

PROMOTION. TENURE. AND REAPPOINTMENT  
PROCEDURES AND CRITERIA  
DEPARTMENT OF ASTRONOMY  
INDIANA UNIVERSITY  
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## INTRODUCTION

This document describes the criteria and procedures adopted by the Department of Astronomy in regard to promotion, tenure, and reappointment of faculty members. These conform to the standards and practices established by the College of Arts and Sciences.

## CRITERIA AND EVALUATION

Faculty members are judged on the basis of their contributions in the areas of research, teaching, and service.

### College of Arts and Sciences

The College of Arts and Sciences has adopted the following definitions of "excellent" as a description of a faculty member's performance in an area. Excellence in research means that the candidate is developing or has attained a leadership position in his or her field, both in the United States and the world, as evidenced by the internal and external reference letters and by other documentation in the dossier. Excellence in teaching means that the candidate's performance should be comparable to that of the most effective teachers at Indiana University, as evidenced by student and peer evaluations. It is also useful to document that his or her work in teaching has the potential to have or is having a significant impact on teaching in the candidate's discipline nationally, as evidenced by textbooks written, national presentations, or other external acclaim. Normally, to be recommended for tenure or promotion, one of these two areas must be designated as excellent. Regardless of which area is designated as excellent, the dossier must demonstrate effectiveness in both research and teaching. The case for reappointment or tenure is made on the basis of a candidate's potential for achievement; the case for promotion is made on the basis of a candidate's actual accomplishments. Cases where only the area of service is excellent are considered exceptional and must demonstrate a significant impact of the service on the candidate's discipline.

### Department of Astronomy

*General.* The Department of Astronomy follows the policy of the College of Arts and Sciences in considering tenure for either excellence in research or excellence in teaching. Nevertheless, the normal expectation of the Department is that category of excellence for almost all promotion and tenure cases will be research, and only in certain exceptional cases will tenure be awarded on the basis of excellence in teaching. Because of the small size of the department, however, it is essential that all faculty be dedicated teachers and that all faculty share the burdens of service

obligations. So, although research is virtually required to meet a standard of excellence, poor performance in either teaching or service could seriously jeopardize tenure and promotion recommendations at the departmental level.

*Research.* The department considers original research to be an essential part of every faculty member's activities. Furthermore, this research is expected to be of sufficient quality to be published in highly-regarded refereed journals. Information about the quality of the research activity of a faculty member is derived from the complete list of publications, research in progress, theses and dissertations supervised, external grant support, observing or computing time granted under competitive peer-review, invited talks and reviews, contributed talks, and the opinions of colleagues at other institutions.

*Teaching.* The department considers conscientious attention to teaching to be a necessary part of every faculty member's obligations. While we recognize that an instructor's success may depend on the course level, we expect each faculty member to acquire the versatility necessary to be effective in teaching at least two of our major types of courses: large enrollment descriptive astronomy classes for nonmajors, undergraduate classes for astronomy majors, and advanced graduate courses and seminars. Teaching is judged by first-hand observation in courses and seminars, colloquium presentations, public talks, mentoring, thesis and dissertation supervision, student evaluation forms, and solicited and unsolicited letters. Faculty are expected to maintain a file of student evaluations of their classroom teaching which can be submitted as part of their tenure and promotion dossiers. Teaching effectiveness extends beyond the lecture. Tests and homework assignments must be fair and appropriate. Each faculty member is also expected to participate in departmental curriculum planning, to undertake new course development when needed, and to keep reasonable office hours.

*Service.* An astronomy department faculty member has important service obligations to the department, to the university, to the discipline, and to the public. In contrast to research and teaching, where each faculty member is expected to acquire a certain versatility, these service obligations are so broad that specialization is acceptable and in some cases desirable. The service contribution of a candidate for promotion or tenure is judged primarily on whether the candidate willingly accepts an appropriate share of some combination of departmental and university committee assignments, activities of national and international astronomy organizations, and public service. The wide ranging public interest in astronomy dictates that a substantial departmental service component be devoted to public talks, observatory open houses, and miscellaneous telephone interviews and question-answering on current astronomical topics. All candidates are encouraged to participate in these activities.

## PROCEDURES

### Committees

The departmental committees which evaluate faculty member performance for consideration of reappointment, promotion, and tenure are constituted as follows: reappointment - all tenured regular faculty; promotion – all regular faculty of higher academic rank; and tenure – all regular faculty. The departmental chairperson is automatically the chair and convener of these committees.

### Voting

The committees evaluate the candidates and make recommendations concerning reappointment, promotion, and tenure. In the voting process, all faculty votes are weighed equally, including that of the chairperson.

### Dossier

In cases of promotion and tenure, the departmental chairperson assembles the dossier for submission to the College using documentation supplied by the candidate and by committee members. Summary reports of the faculty evaluation of the tenure case will be prepared by faculty subcommittee in each category (research, teaching, and service) and will be assembled for the dossier based on written comments from faculty. All tenured faculty will have the opportunity to contribute and review these summary reports, which will be submitted as part of the dossier. Faculty may also include individual reviews of the candidate in the dossier if they choose to.

### Reports

In the case of an untenured faculty member in a tenure-track appointment, the departmental chairperson writes a report to the faculty member at the end of each academic year based on the deliberations of the reappointment committee. The memo reports the reappointment decision, the prospects for a positive departmental tenure decision, and the evaluations of the faculty member's performance by the committee.

### Faculty Responsibilities

*Candidates.* Candidates for tenure and promotion are required to maintain and supply files documenting their contributions to research, teaching, and service. They must supply such materials and the necessary personal statements on research, teaching, and service in a timely manner for inclusion in dossiers.

*Committee Members.* Members of reappointment, promotion, and tenure committees are responsible for remaining informed about the performance of candidates in research, teaching, and service by, for example, reading their faculty reports, attending their departmental colloquia, monitoring their research productivity, visiting their class lectures, and discussing their

performance with astronomers and astrophysicists outside the department. Committee members should also prepare to the departmental summary reviews of research, teaching, and service for inclusion in the dossier.

*Departmental Chairperson.* The chairperson is responsible for convening committee meetings, writing annual reports about reappointment and tenure prospects to untenured faculty, and assembling promotion and tenure dossiers using materials supplied by the candidates and committee members. The chairperson must also write his or her own evaluations of research, teaching, and service for inclusion in the dossier, and clearly state the department's recommendations regarding promotion, tenure, or both, as appropriate.