

Institute for Astronomy

Context: In alignment with our goal of more strongly integrating world-class research and undergraduate education, consider moving the Astronomy degree program to IfA. Explore other avenues for IfA to be more present in both the Manoa educational programs and the broader community.

Summary Recommendations

- Reorganize the Astronomy degree program into the Institute for Astronomy OR explore a collaborative administration of the program between IfA and Physics.
- Consider a professional master's in Astronomy for neighbor island personnel in IFA facilities.
- Reduce inequities in the level of graduate student support.

Details

- The Department of Physics & Astronomy serves as the academic home for the BS in Astrophysics, and the BA, MS and PhD in Astronomy. The undergraduate programs in Astronomy and Astrophysics were recently approved (2014) and are still provisional. While the Department serves as the home for the academic programs, IFA faculty are primarily responsible for the Astronomy degree program. As many as 13 researchers teach courses to support the program. A complicated MOA facilitates the administration of the program across these units.
- There are 53 students enrolled in the BS in Astrophysics, and 15 in the BA in Astronomy. Both lag enrollment projections (80 and 48, respectively). Enrollment in the MS in Astronomy is low at 6 students. Enrollment in the PhD program is 39.
- The Department describes the MS as a terminal degree, noting that students wishing to receive the PhD should apply directly. There are discussions to modify the MS program into an online/hybrid degree to serve neighbor island IFA personnel through a combination of online courses and experiences at IFA facilities. Faculty have inquired about WASC substantive change procedures towards that end.
- Faculty FTE in IFA is currently 31.
- The previous IFA Director recommended that the Department of Physics & Astronomy and IFA collaborate to create a School of Astronomy and Astrophysics. The proposed model was similar to how Natural Sciences and SOEST collaborate to administer the graduate degrees in Marine Biology.
- Moving the Astronomy program to IFA could help address issues with inequitable support of graduate students. The 2014 program review team found the following.

The department should carefully examine its current policies and practices regarding the graduate program...the department needs to develop a way to address the extreme resentment felt by some graduate students regarding the

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