



**Dr. Melinda Kellogg: Consideration for Pre-Tenure.**

### **Teaching Evaluation**

This teaching evaluation is based upon my attendance at a lecture, given 10.31.07, for the course Physics 495: Special Topics, "Black Holes".

This lecture represented a highly competent, interactive, and impressive exercise in teaching undergraduates. Its overall quality derived from two facets:- its logical organization and, perhaps more importantly, its intellectual strength.

Mindy opened the class by linking the upcoming lecture to ideas and theories that had been introduced over the previous two weeks. There then followed a logical progression of concepts, skillfully supported by copious (and multicolored!) notes on the board. Not surprisingly, many of the relevant written notes were in the form of equations and graphical models, but these were effortlessly presented, clearly written, and rationally justified. The sense was very much of a story unfolding, and the ability of the students to follow that story, was consummate.

Despite the quantity of board-work required, Mindy consistently maintained eye contact with her students, and frequently sought interaction with them. She asked challenging questions, actively praised valid questions in return, and encouraged class discussion through which students could increase their own understanding of the material presented. There is little doubt that the students in her class were well-prepared, highly knowledgeable, and at ease with the stringency of the material. There were times during the lecture when the students were listening intently, rather than note-taking, and this appeared to reflect their sense that the flow of ideas was significant, not merely the acquisition of facts. Mindy also made lively use of humor and analogy in the lecture.

We are all, perhaps, aware that teaching an upper-level course to a relatively small number of intelligent and focused students, is one of the most rewarding teaching experiences for Faculty. Nevertheless, the opportunity to engage in such teaching, arguably imposes real responsibilities. If our potential is to take intellectual abilities to new levels, open new doors, and in effect, change lives, Mindy's lecture met these goals. She clearly was motivated and excited about teaching the course, and the depth of her own intellectual capabilities was clearly hinted at. This lecture and the nature of its presentation might not be expected, or indeed be relevant at a lower level, but clearly supported the goals of the department in promoting excellence in physics. Mindy showed a real ability to take students and teaching to the next level, and that reflects an uncommon degree of effectiveness in teaching.

Dr. Kevin Jones