

**STATEMENT OF EVALUATION STANDARDS, CRITERIA, AND  
PROCEDURES  
DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS  
UNIVERSITY OF PUGET SOUND  
2023**

The mission of the Department of Physics at the University of Puget Sound is to educate undergraduate students in the fundamental ideas and methods of physics in an environment of scientific inquiry and discovery, based on a curriculum of classical and modern physics, and on theoretical and experimental methods, in order to prepare students for careers as scientists and as citizens. Faculty members of the Department affirm their commitment to excellence in teaching and to professional growth as scientists. As part of that commitment, members of the faculty participate in periodic evaluation of our colleagues. The following presents the guidelines developed by the Department of Physics for the evaluation of its members, setting forth the criteria to be used in the evaluation of members, the standards against which they will be measured, and the procedures to be followed.

## **1 Statement of evaluation criteria and standards**

The Department shall evaluate a faculty member in the following areas:

- a. Excellence in teaching.
- b. Professional growth.
- c. University service.
- d. Advising.
- e. Community service.

Tenure-line faculty are evaluated on the basis of teaching, professional growth, University service, and advising; community service as related to the professional interests and expertise of the faculty member can also be considered in the evaluation. Excellence in teaching and professional growth are of primary importance, while a record of service and advising is of secondary importance. More specific criteria relevant to the awarding of tenure and promotion in rank are described in Chapter III, Section 3, of the Faculty Code.

Non-tenure-line faculty (e.g., instructors and visiting professors) are expected to meet the same high standards of teaching expected of tenure-line faculty; however, the expectations for professional growth are not the same. A level of study and professional involvement is expected, as required to maintain currency in areas related to the instructor's teaching responsibilities. Instructors and visiting professors are expected to serve the Department by sharing equally in those departmental duties related to the teaching program, such as design of laboratory experiments, preparation of lecture demonstrations, curriculum revision, and so on. Instructors are also expected to participate effectively in the University's advising program.

## 1.1 Teaching

Teaching excellence can manifest itself in many forms, defying prescription. Despite this, we feel that excellent teachers do share some common attributes. In evaluating a colleague's teaching, we will consider the following:

- a. The evaluatee's organization and clarity of presentation of the course material, how well the material is received and understood by students, and how responsive the evaluatee is to the needs of students.
- b. The evaluatee's ability to set high standards for students and to motivate students to meet those standards.
- c. The evaluatee's ability to encourage students to assume responsibility for their own learning, in their day-to-day course work, as well as in independent study and research. Examples of how faculty can help students take ownership for their learning is by regularly assigning problem sets that allow students to practice concepts discussed in lecture, tiered tutorials that help students acquire knowledge through self discovery, and longer term independent (or group) research projects, as appropriate.
- d. The evaluatee's ability to instill within a student an interest and enthusiasm for the subject matter.
- e. The access that students have to the evaluatee. We expect faculty to maintain ample scheduled office hours and be available to students by appointment as necessary.
- f. The evaluatee's ability to choose pertinent material and to set and meet reasonable objectives within the framework of the selected material.

The Department recognizes that a wide range of teaching styles can be effective and that not everyone teaches most effectively in exactly the same way. The Department encourages its faculty to incorporate a variety of learning and teaching techniques in their courses, such as lecture demonstrations, laboratory work, numerical simulation, expository writing, and others. The Department also encourages its faculty to develop as teachers by trying new methods in their quest to improve their teaching.

As stated in the Faculty Code (Chapter III, Section 4 a. (1) (b)), evaluation of a colleague's teaching performance and effectiveness is based on, in order of importance: "the exhibition of pedagogical skill, as assessed through examination of course materials and the organization and construction of courses; an ongoing process of class visitation; and the thoughtful review of all student feedback materials provided in the evaluatee's file." The Department recognizes that important teaching also takes place outside the classroom. The faculty member's effectiveness in informal settings may also be taken into account.

## 1.2 Professional Growth

The physics faculty believes that their primary mission as teachers must be supported by ongoing professional growth and active intellectual engagement with the disciplines of physics or

astronomy. The department values the intellectual growth of its faculty and an atmosphere of vigorous scientific inquiry. The department believes that faculty should show ongoing, professional growth throughout their careers; thus, a significant portion of each year should be devoted to professional growth. It is also expected that sabbatical leaves for tenure-line faculty will contribute to this work. Also, the faculty should be engaged with the physics or astronomy community both at the University of Puget Sound and in the broader world outside. Engagement with the physics or astronomy community outside the University fosters the intellectual growth of the individual faculty member and helps to keep the Physics Department lively and up-to-date.

At each evaluation the faculty member should present written evidence of professional growth. There are many ways a member of the Department can show evidence of professional growth. In what follows, we include a non-exhaustive list of activities that might be cited to support a claim of professional growth. These are grouped into three tiers, and we expect members of the Department to be engaged in multiple activities regardless of tier. However, primary importance is placed on those activities in Tier I, secondary importance on those in Tier II, and tertiary importance on those in Tier III.

Tier I:

- a. Conducting original research in one's discipline and publishing that research in reputable peer-reviewed journals.
- b. Authoring textbooks or research monographs.
- c. Receiving external grant funding to support research activities.
- d. Publishing a peer-reviewed conference proceeding or peer-reviewed book chapter.

Tier II:

- a. Actively participating at conferences (such as giving presentations or serving on panel discussions), including mentored students' active participation at conferences (through oral or poster presentations).
- b. Directing student research, advanced independent study, or student theses.
- c. Publishing expository papers, survey papers, or papers on pedagogy.
- d. Writing grant proposals to support research and/or educational activities.
- e. Giving colloquium or seminar talks.

Tier III:

- a. Attending conferences.
- b. Developing new courses, teaching techniques, laboratory experiments, or demonstrations.

For tenure, we expect the faculty member to establish an independent research program at Puget Sound. Evidence of this aspect of professional growth includes, but is not limited to,

publication of one's independent research in a reputable peer-reviewed journal or obtaining external grant funding. For promotion to full professor, we require evidence of a significant contribution to one's discipline since promotion to associate professor. Although this evidence could come in a number of forms, the clearest evidence of a significant contribution is peer-reviewed publication in the form of journal articles, a monograph, or a textbook.

### **1.3 Service**

Per the Faculty Code (Chapter I, Part D, Section 2e), faculty members should participate in "service that advances the mission of the university" including "participation in departmental and university governance, in co-curricular programs, in promoting intellectual vitality and a high quality of life on the campus, and in activities which help convey the nature and purpose of the university to its constituencies." Broadly, we hold that University service can include participation in the following areas:

- a. University governance. Examples of this include (but are not limited to) participation in various university-wide committees; e.g., standing, ad-hoc, scholarship, and University search committees.
- b. Departmental service. Examples include (but are not limited to) service as Department Chair or Director of the Dual-Degree Engineering program, hosting seminar speakers, representing the Department at University public-relation functions, and participation in student recruitment efforts.
- c. Professional service. Examples of professional service include (but are not limited to) reviewing grant proposals or papers for publication, organizing scientific meetings, editing a professional journal, and serving within the governance structure of one's professional society.
- d. Community service as related to the professional interests and expertise of the faculty member. Examples of community service include (but are not limited to) judging science fairs, giving public talks to lay audiences, and hosting visiting community or student groups.
- e. Other activities that enrich the intellectual and cultural life of the University. Mentoring summer research students is an example of an important co-curricular activity that enriches the intellectual vitality of the University.

All members of the Department must participate in departmental service and are encouraged to serve the University in some, but not necessarily all, of the other areas listed above. While a record of service is expected of faculty members, it is of less importance in the evaluation process than teaching or professional growth.

### **1.4 Advising**

The Department believes that advising is a generally pervasive activity within the Department that is not limited to the formal advisor-advisee relationship. An evaluatee's willingness to advise

students may be measured, but the quality of that advising is difficult to measure, as its effects may not be felt until years after the advisee has left the University. Generally the Department equates good advising with the creation of a climate which fosters realistic discussions with students about their goals and abilities. It also requires faculty members to recognize the different needs of different students while striving to foster independence in all students. Effective advising will be considered in evaluations, but it is less important than teaching and professional growth.

Although individual advising styles may differ considerably, common elements in every effective style include appropriate knowledge, openness, and availability.

- a. Knowledge: Advisors must have a good working knowledge of University curricula, rules, regulations, and policies; an in-depth knowledge of their own departmental curriculum; a sufficient awareness for student support offices to make appropriate referrals; and a familiarity with advising resources. Advisors should maintain and be familiar with their advisees' academic records and any other pertinent information provided by the University.
- b. Openness: Advisors must show a readiness to serve in advising; to welcome student questions and concerns (academic, career-related, and possibly personal); and to make appropriate referrals.
- c. Availability: Advisors must make themselves available to students at reasonable times both formally through regular advising appointments and informally, including discussions with students who are not their advisees. This also includes the writing of recommendation letters at the request of one's advisees or other students.

## 2 Procedures

By default, the head officer for the departmental evaluation committee is the Department Chair. In cases where the Chair is being evaluated, the tenure-line members of the Department will choose another of its members to conduct this evaluation.

For cases involving tenure or promotion, all tenure-line members of the Department are expected to participate in the evaluation.<sup>1</sup> For all other evaluations that are not "streamlined" (as described in Chapter III, Section 5 of the Faculty Code), the head officer is responsible for ensuring that at least two other members of the Department participate in the evaluation.<sup>2</sup> Other departmental members are free to participate if they choose.

---

<sup>1</sup>Faculty who are on leave are not required to participate in the evaluation process, but they may choose to do so. Additionally, tenure line members could be excused from service if, in the judgment of the head officer, there is a compelling reason.

<sup>2</sup>If two other departmental members are unavailable, the head officer can appoint faculty members from a related department to serve on the evaluation committee.

## **2.1 Responsibility of the evaluatee.**

In the year prior to the evaluation, the evaluatee will inform members of the departmental evaluation committee whether the evaluation file is “open” or “closed.” This terminology refers to whether the evaluatee retains the right to examine individual colleagues’ letters after the department has deliberated, as described in Chapter III, Section 4 a. (1) (d) of the Faculty Code. The head officer will be available to discuss, among other issues, the implications of choosing either an open or closed file. Additionally, the evaluatee will make the evaluation committee members aware of times that the committee members can visit the evaluatee’s classes for the two semesters prior to the evaluation date (or four semesters, in the case of tenure).

The evaluatee shall prepare a file containing the following material:

- a. A statement regarding the evaluatee’s philosophy, professional objectives, and accomplishments.
- b. Samples of course materials, e.g., syllabi, assignments, and tests.
- c. Written evidence of professional growth.
- d. Student feedback forms of all courses taught during the previous two semesters of teaching in promotion, 3-year, and 5-year evaluation cases, and during the previous four semesters in tenure cases.
- e. Any other information the faculty member believes will be useful to the Department members and the Faculty Advancement Committee.

## **2.2 Responsibility of Department colleagues in the evaluation process.**

- a. Colleagues participating in the evaluation shall read the file prepared by the evaluatee. They shall also carefully review Chapter III of the Faculty Code, which governs faculty evaluation, these guidelines, and any other relevant University documents.
- b. Colleagues participating in the evaluation should normally observe a minimum of two classes taught by the evaluatee. These class visits should be scheduled in advance in courteous consultation with the evaluatee. If possible, classroom observations should be spread over multiple semesters and include classes representative of the breadth of the evaluatee’s teaching.
- c. Each colleague participating in the evaluation shall write a thoughtful letter evaluating the evaluatee in light of the departmental needs and the criteria and standards stated in Section 1 along with the appropriate sections of the Faculty Code.
- d. Colleagues participating in the evaluation shall meet without the candidate to formulate a departmental recommendation. Individual evaluation letters must be submitted to the head officer in advance of this meeting. These letters may not be revised following this meeting; instead, letters in addenda may be submitted to accompany the file.
- e. The head officer shall inform the candidate of the results of the departmental deliberations and its recommendation to the Academic Dean and the Advancement Committee.