Department of Astronomy Policies

Graduate Handbook
1. Small modifications to the Graduate Handbook for Astronomy, which do not change the spirit of the document, can be unanimously approved by the Chair and EC without a faculty vote. Those changes must be reported to the faculty at the next faculty meeting.
   April 2019

Teaching
1. Teaching release is at the discretion of the Chair and must be in the best interest of the Department. Teaching release has been and will continue to be arranged as part of service to projects critical to the department and campus (e.g., leadership in NCSA, CARMA, LSST). Requests for release will be handled on a case-by-case basis by the Chair, in consultation with the EC, and are subject to buy-out cost. The Chair and EC will weigh department teaching scheduling needs, staffing levels, and how recently/frequently the last request was granted. The cost per semester is currently 20% of the faculty member's academic year salary or $25,000, whichever is greater.
   May 2018
2. Teaching assignments are decided by the Chair with preference given to non-tenured faculty.
   April 2019
3. Double-teaching (i.e., teaching a double-load in one semester to have teaching release in another semester) is discouraged. However, special one-off requests can be made. They will be decided on a case-by-case basis by the Chair, in consultation with the EC. The Chair and EC will weigh department teaching scheduling needs, staffing levels, and how recently/frequently the last request was granted. In cases where double-teaching is approved, it is expected that the double-teaching semester will occur before the semester of teaching release.
   April 2019

Start-up
1. Due to changes in the tax laws in 2018, moving expenses are now treated as taxable income. For future hires, the Department will provide “gross up” payments to compensate for the taxes accrued based on the University’s policies.
   April 2019

Faculty Member Departures
1. When the Chair becomes aware of a faculty member’s intent to resign, a meeting will be called between the Chair, department business manager, and the faculty member to formulate a plan for the faculty member’s grant, ICR/start-up, and gift accounts (if applicable). Any “leave behind obligations” (e.g., support for students and postdocs remaining here) must be met from the faculty member’s research, ICR/startup, and gift accounts (in that order). After obligations are met, unexpended grants may be transferred to the new institution, while unexpended ICR/start-up funds revert back to the department.
   April 2019