

**Annual Key Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements  
Department of Physics**

**M.S. Program in Physics  
Ph.D. Program in Physics  
AY 2009-2010**

**Key Assessment Findings**

**M.S. Program**

During the academic year 2009-10, one student in the Master's program took the Master's comprehensive exam and passed. In order to preserve confidentiality, data are not presented in this report. Aggregated data will be presented later in the five-year report.

Table 1: Master's Comprehensive Exam Results (AY 2009-2010)

|                  | Fail |       | Pass |         | High Pass |       | TOTAL |
|------------------|------|-------|------|---------|-----------|-------|-------|
|                  | #    | %     | #    | %       | #         | %     |       |
| Master's program | 0    | 0.00% | 1    | 100.00% | 0         | 0.00% | 1     |

**Ph.D. Program**

During the academic year 2009-2010, 5 students took the Ph,D, comprehensive examination. Four students passed, and one failed. The number of students was small, so data are not presented in this report to preserve confidentiality. Aggregated data will be presented later in the five-year report.

Table 2: Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam Results (AY 2009-2010)

|               | Fail |        | Pass |        | High Pass |       | TOTAL |
|---------------|------|--------|------|--------|-----------|-------|-------|
|               | #    | %      | #    | %      | #         | %     |       |
| Ph.D. program | 1    | 20.00% | 4    | 80.00% | 0         | 0.00% | 5     |

**Curricular Improvements**

The Physics Department has begun making small structural changes to the Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination in order to permit qualified students to take the examination earlier in their careers, ideally no later than their fifth semester in residence. By offering a limited choice of problems in each subject area (prior to Spring 2009 there was no choice), we hope that students will be less intimidated by the preparation process and will be less inclined to delay taking the examination.

The Department has developed rubrics for the graduate program for analysis of comprehensive exam performance for the Master's and PhD programs. The rubrics will be applied to the aggregated data.