I. Statement of Goals

The Department of Physics and Astronomy, together with the other departments of the University, is charged by the Regents and the University Administration with the task of achieving academic excellence in all of its programs. The criteria for promotion and tenure in the department are based upon the normal standards of academic excellence recognized in major Universities throughout the United States. These include demonstrated excellence in teaching, scholarly activities, and service.

II. Promotion and Tenure Committee

The Department of Physics and Astronomy has a Promotions, Tenure and Appointments (PTA) Committee which makes recommendations to the Department Head regarding granting of tenure or promotion in rank of departmental faculty members. The committee also makes recommendations on joint appointments, and on the granting of Emeritus status. A statement detailing the structure and methods of operation of the PTA Committee is attached.

III. Mechanism of Promotion and Tenure Recommendations

At the instruction of the Head of the Department, the PTA Committee evaluates whether any untenured or associate professor should be considered for tenure or promotion. The evaluation will be based on the committee’s review of the candidate’s vitae and annual reports, and the result of the annual review by the Performance Evaluation Committee that is conducted for all faculty. If the committee and department head concur that an untenured professor should be considered for tenure, or that an associate professor should be considered for promotion, the PTA committee will so advise the faculty member, who may then formally request consideration. Even without this advice, non-tenured faculty may request at any time to be considered for tenure, and associate professors may request to be promoted to professor by sending such a request to the PTA committee. Non-tenured professors reaching the mandatory year for consideration for tenure will automatically be considered for tenure.

When a faculty member is being considered for promotion or tenure, the committee selects a suitable group of outside referees to provide letters of recommendation about promotion and tenure for that faculty member. The candidate is asked to submit names of suitable referees, and the committee can
also use referees that are not on the candidate’s list. The candidate is allowed to submit a list of people who should not be used as referees because of conflict of interest or other valid reasons, and people on this list will not be contacted as referees. Based on these letters and available internal information, the committee makes a written recommendation about promotion and tenure. This recommendation includes evaluative reports on the candidate’s teaching, research, and service, and a final advisory report that conveys an explanation of the committee’s recommendation.

The candidate’s file is made available to all faculty members at rank higher than the candidate’s current rank, and the recommendation of the committee is discussed at a meeting of these faculty members. This meeting is followed by a secret ballot on the question of promotion and tenure. For tenure decisions, all tenured faculty members are eligible to vote. The Department Head then makes a recommendation to the Dean of the College of Science and includes the vote of the committee and of the eligible faculty members in his letter.

IV. Tenure and Promotion Evaluation

Faculty will be evaluated for tenure and promotion on accomplishments in each of the three major categories with primary emphasis on teaching and scholarly activities. Excellence in performance is of primary importance; that is, the quality, significance, and impact of accomplishments are of much greater importance than their numbers. For tenure and promotion, in addition to meritorious accomplishments, a high potential for continued excellence is required.

The judgments of professionals in the faculty member’s field provide the best and most reliable basis for making sound decisions about tenure and promotion. Consequently, the level of accomplishment and potential relative to disciplinary norms and standards as judged by peer review are central to the tenure and promotion process. Accomplishments that are not subject to peer review generally will not be a major consideration in tenure and promotion evaluations.

Exceptions to the normal requirements for tenure and promotion may sometimes be warranted. Examples would include (a) gifted and productive teachers who are abreast of their field, but who have not contributed extensively to the development of new knowledge, (b) exceptionally outstanding researchers whose teaching is acceptable, (c) faculty whose service to the University is distinctive and outstanding, with acceptable teaching and research.

V. Criteria for Promotion and Tenure

A. Categories of Performance

1. Teaching
This category includes, among other things, classroom and laboratory instruction; development of new courses, laboratories, and teaching methods; publication of innovative pedagogical approaches or instructional materials, including textbooks, and supervision of undergraduate and graduate students in research.

2. Scholarly Activities

This category will normally involve original scientific research and publication of the results of such research. In all cases it consists of creation and dissemination of new knowledge or other creative activities.

3. Service

This includes service to the institution—to students, colleagues, department, college, and the University—as well as service beyond the campus including service to professional societies, research organizations, governmental agencies, the local community, and the public at large.

B. Levels of Performance

The following factors may be used to judge the level of performance of faculty in each category.

1. Teaching

*Indicators of Excellence:*
- Selection for a University, college, or professional society outstanding teacher award
- Evidence of courses taught at a rigorous and challenging level
- Publication of widely adopted or acclaimed instructional materials
- Outstanding teaching performance evaluations
- Development of innovative pedagogical methods and materials
- Publication in refereed education journals

*Indicators of Effectiveness:*
- Development of new courses or major revision of existing courses
- Member of graduate student advisory committees
- Evidence of high quality in class preparation, interaction, and accomplishments
- Coordination of multisection courses
- Service as departmental undergraduate or graduate advisor
- Significant self-development activities leading to enhanced teaching effectiveness

2. Scholarly Activities

*Indicators of Excellence:*
- Publications in leading refereed journals
- Receiving major fellowship or research award
- Frequent citation of publications
- Publication of scholarly books
- Editor or member of editorial board of a major journal
- Receiving approved patents
- Member of review panel for national research organization
- Presentation of invited papers at international and national meetings
- Receiving significant external peer-reviewed funding of research
- An established reputation as verified through review by leading experts in the field

**Indicators of Effectiveness:**
- Publications in refereed journals
- Service as a reviewer for major refereed journals or as an ad hoc reviewer for national research organizations
- Publication of a chapter in a scholarly book
- Presentation of papers at national meetings
- Publications in proceeding of conferences and professional meetings
- Significant self-development activities, such as a Faculty Development Leave, that lead to increased research and publication effectiveness
- An active and productive research program

3. Service

**Indicators of Excellence:**
- Outstanding performance in some of the positions outlined as indicator of effectiveness

**Indicators of Effectiveness:**
- Officer in a national professional organization
- Service on a major governmental commission, task force, or board
- Administrative leadership role at Texas A&M University
- Program chair or similar chair at a national meeting
- Officer in Faculty Senate
- Chair of major standing or ad hoc Texas A&M University committee
- Committee chair of national professional organization
- Officer in regional or state professional organization
- Program or committee chair for regional or state professional meeting
- Service as an active member of the Faculty Senate
- Service on University, college, and departmental committees and task forces
- Service as consultant to business or governmental agencies
- Advisor to student organizations
- Administrative roles within the department
- Significant self-development activities that lead to enhanced service effectiveness
C. Requirements for Tenure

The requirements for recommendation to tenure include:
- an exemplary level of competence as measured against the contributions of others in physics and astronomy
- professional conduct conducive to a collegial work environment and standards of professional integrity that will advance the interests of Texas A&M University
- an area of specialization germane to the programs of the Physics and Astronomy Department
- evidence indicating a commitment to maintaining the level of competence in teaching and research expected of a tenured faculty member

1. Teaching

The department is a major teaching department in the University, providing instruction to both non-majors and majors in a variety of undergraduate and graduate courses. The teaching activities include both formal classroom courses and research experience for undergraduate and graduate students. Candidates for promotion and tenure will normally be expected to have demonstrated their ability to be successful teachers in the full range of departmental teaching activities. Evaluation of teaching performance is based on information obtained from any of the following sources.

a. Teaching evaluation forms prepared by students
b. Individual student comments
c. Observation by tenured faculty members
d. Evaluations provided by the coordinators of multi-section courses
e. Annual review of performance by the departmental Performance Evaluation Committee

Successful candidates for tenure will be expected to show performance levels that include many indicators of effectiveness and excellence in teaching.

2. Scholarly Activities

Candidates for tenure should have demonstrated a clear willingness to serve the department, the University, and the scientific community through active participation in committee work and professional activities. Successful candidates for tenure will be expected to show performance levels that include indicators of effectiveness and/or of excellence in service.

D. Requirements for Promotion to Associate Professor
Evaluation for promotion from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor and for tenure will be made concurrently and one will not be awarded without the other.

E. Requirements for Promotion to Professor

The candidate should exhibit a continued development of the attributes required for promotion to associate professor and the granting of tenure. A consistent standard of excellence in teaching, recognized leadership in research, and a significant record of service will normally be required for promotion to professor.

VI. Requirement for Joint, Visiting, and Emeritus Appointments

A. Joint Appointments

In cases where a scholar’s expertise is appropriate to more than one department, a joint appointment, renewable biannually, may be made. The qualifications for such an appointment shall be the same as those for full appointment in the Department of Physics and Astronomy. Joint appointments to the Physics and Astronomy Department faculty for an individual with a primary appointment elsewhere in the University are considered temporary with no privilege of tenure.

B. Visiting Appointments

Visiting Appointments may be made at the discretion of the Department, renewable annually. Such positions are not tenure accruing.

C. Emeritus Appointments

Every individual who, at the time of retirement, holds a tenured appointment in the Physics and Astronomy Department and has served the University at least 10 years will be considered for emeritus status by the Department. Individuals who are non-tenured or who have served less than 10 years may be considered also. The Promotion, Tenure and Appointments Committee will make a recommendation to the Department Head following procedures similar to those used for tenure and promotion recommendations with the committee considering any information they deem appropriate in judging the individual’s contributions to the University. The committee will recommend in writing that emeritus status be awarded to those individuals judged to have made noteworthy and meritorious contributions to the academic programs of the University.
Physics Department Bylaws

C. Promotion, Tenure and Appointments Committee (PTA)

1. Duties

   a. Annual reviews of non-tenured faculty
   b. Third-year reviews of non-tenured faculty
   c. Review of candidates for promotion and tenure

2. Membership

   This committee shall consist of six members who serve staggered three-year terms, with three members elected by the faculty and three appointed by the Head. Each academic year there will be one elected and one appointed term which expire. It is expected that the Head use the appointed members to achieve in the committee a balanced representation of the faculty.

3. Visitors: The PTA Committee meetings are closed, unless the committee votes otherwise.