of the major funding agencies, with the candidate as a main PI or having an essential/significant role.

(c) Presentations at national and international meetings/conferences of the investigator’s field and seminars at major university and research oriented facilities.

(d) Involvement and financial support of graduate students and/or postdoctoral researchers.

(e) Awards of United States patents, if appropriate.

3. Conscientious and effective performance in university and professional service and outreach assignments as detailed in Section 6.

Non-tenure-track faculty members eligible for the position of Associate Professor (College Assistant Professors, for example) shall be judged on assigned teaching and service duties according to the criteria given above.

5.2 Early Promotion to Associate Professor

While tenure-track faculty members will normally be considered for promotion from Assistant to Associate Professor with tenure in their sixth year, promotion at an earlier time may be considered in cases of unusually rapid development accompanied by an exceptional record of achievements as described in Section 5.1. Such early promotion may, or may not, be accompanied by the granting of tenure status. Indicators of exceptional performance include:

1. An exceptional body of published work that clearly establishes international leadership in the chosen field.

2. Peer-reviewed funding at a level substantially above the average for the field.

3. Exceptional peer recognition exemplified by invitations to present prestigious lectures, plenary lectures, and lecture series at prestigious institutions.

4. Awards for excellence in teaching and/or research

5. Special recognition from national or international organizations for excellence in research.
5.3 Promotion to Full Professor

Tenured members of the faculty may be recommended for promotion to the rank of Full Professor by a subcommittee of the Promotion and Tenure committee consisting of Full Professors. A candidate for this promotion will show evidence of leadership and be well known in the international science community. Leadership should embody initiative, perseverance, and originality. Indicators of these qualities include:

1. Sustained effective teaching contributions in courses, as evidenced by the criteria noted in Section 5.1. Some service in lower division courses is normally expected. Additional evidence includes sustained and effective mentoring of many graduate students, leading to the Master and Ph.D. degrees, and successful careers beyond NMSU.

2. Recognition as a major influential force in one or more significant areas of research as usually evidenced by:

   (a) A substantial body of refereed publications in high impact primary journals for the field, and/or in high impact general science journals, reporting original research that has significantly impacted the field.

   (b) Continuing and sustained peer-reviewed grant support from one or more of the major funding agencies.

   (c) Invited presentations at the important meetings and conferences of the investigator’s field and at major research universities and government facilities.

   (d) Service on scientific review boards and panels,

   (e) Awards of United States patents, if truly significant and appropriate.

3. Provide leadership and effective service at the local (Department, College, and University) and professional levels.

Non-tenure-track faculty members eligible for the position of Full Professor (College Associate Professors, for example) shall be judged on assigned teaching and service duties according to the criteria given above.

5.4 Early Promotion to Full Professor

Promotion to the rank of Full Professor is warranted when the criteria in Section 5.3 are met and is not based on either promise or longevity. The time required by different faculty members to attain the appropriate level of achievement will vary, with six years being the typical minimum period at the Associate Professor level. Earlier promotion to the rank of Full Professor will only be considered in cases of unusually rapid development accompanied by an exceptional record of achievements. Indicators of such exceptional performance include:

1. An exceptional body of published work that clearly establishes international leadership in the chosen field.
2. Peer-reviewed funding at a level substantially beyond the average for the field.

3. Exceptional peer recognition exemplified by invitations to present prestigious lectures, plenary lectures, etc.

4. Awards for excellence in teaching and/or research.

5. Special recognition from national and international organizations for excellence in research.

6. Election to fellow status in a prestigious professional society, such as the American Physical Society or the American Geophysical Union.

6 Annual Evaluation

6.1 General Procedures

Each fall each faculty member will receive an annual evaluation form, which suggests the organization of material for evaluation on the assignments in teaching, research and service. The Department Head will set a deadline for completion of the annual evaluation forms, usually in late October. Faculty members will also submit a statement of goals for the following year, to be included in their files.

The Physics Department Annual Evaluation Committee, consisting of the Department Head and two tenured faculty members, elected by the faculty, evaluate each faculty member’s performance in teaching, research and service during the current calendar year. The elected members of this committee cannot serve two years in succession. Each member will perform the evaluations independently using the general guidelines given in the next section. The possible rankings are “Exceeds expectations”, “Meets expectations”, and “Does not meet expectations.”

Once the Deans have confirmed these evaluations, the Department Head will schedule a conference with each faculty member during the spring semester. During the conference, the Department Head and the faculty member will discuss the evaluation, ways for improvement of performance, if appropriate, and come to a consensus on reasonable performance goals and approximate fractional time assigned to teaching, research and service for the coming year.

6.2 Items to be Submitted for Annual Evaluation

1. Teaching: In the fall each member will submit evidence of conscientious and effective teaching in undergraduate and graduate courses, by presentation of at least 3 out of the following 4 forms of evidence:

   (a) evidence from the instructor,
   (b) evidence from other professionals,
   (c) evidence from students, and
   (d) evidence of student learning.
Suitable items include student evaluations, Department Head evaluation, copies of class lecture material, tests and solutions, examples of homework and supplementary class materials generated by the faculty member. Student evaluations are required for all formal courses.

2. **Research:** Each faculty member who has a research assignment will submit evidence of creative activity conducted during the current calendar year. In general, items include evidence of peer-reviewed grants and contracts from major federal agencies, contracts from industry and government agencies, presentations at national and international meetings, refereed publications and proceedings, and graduate and undergraduate students who conducted research with the faculty member. The quality of the publications is more important than the quantity of work produced.

3. **Service:** Evidence of service effort including committee work within the Department, University and professional societies, reviewing papers and proposals, administrative duties and outreach activities will be submitted.

Contributions to annual reports are not limited to the items listed above; anything deemed relevant by the faculty member may be included.

### 6.3 Guidelines to be used by the Annual Evaluation Committee

These categories correspond to the ranking system mentioned above in Section 6.1.

#### Exceeds Expectations

**Teaching**
A meritorious evaluation includes at least one of the following measures: consistently positive teaching evaluations in classroom teaching assigned at the normal course load for that faculty member; involvement in new course development and teaching innovation; involvement of undergraduates in research experiences; successful mentoring of graduate students who perform publishable and/or patentable research and graduate in a timely fashion; exemplary use of outcomes assessment materials to improve courses; and successful mentoring of productive postdoctoral fellows.

**Research**
Evidence of meritorious performance may be based on the number and quality of publications and presentations, citations and reviews. A sustained level of peer-reviewed major funding is evidence of the quality and productivity of the research. For participants in multi-investigator projects, the level of individual contribution will be taken into account in assessing merit. Successful patent activity may also constitute evidence of meritorious research performance.

**Service**
Evidence of meritorious service performance includes chairing an active Department, College, or University committee; active participation in more than one committee; and professional service external to the university including the reviewing of proposals and papers. Student recruiting and/or outreach can provide additional evidence of meritorious service.
Meets Expectations

Teaching
A satisfactory level of teaching can be documented by average student teaching evaluations at the minimum course load, and in acceptable progress towards graduation of any graduate students mentored. Completion of outcomes assessment documentation in a timely manner is a must.

Research
A satisfactory ranking is evidenced by publication in a peer-reviewed journal (averaging one paper per year), minor funding from internal or external sources, or significant efforts to obtain funding by preparing and submitting research proposals.

Service
Satisfactory service consists of assuming significant responsibility for organization and implementation of departmental, College, or University activities during the evaluation period or substantial participation in recruiting/outreach work.

Does Not Meet Expectations

Teaching
An unsatisfactory rating would be appropriate in cases where persistently poor performance in teaching was documented even though an acceptable minimum load was carried. An unsatisfactory performance rating would result from one or more of the following:

1. The consistent presence of adverse student comments that indicate a clear lack of communication and teaching effectiveness.
2. Partial abandonment of assigned classes. When travel to fulfill professional responsibilities is unavoidable during the semester, another faculty member should normally cover a faculty member’s class; a graduate teaching assistant should not teach classes unless prior approval of the Department Head is obtained. Repeated failure to obtain this approval would constitute unsatisfactory performance.
3. Failure to be available adequately to students outside of class hours.
4. Failure to complete outcomes assessment documentation in a timely fashion.

Research
A rating of unsatisfactory is appropriate where a faculty member makes little effort to pursue research, submit a patent application, or seek outside funding at any level from federal to internal university funds by writing proposals.

Service
Refusal to serve on any committee or recruiting/outreach activity is unsatisfactory. Documented failure to perform reasonable assigned duties on a committee or participate in recruiting/outreach activity is also unsatisfactory.
7 Post-tenure Review

In order to promote accountability and continuing professional excellence among the faculty at New Mexico State University, all tenured faculty members are subject to post-tenure review according to policies set by the University and the State of New Mexico.

8 Updates of The Functions and Criteria Statement

The Physics Department Tenure and Promotion Committee will review and update this policy document at least every three years. If the policy should change during a faculty members pre-tenure or pre-promotion period, the faculty member may choose one of the policies for evaluation purposes. The chosen version of the policy will be placed in the faculty member’s file, signed and dated by the faculty member and the department head.