

## **Department of Astronomy Governance Policies and Procedures**

(March 2017 – From Section X.B of Self-Study)

The governance structure of the Department of Astronomy outlined below conforms with the Rules and Regulations of the Board of Regents of The University of Texas at Austin, the Handbook of Operating Procedure of The University of Texas at Austin, and the Policies of the College of Natural Sciences.

**The Voting Faculty** votes on important matters, including the strategic plan of the department, research initiatives, faculty hires, allocation of resources, and matters related to the graduate and undergraduate programs. The Voting Faculty consists of all persons officially appointed to the faculty as Professors, Associate Professors, Assistant Professors, and Lecturers, with at least 50% appointment, who are tenured or receiving probationary credit toward tenure. Faculty with less than 50% appointment, as well as Research Professors of all ranks, and Emeritus, Retired, Visiting, and Adjunct Faculty, shall be accorded voice but not vote at faculty meetings.

**The Budget Council** consists of all members of the Voting Faculty with tenure. The Senior Budget Council consists of all members of the Voting Faculty who are Full Professors. The Budget Council votes on promotion to tenure, the Senior Budget Council votes on promotion to Full Professor.

**The Endowment Holders** comprise all members of the Voting Faculty who hold endowed Chairs or Professorships.

**The Graduate Studies Committee (GSC)** consists of all Voting Faculty and research staff members who have an interest in co-supervising graduate student research.

**The Undergraduate Studies Committee (UGSC)** consists of all Voting Faculty and research staff members who have an interest in co-supervising undergraduate student research.

**The Department Chair:** The Voting Faculty recommends to the Dean a faculty member who is a Full Professor for appointment as Chair. The candidate is selected based on an election by a simple majority of the Voting Faculty. The election is administered by current Chair unless the current Chair is a candidate, in which case the election is administered by the Chair of the Faculty Evaluation Committee (defined below). Only Full Professors are eligible for this office.

**The Faculty Evaluation Committee** consists of five tenured members of the Voting Faculty who are elected by all members of the Voting Faculty. The committee provides the annual performance reviews and the category ratings of each faculty member to the Department Chair. It also recommends to the Department Chair merit raises for all faculty members, except those who report directly to the Dean. It also provides advice on workloads, Third Year Reviews, promotions, prizes, faculty leaves, Chair's Fellowships, and any similar matters identified by the Chair.

**Astronomy Program Committees:** The Department Chair appoints the Associate Chair and members of all departmental committees, except the Faculty Evaluation Committee. Some joint Department/Observatory committees are assigned by the Department Chair and the McDonald Observatory Director. A partial list of committees is provided below, and a full list can be found at <http://www.as.utexas.edu/astronomy/2016-17Committees.pdf>

- **The Graduate Studies Executive Committee (GSEC)** consists of the Chair of Graduate Studies, a Graduate Advisor, and at least two other members, one of whom may be the Assistant Graduate Advisor. The Department Chair and Associate Chair are ex-officio members of the GSEC.
- **The Undergraduate Studies Executive Committee (UGSEC)** consist of the Chair of the UGSC, the Undergraduate Advisor, and at least two other members, one of whom may be the Assistant Undergraduate Advisor. The Department Chair and Associate Chair are ex-officio members of the UGSEC.
- **The Graduate Admission Committee** recommends the admission of graduate students and helps recruit them.
- **The Teaching Peer Review and Awards Committee** reviews teaching performance of all faculty members periodically and recommends faculty members for teaching awards.
- **The Cox Committee** makes advisory recommendations to the Department Chair on the allocation of Research funds from the Cox Endowment if such funds are deemed to be available by the Department Chair.
- **The Office Space Committee** advises the Department Chair on office space needs of the various groups in the department.
- **The Postdoc Mentoring Committee** mentors postdoctoral fellows and provides advice on career and professional development.

### **Promotion and Tenure**

The Chair and relevant Budget Council shall recommend to the Dean individuals for new appointment, promotion and tenure in the department. A vote by the relevant Budget Council shall be solicited by the Chair on such recommendations. All members of the Faculty may vote on new appointments. However, a member of the Faculty shall not vote on promotion or tenure to a rank higher than the rank of said member. The Budget Council votes on promotion to tenure, The Senior Budget Council votes on promotion to Full Professor and the Endowment Holders vote on promotion to endowed positions. The votes of the relevant Budget Council shall be report to the Dean by the Chair, along with the Chair's recommendation.

The Evaluations Committee (EC) shall review annually during the Spring Semester, the records of all faculty members who may be eligible for promotion or tenure, and determine if a review by the full, relevant Budget Council is warranted. Supplementary material from the eligible faculty member and input from the Faculty may be solicited by the Chair for this annual review. A member of the Committee may participate in deliberations concerning promotion(s) or

tenure to a rank higher than the rank of said member, by he or she may not vote on the question. If a full review is deemed not warranted, the Chair shall convey the decision, as well as guidance and feedback, to the faculty member in a timely fashion. If warranted, the Chair shall initiate the formal review process before or immediately after the end of Spring Semester, in accordance with the current policies and procedures of the University and College. Input to the formal review shall be solicited by the Chair from the Faculty with rank higher than the rank of the faculty member being reviewed.

Notification of Non-reappointment: In the case of a negative tenure decision for a tenure-track faculty member, any notification of non-reappointment shall follow the procedures of the University and College.

Right of Petition and Appeal: Any member of the Department may request a hearing by the Chair or by any Committee and, on presenting such a request, shall receive a hearing.

### **Faculty Recruiting**

The Chair shall appoint the Chair and members of a Search Committee, which carries out the necessary tasks to arrive at a short list of candidates. The Committee presents the recommended short list to the Chair, faculty, and research scientists at a Faculty and Research Scientist Meeting. The Chair shall make the final recommendation to the Dean, following the votes of the Voting Faculty.

### **Annual and Comprehensive Periodic Review of Faculty**

Annual and Comprehensive Periodic Review of Faculty are managed by the Evaluations Committee (EC). The EC shall consist of five members elected from the tenured members of the voting faculty and elected by all members of the voting faculty. The term of office of each member shall be two academic years, to begin at the start of the Fall Semester. At the last regularly scheduled Faculty meeting of each academic year, the Faculty shall elect two (or three in alternate years) members by secret ballot. The member of the committee whose term expires each year may not be reelected until one full year has elapsed. The Evaluations Committee will elect its own Chair.

The Evaluations Committee will provide advice and evaluations of faculty performance to the Department Chair, including, but not limited to, faculty annual evaluations, third-year reviews for untenured faculty, comprehensive periodic review, recommendations for promotion, teaching relief, Chair's Fellows, awards, prizes and priorities for office space.

### **Merit Raises**

The Evaluations Committee advises the Chair and Budget Council on merit raises for faculty. The criteria used for evaluation and the procedures that the committee follows

are described in separate documents. Changes must be approved by the Budget Council and consistent with the University and College policies. Merit raises are recommended to the Dean by the Chair, based on the procedures in force at the time. These procedures shall include input from the EC and the Budget Council.