Proposed revisions from Nov. 2007 are indicated in red and have not yet been approved

I. Introduction

The Department of Physics and Astronomy at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, is to be governed by these bylaws. These bylaws are subject to all policies and provisions as set forth both by the Faculty Handbook and the bylaws of the College of Arts and Sciences.

II. Faculty

A. Department Head

1. The dean of the College of Arts and Sciences appoints the department head following consultation with department faculty.

2. The department head assumes administrative responsibility for the management of the physics department.

3. The department head shall preside over meetings of the faculty and the board of visitors.

4. The department head may appoint one or more associate heads from among the faculty of the department to assist in the administration of the department.

B. Faculty Membership

1. The faculty of the department shall consist of all professors, associate professors, assistant professors, instructors, and lecturers who hold an appointment in the Department of Physics and Astronomy.

2. The voting faculty includes all faculty members except those who are retired, research professors, visiting members, adjunct faculty, and those whose University of Tennessee appointment is part-time. However, a faculty member is included in the voting faculty if he or she:
   a) has tenure; or
   b) has a "continuing part-time" appointment, as defined by the Faculty Handbook; or
   c) has been granted voting rights by the voting faculty.
3. Affirmative vote by two-thirds of the voting members is required to grant voting rights. Renewal of such rights will be reviewed on an annual basis.

4. Centrally funded Joint Faculty with shared appointments between The University of Tennessee and Oak Ridge National Laboratory, as defined by the Joint Faculty agreement between UT and ORNL (or other entity), enjoy all the same privileges and responsibilities within the department as tenured or tenure-track faculty independent of whether their home institution is UT or ORNL with the exception that Joint Faculty with primary appointment at ORNL cannot vote on personnel decisions affecting UT tenured or tenure track faculty. The UT workload requirements for Joint Faculty are prorated according to the UT share of their appointment. Selection and appointment of such joint faculty shall follow the same process as for regular faculty, as described in Section IID of the departmental bylaws.

5. Externally funded Joint Faculty are those whose UT appointment is sponsored exclusively from externally funded research contracts. Externally funded Joint Faculty do not share the faculty privileges and responsibilities as set out in the Faculty handbook or Section II B4 of the departmental bylaws. The conditions of their employment shall be similar to those of Non-Tenure-Track Research Faculty as described in Section 4.2.2 of the Faculty Handbook. Selection and appointment of such Joint Faculty shall follow the same process as that described for Adjunct Faculty in Section IIB6 of the departmental bylaws.

6. An appointment to the position of Adjunct Professor, Adjunct Associate Professor, or Adjunct Assistant Professor is made by majority vote by the voting faculty. Nomination for adjunct faculty membership is to be made by submission of a written request to the Head by the candidate and by two voting members of the faculty. Appointment of adjunct faculty are expected to be reserved for individuals with substantive association with the educational, research or outreach activities of the Department of Physics. All nominations must be accompanied by a vita of the nominee as well as a written statement of the nature of their association with the Department of Physics. Appointments as Adjunct Faculty are made for a fixed term only. The initial appointment is usually made not more than three years. Appointments as Adjunct Faculty may be renewed for additional fixed terms, typically for four years, by majority vote by the faculty following nomination by two voting members of the faculty. It is expected that, as appropriate, adjunct faculty members will use the Department of Physics byline when publishing papers, giving talks, or in other circumstances where an affiliation is given.

C. Faculty Meetings and Voting Procedures

1. There shall be a faculty meeting at least once in each term during the academic year.

2. The department head shall distribute the agenda for faculty meetings to the faculty at least five calendar days, if feasible, before the meeting.
3. Voting may take place during regularly announced faculty meeting, by electronic ballot, or by some combination of the two. For hiring, promotion, and tenure decisions, or other decisions related to individual faculty members, the voting shall be done by a secret written ballot. For all other voting, the Head may select the method of voting.

4. A quorum for votes concerning hiring, promotion, or tenure shall be 2/3 of the voting faculty. For other votes, there are no specific quorum requirements, unless otherwise specified in these bylaws. If the vote employs electronic ballot, a quorum shall be assumed if all voting members of the faculty have been informed of the process in a timely fashion.

D. Hiring of Faculty

1. Faculty shall be hired in keeping with the department’s long-range plan, which is to be updated at least every five years by the planning committee. This plan sets forth the priority areas for new faculty hires. New opportunities can be brought to the department head and the planning committee for consideration, and then to the faculty upon approval by the planning committee. New circumstances or initiatives at the University can lead to a re-evaluation of the long-range plan.

2. Proposals for specific hires should be taken to the department head, then to the planning committee, before presentation to the faculty.

3. A majority of the voting faculty must support a specific hiring proposal before it can be acted upon. Once such a majority opinion has been achieved, the department head will present the proposal to the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

4. If the dean approves a search for a new faculty hire, the department head will establish a search committee, including a distribution of faculty from different research areas.

5. The search committee shall assume responsibility for interviewing and recommending candidates for the faculty position. The faculty must vote on the candidates.

6. The department head reviews the votes of the search committee and the votes of the faculty and makes a recommendation to the dean.

E. Promotion and Tenure

1. All departmental actions concerning appointment to the faculty, retention, tenure, and promotion, will conform to the standards and procedures set forth in the Faculty Handbook and the Handbook for Faculty Evaluations.
2. The department head shall appoint a mentor for a newly hired assistant professor. The mentor will be a departmental faculty member working in an area of research close to that of the new assistant professor. After the assistant professor has served three years on the faculty, the department head will ask the departmental promotion and tenure committee to perform a midterm review of him or her. The purpose of this review is to judge the progress of the junior faculty member toward tenure, make recommendations on needed improvements, and advise the department head and the tenured faculty on retention. To make this assessment, the promotion and tenure committee will identify reviewers who are recognized experts in the candidate’s field whom the department head will contact for letters of recommendation. Only those letters solicited by the department head will be included in the official promotion/tenure file.

3. The committee will interview the mentor, and review the record in teaching, funding, and research.

4. The department head may identify candidates for promotion and tenure, or faculty members may propose candidates. Faculty members may also propose themselves for promotion and tenure. Nominations will be in accordance with the Chancellor’s letter of appointment.

5. The department head must judge candidates’ qualifications according to the Faculty Handbook and then submit his or her nominations to the department’s promotion and tenure committee. The P&T committee will be responsible for specifying names of evaluators, some suggested by the candidates and some suggested by the faculty.

6. The candidate shall present a departmental colloquium before the first faculty meeting at which the tenure or promotion issues are discussed. If feasible, the colloquium shall take place in the same semester as the faculty recommendation on promotion and tenure.

7. There must be two faculty meetings to discuss promotion and tenure for a candidate. The first meeting is devoted to discussion of the data. The second meeting involves further discussion and a vote. If possible, meetings should be at least three weeks apart to give faculty time to study the related data regarding a candidate’s nomination. The formal vote, as well as a written summary of the tenured faculty’s deliberation, will be recorded. A two-thirds vote of the tenured faculty will be considered a positive recommendation.

8. A two-thirds majority of the eligible faculty is required for a positive recommendation for promotion and tenure. If more than two eligible faculty members are voting against promotion or tenure at the faculty meeting, an additional faculty meeting shall be called two or three weeks later for additional deliberations on the issue. The vote at this second faculty meeting is final. The formal vote, as well as a written summary of the tenured faculty’s deliberation, will be recorded by the Department’s Promotion and Tenure Committee.
9. The department head, in forming his or her promotion and tenure recommendation, should consider whether a consensus of the faculty forms. Both the faculty vote and department head recommendation are submitted.

10. The department head must notify the tenured faculty if his or her recommendation deviates from the majority of the faculty. The head must also inform the faculty of his or her recommendation before submittal to the dean.

11. The department head must provide the faculty member with a copy of the recommendation at the same time it is submitted to the dean.

12. Tenured faculty, individually or collectively, may forward a dissenting report to the next level of review.

F. Annual Faculty Evaluations

It shall be the responsibility of the department head to perform an annual evaluation of all regular faculty members. The detailed formulation of the review process is left to the department head, but the process is to be consistent with the policies of the University and the College of Arts and Sciences and is expected to include the following:

1. Announcement of evaluation procedures
   In a timely fashion, the department head will inform all regular faculty members of the procedure for the annual evaluation. This includes a schedule for each step in the process, including formats for submission of information, as well as clear description of the actions expected by the faculty member and the department chair.

2. Definition of “expectations”
   The department chair will provide the faculty with a clear set of “expectations” against which a faculty member will be evaluated. These will include, but are not necessarily limited to accomplishments in teaching, research, department service, university service, community service, as well as success in obtaining university or external funding. Expectations may be “universal” in that they are the same for all faculty members or they may be “individualized” for specific faculty members, or sets of faculty members as appropriate. All faculty members are to be informed of their “expectations” in a timely fashion in order to allow them an opportunity to respond to the department chair and if appropriate, negotiate changes. Nonetheless, It is understood the final responsibility of the definition of the “expectations” lies with the department head.

3. Submission of information by faculty members
   It is the responsibility of each faculty member to submit all material germane to the evaluation to the department head by the date defined in the review process. The format shall be consistent with that defined by the evaluation procedure. It is understood that it is the responsibility of each faculty member to provide this information in a timely fashion and in the required format. While the department head may, as appropriate, consider information in addition to that submitted by the faculty member,
he is not responsible for the failure to consider information which was not submitted in the correct format and in a timely fashion. Information to be provided by the each faculty member is expected to include (but is not limited to):

- Papers published in refereed journals
- Books published
- Success in competitive funding/external funding support
- Invited talks at meetings and conferences by the faculty member or the graduate students or postdocs working directly for him or her
- Major prizes and honors
- Professional recognition/important national committees and boards
- Activities in teaching (including graduate student supervision)
- Public service
- Departmental and University service

4. Evaluation by department head
   Based on the submitted information, teaching evaluations, and other information as appropriate, the department head assigns a grade or ranking as mandated by University policy.

5. Review by faculty member
   Each faculty rankings will informed of his/her ranking in timely fashion to allow a review. At their discretion, either the department head or the faculty member may request formal meeting to discuss issues relating to the evaluation.

6. Signature of review
   It is the responsibility of the faculty member to sign a hardcopy of their evaluation and return it to the department head in a timely fashion. The signing of the report is understood to be a formal acknowledgement of receipt of the report and does not, necessarily, represent concurrence with the assigned ranking

7. Planning
   A faculty member whose performance is determined to be less than fully satisfactory must consult with the department head to develop a written plan to address areas needing attention

G. Merit Raises
   It is understood that, as mandated by the University, the assignment of performance based raises or compensation will be based upon recent Annual Faculty Evaluations (when available) and not only upon the previous year’s evaluation.

H. Teaching Loads

1. In accordance with UTK policy, a full-time load shall be defined as the equivalent of 12 credit hours per term. There are four factors involved in determining teaching assignments:
a) Teaching a lecture or laboratory course  
b) Guiding graduate students in research  
c) Personal scientific research  
d) Service to the department, the University, and/or the public

2. The department head makes each semester’s teaching assignments based on the above workload factors. The department head will consider faculty requests for specific teaching assignments and is the final arbiter of disputes involving assignments.

3. The Department aims at assigning faculty members with a 1+1 teaching load, if they have an active and well-funded research program and they are actively supervising graduate students for dissertation work.

III. Departmental Affairs

A. Standing Committees

1. The department head proposes a committee structure subject for approval by the faculty. The department head appoints committees and their respective chairs.

2. The major standing committees normally function only during the academic year, and meet at least once during each term. Additional meetings may be called by the Chair or on petition of three members. The department head shall be advised of all meetings.

3. The following core committees must exist within the department:
   a) Undergraduate Studies (with student representation)  
   b) Graduate Studies (with student representation)  
   c) Promotion and Tenure*  
   d) Planning*  
   e) Prelim (Ph.D. Qualifying Exams)  
   *Must include a distribution of people from different research specialties.

4. The current committee structure includes the core committees as well as:
   a) Engineering Physics  
   b) Undergraduate College of Arts and Sciences Advising  
   c) Undergraduate Advising  
   d) Graduate Program  
   e) Endowment Development and Alumni Relations  
   f) Awards  
   g) Graduate Student Liaison  
   h) Undergraduate Liaison  
   i) Student Appeals Review  
   j) Shop

5. The department head will review committee membership each year and make necessary changes, if any.
6. The department head also recommends, as needed, certain faculty and staff to assume responsibility for various departmental service issues. The core assignments are:
   a) Associate Head
   b) Director of the Graduate Program
   c) Director of the Undergraduate Program
   d) Colloquium
   e) Graduate Admissions
   f) Ph.D. Qualifying Exams
   g) Placement Exam (Graduate Students)
   h) Honors Day
   i) Radiation Safety
   j) Environmental Health and Safety

7. The department head may also recommend/assign certain faculty and staff to assume the following additional assignments:
   a) Graduate Student Progress
   b) Dean’s Advisory Council
   c) History
   d) Inventory
   e) Building Representative
   f) Library Representative
   g) Society of Physics Students Advisor
   h) Astronomy Outreach and Public Programs
   i) Publications Coordinator
   j) Surplusing
   k) Joint Institute for Heavy Ion Research

B. Curriculum/Undergraduate and Graduate Requirements

1. Proposed curriculum changes are reviewed by the graduate and undergraduate studies committees and then voted upon. If passed, they are forwarded to the faculty for a vote.

2. After faculty approval, any proposed changes addressing the curriculum will be forwarded through the appropriate University channels.

C. Advising

1. Undergraduate and graduate physics majors are to be under the advisement of the department’s faculty.

2. The department will provide faculty to work in the Arts and Sciences Advising Center as required by the College.

D. Graduate Students
1. Graduate students are expected to teach instructional laboratories as full teaching assistants during their first year of graduate study and full or half-time TAs during their second year.

2. If a graduate student chooses to pursue a master’s degree without writing a thesis, he or she must follow the guidelines outlined in the Graduate Student Handbook, including 18 hours of core courses, six semester hours in a minor field, six semester hours from additional 400-level courses or above, seminar, and a written exam.

3. It is the expectation that a faculty member provide support for any graduate student supervised by them after the student passes their qualifying examinations.

4. It is expected that a voting member of the faculty will direct the research of Ph.D. students. If a student is working with Oak Ridge National Laboratory or other outside scientific research institution, the chair of the student’s committee must be a voting member of the faculty.

IV. Amendments

A. The faculty shall have the power to amend these bylaws according to the following procedures:

1. Amendment proposals shall originate through a petition to the planning committee signed by at least seven members of the voting faculty.

2. The planning committee shall present proposed amendments to the faculty in writing before the earliest possible regular faculty meeting following receipt of a petition.
   a) At that faculty meeting (or subsequent meetings when in order) a motion to poll the faculty for the purpose of adopting the prospective amendment may be made and voted upon according to the usual rules of parliamentary procedure, a majority vote being sufficient to carry the motion.
   b) After a motion to poll the faculty has carried, a ballot shall be distributed immediately to all voting faculty and, after seven days, the planning committee shall count votes. An affirmative vote by two-thirds of the voting faculty shall constitute an enactment of the amendment. The voting faculty shall be informed in writing of the amendment when it is enacted.
   c) Amendments shall become effective immediately following the vote of enactment.

B. The planning committee shall review the bylaws at least once every five years to determine their effectiveness and propose amendments if necessary.