

**FACULTY WORKLOAD POLICY  
DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS AND ASTRONOMY**

*March 7, 2005*

**Preamble**

The Department of Physics and Astronomy has the following missions:

- 1) To prepare undergraduate and graduate students for careers in physics and astronomy.
- 2) To teach students of other disciplines the principles of physics and astronomy.
- 3) To add to the body of knowledge in physics and astronomy and related areas through scholarly work that is among the best in the world.

To ensure that we, as a faculty, serve these missions properly, we have established two goals:

- 1) The continuation and enhancement of this Department's longstanding reputation for excellent undergraduate education.
- 2) The continuation and enhancement of this Department's status as a center of excellence in graduate education and research, recognized as comparable to departments of other universities where outstanding research and graduate education in physics and astronomy are carried out.

To achieve these goals, each tenure-track faculty member is expected to contribute to the teaching, scholarly work and administration of the Department. The workload distribution will vary from faculty member to faculty member, depending on the needs of the Department and the interests of the faculty members. Continuing non-tenure-track faculty members have workloads governed by a different set of criteria from tenure-track faculty members, as explained below. The workload distribution of each faculty member must appropriately reflect the time spent in each effort.

Workloads are assigned by the Chair, following consultation with individual faculty members. The responsibility of the Chair is to ensure that the total workload is administered appropriately and equitably, taking into account the needs of the Department and its faculty.

**Guidelines**

**General Philosophy:** Tenure-track faculty of the Department of Physics and Astronomy have responsibilities in the three areas of teaching, research/scholarly activity and service. In addition to teaching, tenure-track faculty members will be involved in scholarly activity, actively pursue and garner appropriate external research funding, advise undergraduate majors, and serve on Departmental, College and/or University committees, as these activities are necessary to the function of the Department as a whole. Specific assignments are administered by the Chair in

consultation with the faculty member and shall be in accord with this Workload Policy, the Faculty Handbook, and the applicable Collective Bargaining Agreement. An individual's workload will be determined with the expectation that the faculty member will have the opportunity to meet the criteria for promotion and satisfactory peer review.

**Examples of Teaching Activities:**

- Undergraduate and graduate classroom teaching.
- Individual research instruction of undergraduate students, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and visiting scholars.
- Other instructional activities, including course development, laboratory supervision, and developing grant requests for instruction.
- Advising of undergraduates.
- Thesis and dissertation advisement toward the awarding of degrees.

**Examples of Research and Scholarly Activities:**

- Individual and collaborative research.
- Other scholarly activity such as the preparation of textbooks, monographs, book chapters and literature reviews.
- Supervision of undergraduate, graduate, postdoctoral and visiting scholar research.
- Regularly seeking and receiving external support for research.
- Publication of faculty and faculty/student research in peer-reviewed journals.
- Presentation of research at scholarly meetings and publication in related proceedings;
- Colloquia and seminars at other universities and research organizations.

**Examples of Service and Professional Activities:**

- Membership on Department, College and University committees.
- Service to government and professional societies including committee assignments, elected positions, and conference organization.
- Editorial and reviewing activities for professional journals and granting agencies.
- Public and community outreach.
- Consulting activities.

**Administering the Teaching Load:** It is Departmental policy that teaching, as described above, is a central responsibility of the faculty. It is also Departmental policy that the classroom teaching load be equitably shared. Conversion of other teaching activities into contact-credit-hours for determination of the teaching workload is specified in Article 11.9, Footnote 3 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

**Tenured and Tenure Track Faculty:** It is expected that a faculty member will maintain a productive and nationally recognized scholarly research program<sup>1</sup> as measured by significant and sustained external funding (Federal, private and/or industrial sources) and a publication record commensurate with maintaining such external funding and stature in the discipline, typically two or more articles per year in peer-reviewed journals. A typical administered teaching workload is

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<sup>1</sup> Research and scholarly productivity are evaluated/averaged on a three-year rolling cycle.

two lecture (three or four credit-contact-hour) courses per academic year (totaling six to eight credit-contact hours), which in the absence of other contributions to teaching as exemplified above, would constitute a teaching workload of 25 % - 33%.

A tenured faculty member whose research productivity<sup>1</sup> does not rise to the criteria of a productive and nationally recognized scholarly research program, but who is engaged in scholarly activity as evidenced for instance by consistent efforts to secure external funding, and the supervision of student/coworker directed research resulting in published works, shall be assigned a teaching workload of up to 12 credit-contact-hours per academic year.

A tenured faculty member whose research activity<sup>1</sup> does not include consistent efforts to secure external funding and consistent publication rates (less than one paper per year), shall be assigned one or more extra courses per semester with the balance of the workload completed by research and service.

A tenured faculty member may ask to emphasize teaching in his or her workload and thereby request to teach one or more additional courses during the year. If the proposal is accepted by the Chair, the faculty member will be assigned additional courses and will have his/her teaching workload percentage increased accordingly. Under exceptional circumstances, a lesser teaching load may also be assigned, at the discretion of the Department Chair.

The scholarly excellence and national stature of the Department relies on all faculty members being fully engaged in teaching and scholarly research. The Department's shared goal of excellence and the faculty norms that support these standards are consistent with our aspirations to be recognized among the premier departments that achieve success in both of these areas.<sup>2</sup> The typical workload assignment for research is reflective of this shared expectation of excellence, and the high level of extramural support maintained by the faculty members.

**Pre-tenure Faculty:** To achieve tenure, a faculty member must establish an active research group and gain external professional recognition. The Department recognizes that the pre-tenure faculty member, faced with this necessity of establishing a research program in a short time, carries a particularly heavy workload. The Chair will administer the workload of assistant professors so as to maximize their opportunities to establish a vigorous research program as evidenced by external funding and peer-reviewed publications provided the faculty member's research productivity is consistent with the expected progress towards promotion and tenure. While an expected component of the workload, service should generally be limited for pre-tenure faculty.

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<sup>2</sup> Metrics include Departmental funding levels based on the most recent NSF rankings (or equivalent) and the number of undergraduates that participate in research and pursue advanced degrees in physics and astronomy. As a guide the instructional and research funding contributions of department faculty will be comparable with those of faculty at peer institutions in the mid-Atlantic and Northeast, including Clemson, Georgia Institute of Technology, North Carolina State, Rutgers, Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Virginia, and Virginia Tech.

**Service:** The tenured faculty member is expected to devote at least 10 percent of his or her workload to service. The Chair may assign a reduced workload in teaching or research for a faculty member who has significant service responsibilities within or outside the Department that are beyond the normal expectations of a faculty member and that clearly enhance the visibility of the Department and/or the ability to meet the Department's mission.

**Workload Percentages:** The workload percentages will reflect each faculty member's administered workload, as described above. The typical workload for tenured and tenure-track faculty in the Department is six to eight credit-contact-hours per year, which constitutes a workload distribution of 25% to 33% teaching, other contributions to teaching constituting 10%, 47 - 55% research, and 10% service.

**Buyout:** It is a general expectation that all faculty will contribute in a significant way to teaching and will conduct externally funded research. Such research activity is not a justification for further reduction in teaching workload. However, faculty may buy out instructional time through salary release as delineated in the College of Arts and Sciences buyout policy.

**Summer Research Option:** The Department of Physics and Astronomy does permit the Summer Research Option as delineated in the Faculty Handbook. Faculty members must make an annual request to the Chair that their workload and appraisal include summer activities with such activities necessarily changing the overall workload percentages. For example, a faculty member who teaches eight credit-contact-hours during the academic year with a 10% service workload and that carries an approved two month summer research option, the overall workload distribution would be 27% teaching, 65% research, and 8% service.

**Continuing Non-tenure-track faculty:** The expectations for continuing non-tenure track (CNTT) faculty members are different from those of tenure-track faculty members. The principal responsibility of a CNTT faculty member is classroom teaching and related instructional activities. The CNTT faculty member's workload does not typically include a research component or the instruction of undergraduate research and graduate research students that accompanies such a component. In addition, the expectation of service by CNTT faculty member is typically lower than that of a tenure-track faculty member. A CNTT faculty member would typically be assigned a teaching workload of 12 credit-contact-hours per semester on average, reduced as needed to permit undergraduate advising or assigned service.

**Revision of Workload Policy:** This Policy will be reassessed when requested by the Chair or a majority of the Departmental faculty. Major curricular changes or academic program reviews may necessitate modification of this policy. Contract changes instituted through the Collective Bargaining Agreement may require reassessment of this Policy. Modifications to this workload policy must be approved by the faculty in accordance with the Departmental policies and procedures, the Dean, the AAUP and the Provost. This document will be provided to all new faculty members upon their appointment.