



ASSESSMENT PLAN

ASTRONOMY BS

(Program of Study / Major / Degree Level, etc.)

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Date submitted to Academic Unit Head: 2/6/06

Program Goals: The Department of Astronomy B.S. program educates majors toward achieving an understanding of modern astronomical concepts, applying physics and mathematics to astrophysical situations, and gaining experience in gathering and reducing data using astronomical instrumentation and computational tools. Completion of this program provides the opportunity for majors to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for graduate school or employment after graduation.

Relevance of goals to the mission statements and/or strategic plans of the University, College, or Program as applicable:

These program goals are aligned with the strategic plans of the Program and College to equip our graduates with the skills of modern technology and knowledge to lead the next generation of scientists and innovators.

Student Learning Outcomes (list the three-to-five most important)	Assessment Measures and Criteria (describe one or more measures for each outcome and criteria for success)	Assessment Schedule (initial year, and subsequent cycle)
1. Identify basic concepts from the many areas of astronomy, including motions in the sky, gravity, electromagnetic radiation, solar system, stars, and galaxies.	Astronomy majors take a year-long introductory sequence in astronomy (ASTR 120 and 121) that includes broad coverage of the various areas of astronomy. Responses to selected questions from the cumulative final exams for ASTR 120 and 121 will be chosen as indicators of basic astronomical knowledge.	A departmental committee analyzes syllabi, course grades, and scores on the responses to the selected questions from final exams and makes

	<p>Average scores on these questions should be at least at the eighty percent level for astronomy majors.</p>	<p>recommendations to the Chair once every three years beginning in 2006.</p>
<p>2. Develop mathematical skills, acquire physics knowledge, and practice applying these skills and knowledge in astrophysical situations.</p>	<p>Astronomy majors take 5 Math courses (MATH 140, 141, 241, 246, and 240 or 461) to provide mathematical skills and 3 semesters of introductory physics with labs (PHYS 171/174, 272/275 and 273/276) to develop basic physics knowledge. ASTR 320 (required for all majors) involves working problems that integrates astronomy and physics knowledge with applied mathematical skills. The responses to selected questions from exams will be evaluated as excellent, good, needs improvement, or unacceptable.</p> <p>At least eighty percent of majors should receive an excellent or good rating on average for their responses.</p>	<p>A departmental committee analyzes syllabi, course grades, and responses to selected exam questions from ASTR 320 and makes recommendations to the Chair once every three years beginning in 2007.</p>
<p>3. Use astronomical telescopes/instruments and reduce astronomical data using modern computational methods.</p>	<p>Astronomy majors take a course in observational astronomy, ASTR 310 (required for all majors). Telescopes and instruments at the campus observatory are used to complete four projects in ASTR 310. Computers in the Astronomy Lab are used to reduce and analyze data. One of these projects will be selected and evaluated as excellent, good, needs improvement, or unacceptable.</p> <p>At least eighty percent of majors should receive an excellent or good rating on the selected</p>	<p>A departmental committee analyzes syllabi, course grades, and selected projects from ASTR 310 and makes recommendations to the Chair once every three years beginning in 2007.</p>

	project.	
4. Demonstrate advanced level knowledge in several different areas of astronomy.	<p>Astronomy majors take two upper level astronomy courses from a list of electives (400 level courses). Selected responses to questions from exams will be evaluated as excellent, good, needs improvement, and unacceptable.</p> <p>At least eighty percent of majors should receive an excellent or good rating on average for their responses.</p>	<p>A departmental committee analyzes syllabi, course grades, and responses to selected exam questions and makes recommendations to the Chair once every three years beginning in 2008</p>