

Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom

Annual Report for 2021-2022

Committee Members: Lauren Mathews (Chair), Mark Claypool (Secretary), Jim Doyle, Constance Clark, Nima Rahbar, and Kris Wobbe

CTAF took the following actions during the 2021-2022 Academic Year:

1. With departmental tenure committees, reviewed 7 tenure cases and made recommendations to the Provost.
2. Reviewed 6 proposals for appointment with tenure and made recommendations to the Provost.
3. Notified departmental tenure committees to conduct annual reviews of untenured tenure-track faculty and to certify to CTAF in writing that the reviews had been done.
4. Presented a session on the tenure review process during New Faculty Orientation in August 2021.
5. Held an open meeting on April 20, 2022 with untenured tenure-track faculty to provide information on the tenure process at WPI.
6. Held an open meeting on April 21, 2022 with departmental tenure committees to discuss the tenure review process.
7. Named Xiaozhong Liu (DS) as the CTAF selection to the Committee on Information Technology Policy (CITP).
8. Finalized CTAF policy and procedures on the formation of joint tenure committees for faculty in programs.
9. Developed CTAF policies and procedures for hearing and resolving cases regarding potential violation of academic freedom for faculty.
10. Developed a proposal (in collaboration with the Committee on Governance) to extend the tenure clock for one year due to hardships associated with the COVID-19 pandemic for faculty that started on the tenure track in AY21/22, with an opt-out option. The motion was presented to and approved by the Faculty on April 14, 2022.
11. Prepared and distributed a roster of non-tenured, tenure track faculty, along with their tenure years, as per Part 2, Section 1A of the Faculty Handbook.
12. Investigated and ruled on an allegation of violation of academic freedom.
13. Met with the ADVANCE team to discuss possible changes to tenure clocks that might address concerns about flexibility and equity in the tenure process.
14. Appointed M. Claypool (until 2023) as the new Chair and C. Clark (until 2024) as the new Secretary of CTAF. Continuing members are N. Rahbar (until 2023) and K. Wobbe (until 2025). CTAF welcomed newly elected members R. Konrad (until 2026) and M. Timko (until 2026).
15. Established a summer working group to make progress on several issues, in order of priority: (a) developing of practices and materials specific to the Professors of Teaching, (b) evaluating

options to deal with the expected significant increase in CTAF workload, (c) improving the low response rate to alumni surveys, (d) aligning definitions of scholarship for promotion and tenure, and (e) considering diversity and inclusion training for CTAF members.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Claypool
2021-2022 CTAF Secretary