

Review of Departmental Weighted Criteria for Tenure

Department of Physics and Astronomy East Tennessee State University

Pre-Tenure Mentoring of Faculty

The Department uses two formal methods of Mentoring of pre-Tenure Faculty. First is the evaluation portion of the Faculty Activities System. This provides annual feedback in the areas of teaching, research and service for faculty. The Department also conducts an internal departmental review of progress during the third year of the faculty member's probationary period, to provide guidance for the faculty. For this step, the faculty member submits a document patterned on a normal tenure folder. After the document is read by the tenured members of the Department, a written report is sent to the candidate and to the Chair of the Department.

Overview

Evaluation for tenure will be given in the areas of teaching, research and service. It is clear that these areas are not entirely separable. Teaching often includes discussing the importance and limitations of research in the fields of physics and astronomy. Also, research at the undergraduate level, particularly with the Honors-in-Discipline students, involves instruction in physical principles and research techniques. The Department considers that research is one of the best forms of instruction available. It is important to the Department that candidates for tenure demonstrate effective teaching, produce quality research, and participate in service activities. For evaluation, the relative importance of these three activities are taken in the order of teaching > research > service.

Candidates for tenure must demonstrate a continuing program of scholarly activity and must supply documentation supporting their levels of accomplishment in all areas. In teaching, this would include good student and peer evaluations, development of new teaching methods and or materials, or publications in education journals. In research this would include a number of papers published in peer-reviewed journals. Here one is looking for a continuing program of accomplishments. Finally for service, participation in departmental activities, service on college and/or university committees, service to the profession, and participation in public outreach programs are expected to achieve tenure.

Teaching

To apply for tenure, the faculty member is required to submit an application demonstrating that he/she is an effective teacher. Effectiveness must be documented. Documentation is supplied mainly by quantifying student assessments. Student evaluations are sought from both lower-level and upper-level undergraduate courses. The University requires peer review of instructors. Faculty attend a candidate's lectures, and written evaluations of these visits are included in the third-year reviews. Those

performing the peer reviews look at the development of new teaching methods, testing materials, and the incorporation of new technologies in teaching. Peer review of tenure-track faculty is also conducted by the faculty at presentations of seminars through the regular weekly departmental seminars.

Research

Research is the single most important activity after teaching to be considered for faculty applying for tenure in the Department. The Department goes out of its way to provide release time for new faculty, and therefore there are expectations for demonstrating a productive research effort. Faculty place an emphasis on looking for new faculty who will seek external funding. There are expectations therefore that faculty seeking tenure will be actively writing external grant proposals. Faculty seeking tenure must also have publications in nationally and internationally recognized peer-reviewed journals.

Service

The Department expects all of their tenured and tenure-track faculty to carry out service activities. Activities related to service to the Department include the advising of Physics majors/minors, Astronomy minors, and students involved in the Honors-in-Discipline program. Additional departmental service activities include service on search committees, editor of the departmental web pages, serving as seminar coordinator, and the recruitment of students to the major. Serving on college-level or university-level committees are useful service activities to achieve tenure. Service to the profession include such activities as reviewing grant proposals for NSF, NASA, or NIH; reviewing manuscripts submitted to publication to national journals; committee work for national/international organizations; or working on arranging topical conferences. Finally, our faculty are expected to assist in the departmental public outreach programs such as presenting a talk and/or participating at the Astronomy Open Houses at the ETSU Observatory, presenting planetarium shows, presenting talks at local schools, or interacting with the local media.