



# WPI

## **Equity in our Associate-to-Full promotion systems: How far have we come?**



ADVANCE Adaptation Grant No. 1760577

# WPI ADVANCE Team

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**Jeanine Skorinko**

Professor, Psychology  
Director, Psychological Science  
Program



**Elizabeth Long Lingo**

Assistant Professor  
Business School



**Chrys Demetry**

Director, Morgan Teaching and  
Learning Center  
Professor, Mechanical and  
Materials Engineering



**Susan Roberts**

Professor  
Department Head, Chemical Engineering



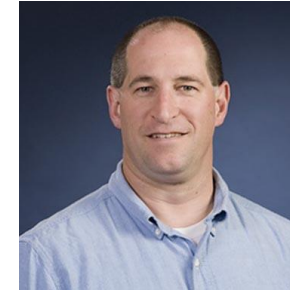
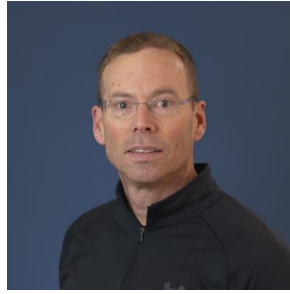
**Natalie Farny**

Assistant Professor,  
Biology & Biotechnology

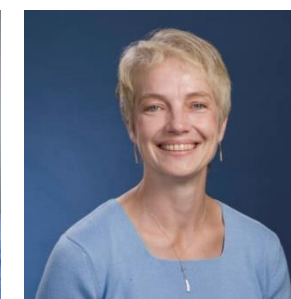


**Kim Hollan**

Program Coordinator (2019-2022)  
Director of Operations, Engineering



# ADVANCE Summer Working Groups



# Close Collaborators in Department Head Development



**Kris Billiar**  
BME



**Doug Petkie**  
PH



**Diane Strong**  
BUS

## Internal Advisory Board Members



**Kris Billiar**  
BME



**Jean King**  
Arts & Sciences



**John McNeill**  
Engineering



**Doug Petkie**  
PH



**Wole Soboyejo**  
Provost



**David Spanagel**  
HUA



**John Sullivan**  
MME

# Outline

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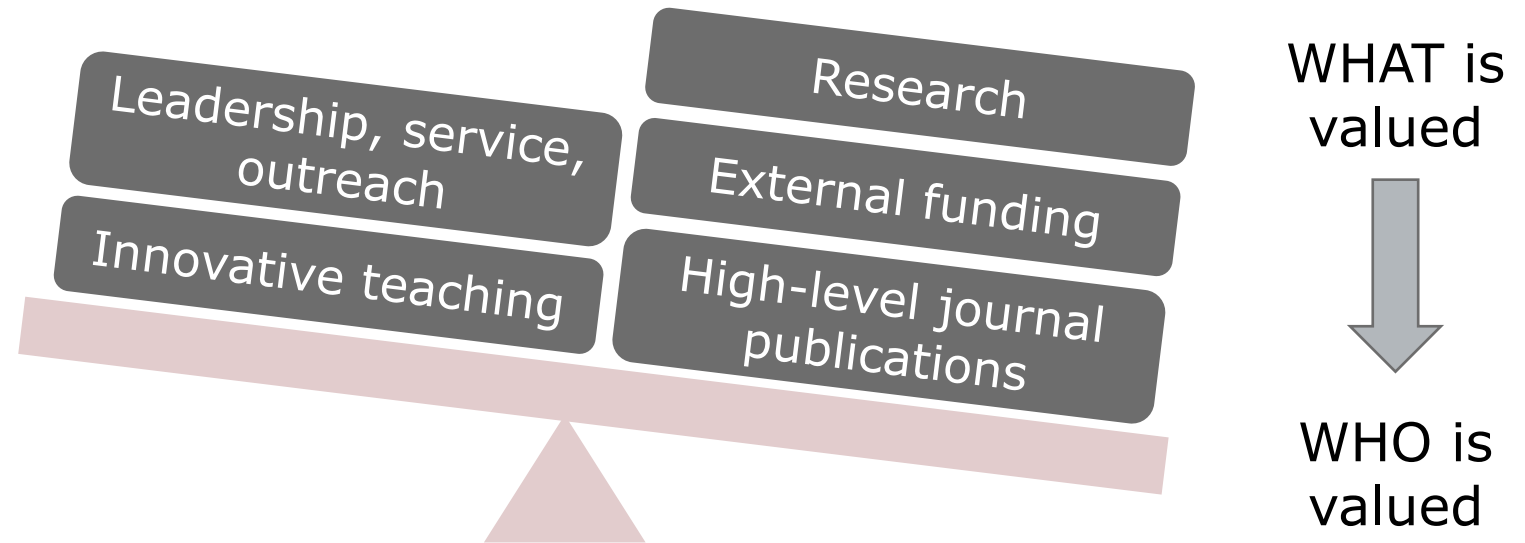
- Historical overview of faculty actions related to Associate-Full promotion
- Goals and activities of the ADVANCE grant
- New resources to clarify promotion and professional development of Associates
- Outcomes: What has changed? What has not?
- Promising practices and insights to take forward

# Backstory: Work began in 2014

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- Promotion to Full identified as institutional weakness in COACHE Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey
- Women particularly dissatisfied with:
  - Multiple aspects of promotion clarity
  - Mentoring of Associates in their department

**“Lack of recognition for people who spend time on activities essential to WPI’s mission”**



# Faculty Actions, 2017-2018

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- Revised election procedures and committee membership for Committee on Appointments and Promotions (COAP) and Joint Promotion Committees (JPC)
- Changed several promotion procedures
- Approved new promotion policy that includes:
  - criteria that explicitly recognize multiple forms of scholarship and range of impact indicators
  - acknowledgement of biases in faculty evaluation
- Approved framework for mentoring of Associate Professors

# Still a “Foggy Climate” of Promotion

(Banerjee & Pawley, 2013)

How will policies be interpreted?

Will values and interpretation change when leadership changes?

What counts?

How to access opportunities for mentorship, sponsorship, professional development?

How to address biases in evaluation of teaching and scholarship?

What about workload distribution and hidden work?



# Role of ADVANCE Adaptation Grant

\$1M, 3 yrs, 2018-2021<sup>++</sup>



- Implement policy and practices to navigate ambiguity, reduce gender inequalities while realizing benefits for all faculty
- Attend to intersection of gender and TRT status
- Adapt evidence-based practices (e.g., O'Meara) to our context
- Dig deeper into Associate experiences via interviews

# Implementation Goals and Activities

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create a shared understanding of promotion policies and processes



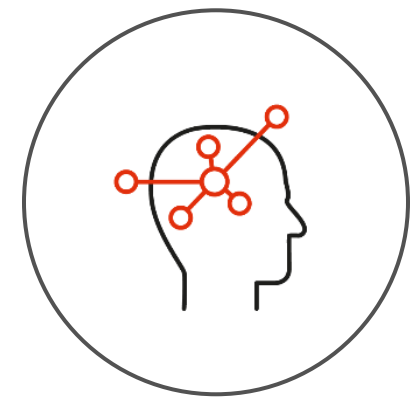
resource development by summer working groups

establish a mentoring and professional development system for mid-career faculty



programs for Associates and their mentors

create processes for recognizing and mitigating biases in promotion systems



tools and practices for bias mitigation

redesign of annual review conversations with DHs



Creating Shared Understandings:

# Leveraging Power of Summer Working Groups

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- Provide groups with equity foundations (e.g., principles-based audit and workshop by external expert)
- Pay faculty for manageable commitment (~1 week total)
- Undertake bite-size goals that aim for “small wins”
- Compose groups strategically to pave way forward
- Use facilitation approach that empowers members to make choices and do the work
- Decide on clear deliverables and disseminate in existing communication channels

# Outcomes of Summer Working Groups

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## Resources & Tools

Collection of Sample  
Dossiers (TTT, TRT)

“Guides” to Promotion  
(TTT, TRT)

Matrix of Multiple Forms  
of Scholarship

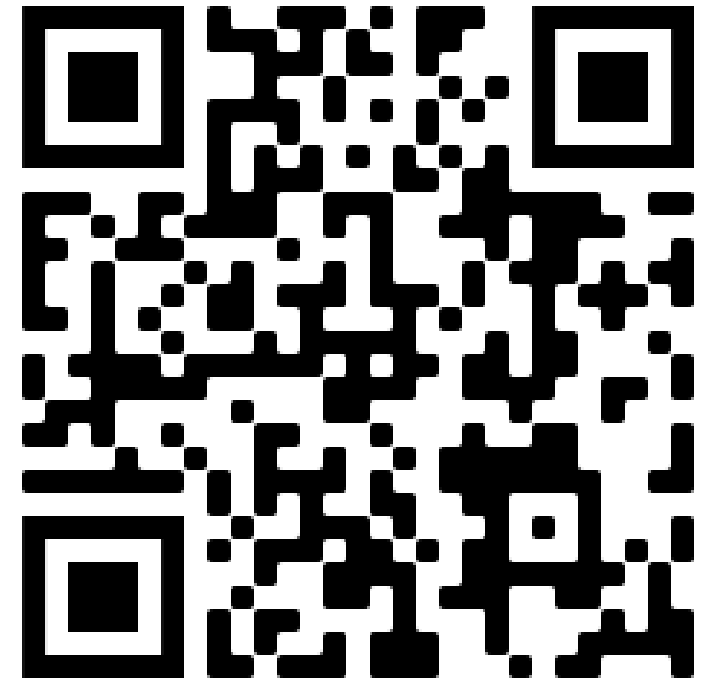
## Evaluation of Teaching

Teaching Portfolio  
Guidelines

Teaching Evaluation  
Rubric

Peer Review of Teaching  
Guidelines

Available to all on Canvas site:



or  
<https://bit.ly/wpi-advance>

# Additional Outcomes of Summer Working Groups

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## Policy-Related

Updated and Consistent Language for TRT Promotion Policies & Practices

Draft Language for Valuing of Service & Collaboration

## Alignment Efforts (CTAF-COAP)

Revision of Instructions to Letter Writers ✓

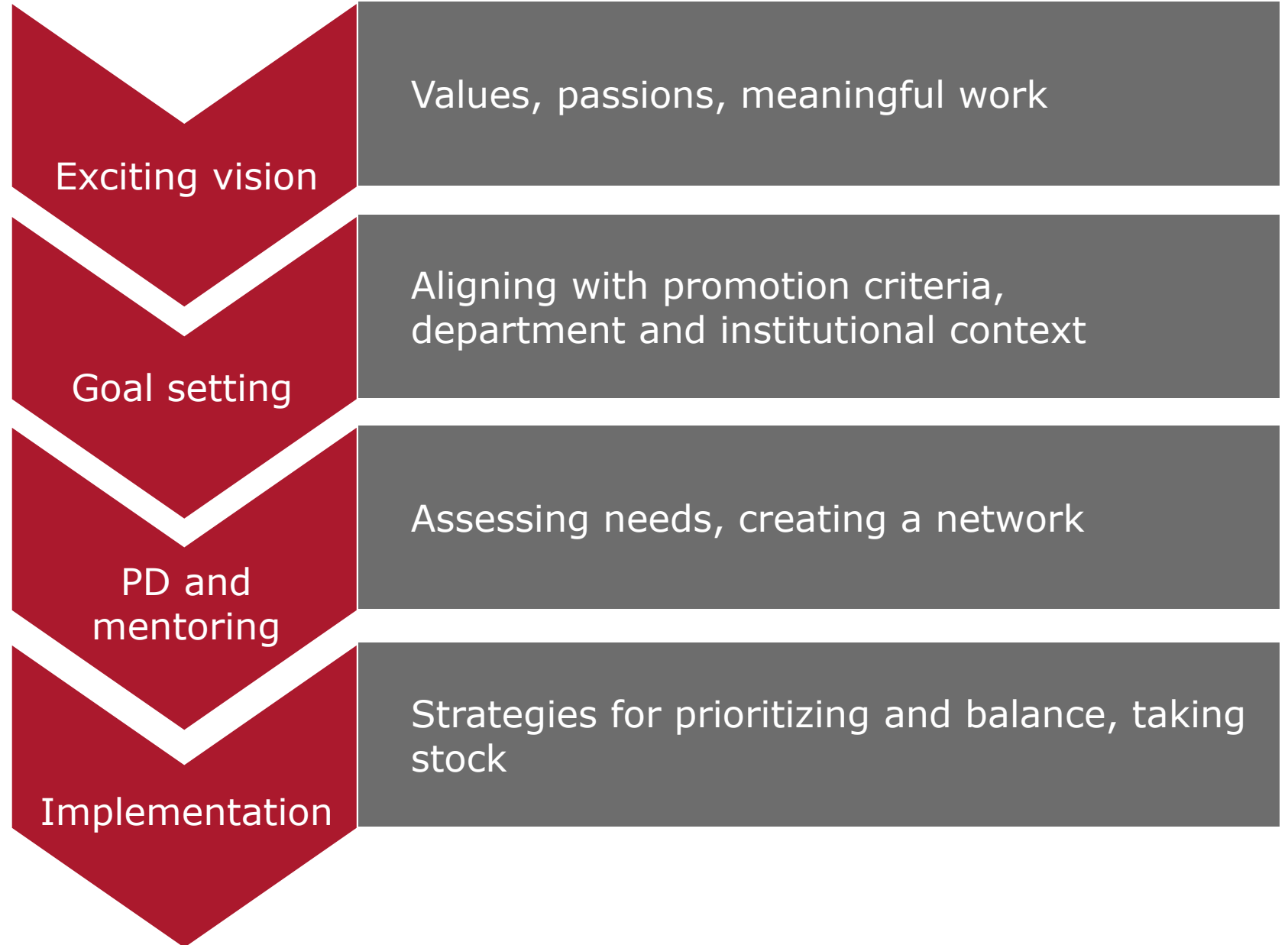
Uniform Definition of Scholarship Across Ranks

...still in committee queues



Mentoring and  
Professional  
Development of  
Associates

# Professional Development Plan (PDP) for Mid-Career



# Model for Associate Professor Mentoring

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**Jan**

PDP Workshop  
for Assoc Profs

**Jan-Mar**

Select Mentoring Team  
Annual Conversation  
w/ Dept Head

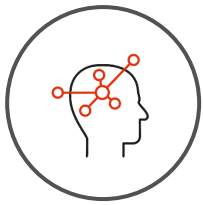
**Mar-Apr**

Promotion Committee  
Information Session

**Aug-Sep**

Strategy Workshop for  
Assoc Profs and their  
Mentoring Teams

**Resource Repository:** PDP template, Guide to Promotion, sample promotion dossiers, scholarship and teaching rubrics, National Center for Faculty Development & Diversity (NCFDD)



# Important Role of DHs

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- Strong, emergent theme in interviews
- Shape or control multiple aspects of the “foggy climate”
  - Work assignments
  - Resources
  - Support for professional growth
  - Connecting to collective strategic goals and other mentors
- Wide range of experiences

DH as barrier

DH as mentor



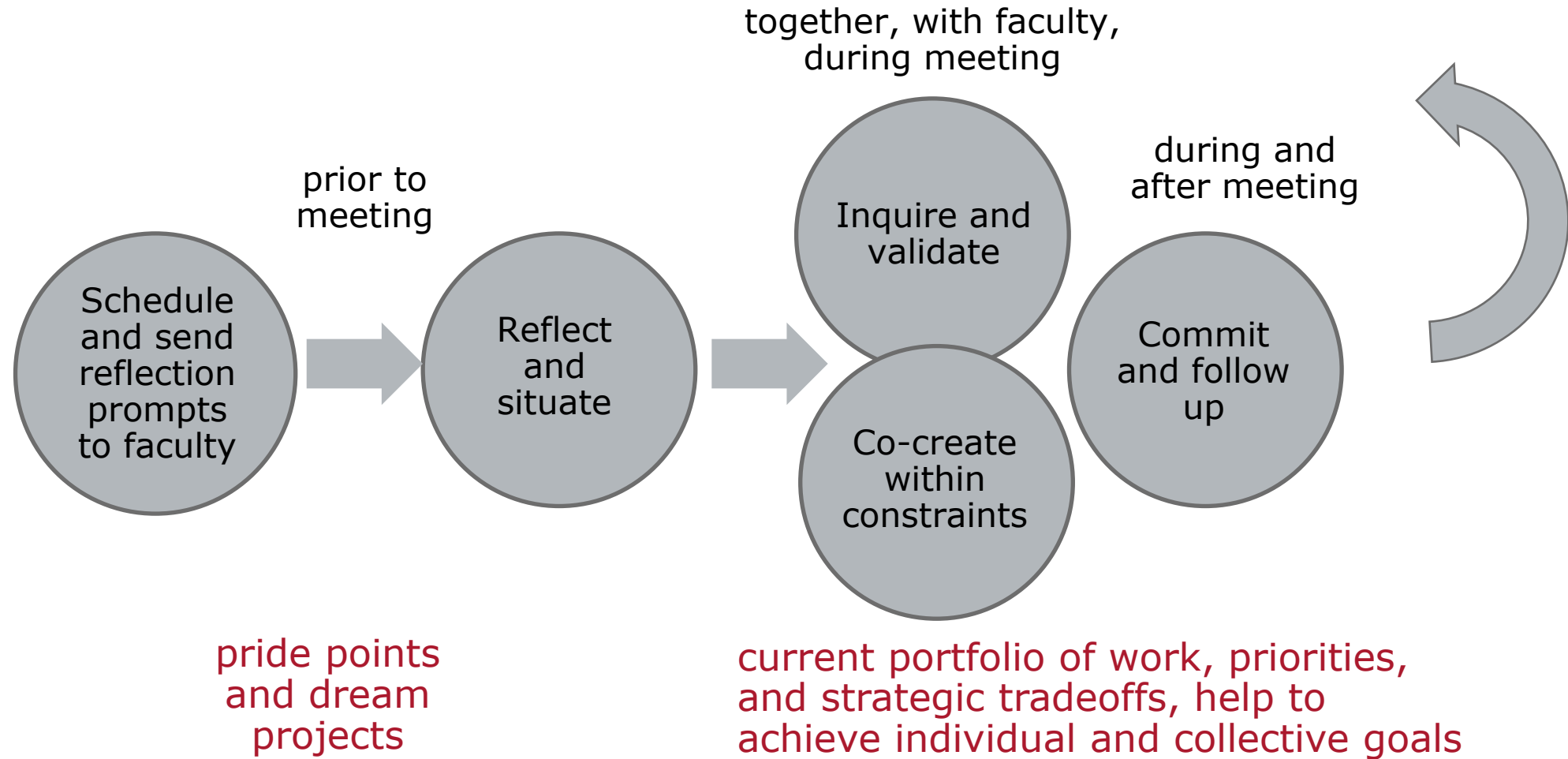
neglect

support



# Transformed Annual Review Conversations

using a human-centered, pilot-based design approach



+ **Tools for DHs:** Workshop, templates, list of resources DHs can offer

# Outcomes of New Conversation Model: Faculty Reflections

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**77%** reported annual review was better compared to other years or better than expected

**75%** left feeling valued

**90%** characterized conversation as positive

“I really liked the prompts that we had this year. They were much **more forward-looking**. Previously, I have felt like my annual review was just going over my report and saying, yes, I did a lot of stuff.”

“It made it so asking for resources or a course buy-out was just a **natural extension of our conversation—rather than a separate ask** that I had to prepare for”

“I was able to share some of the **mentoring work that doesn't typically show up** in the official reports. And talk about why this was important to me and the institution.”

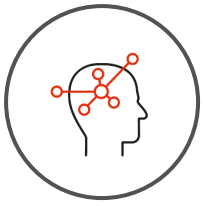
# Outcomes of New Conversation Model: Department Head Reflections

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“Talking about interests and passions led to a whole different conversation—and **let me see them in a whole new way**. This was **especially the case for NTT faculty**, who I don’t get to talk to much.”

“Really appreciated the framing around integrative creative leadership—and having a conversation where we talk about the **individual and fit with strategic vision for the whole department**. It is absolutely about both.”

“Was eye-opening to hear what they were most proud of—some of **that stuff was not even on my radar**.”



# Practices and Tools to Mitigate Biases

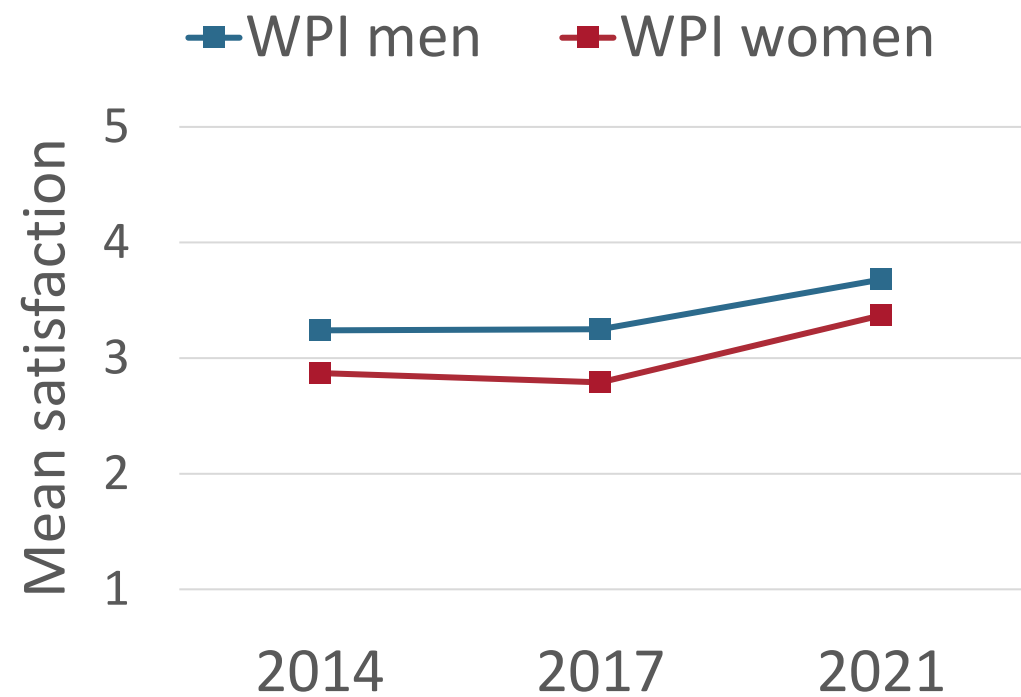
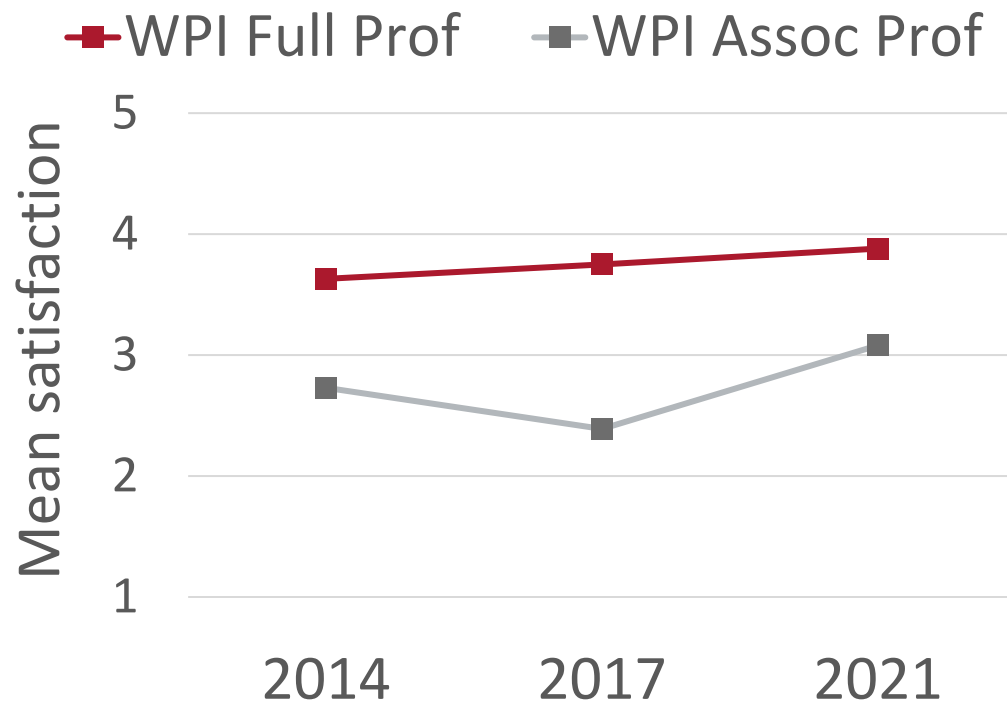
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- First-ever bias awareness and mitigation training tailored for faculty evaluation at WPI
  - Goal setting
  - Recast as individual
  - Awareness
  - Challenge and confront bias
  - Engage egalitarian motivations
- Creates shared language for discussion of sources of bias and mitigation strategies
- Consideration of biases now regularized in COAP discussion of each promotion case

**What has changed and what has not?**

# Overall levels of satisfaction with promotion to full have improved since 2014, but gaps by rank and gender remain.

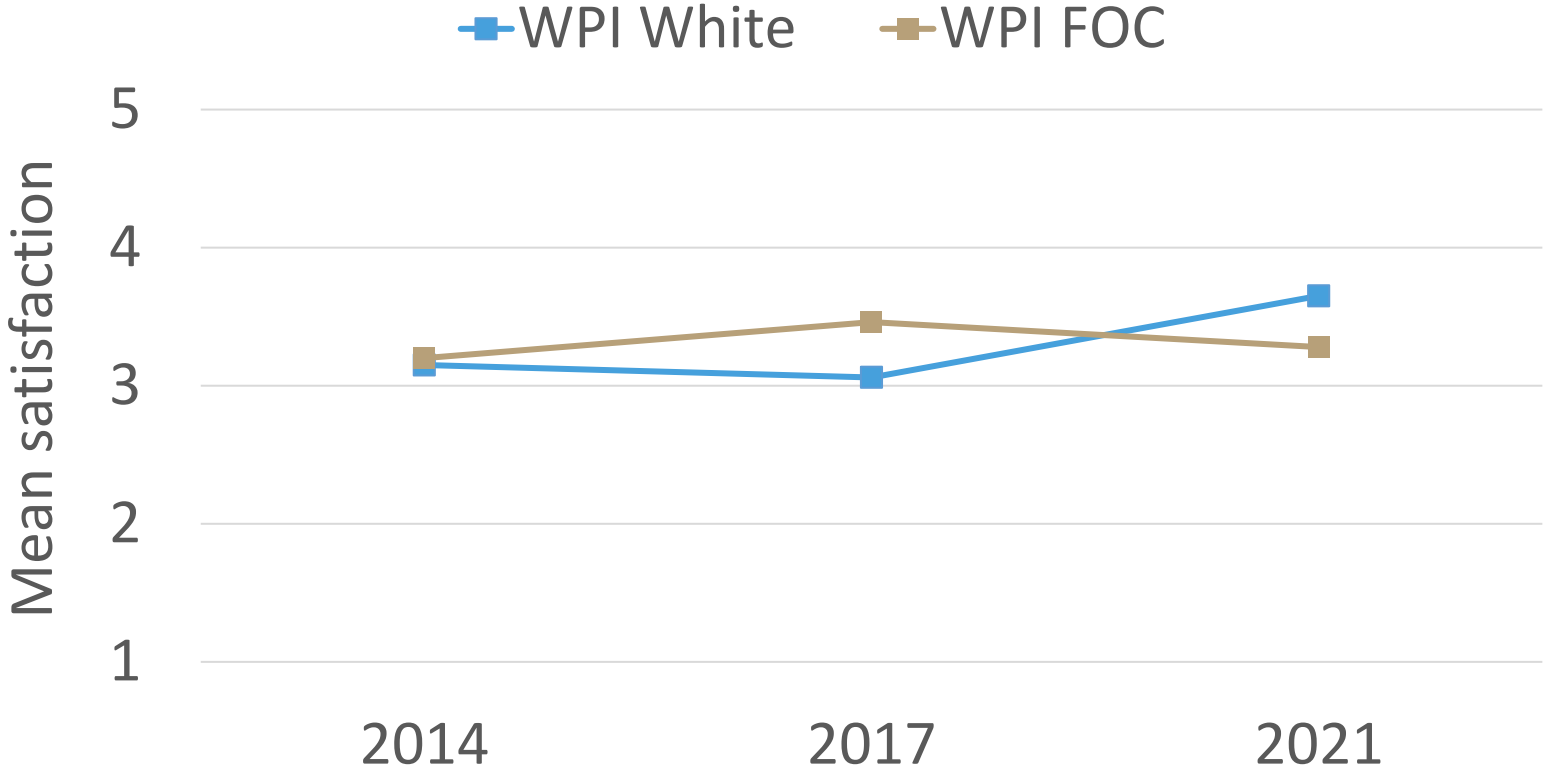
COACHE Benchmark: Promotion to Full  
(cluster of 8 questions\*, 1-5 scale)



\*6 questions on various aspects of clarity, 1 on reasonableness, 1 on department culture related to promotion

# While satisfaction of white faculty with promotion to full has increased since 2017, it has decreased among faculty of color.\*\*

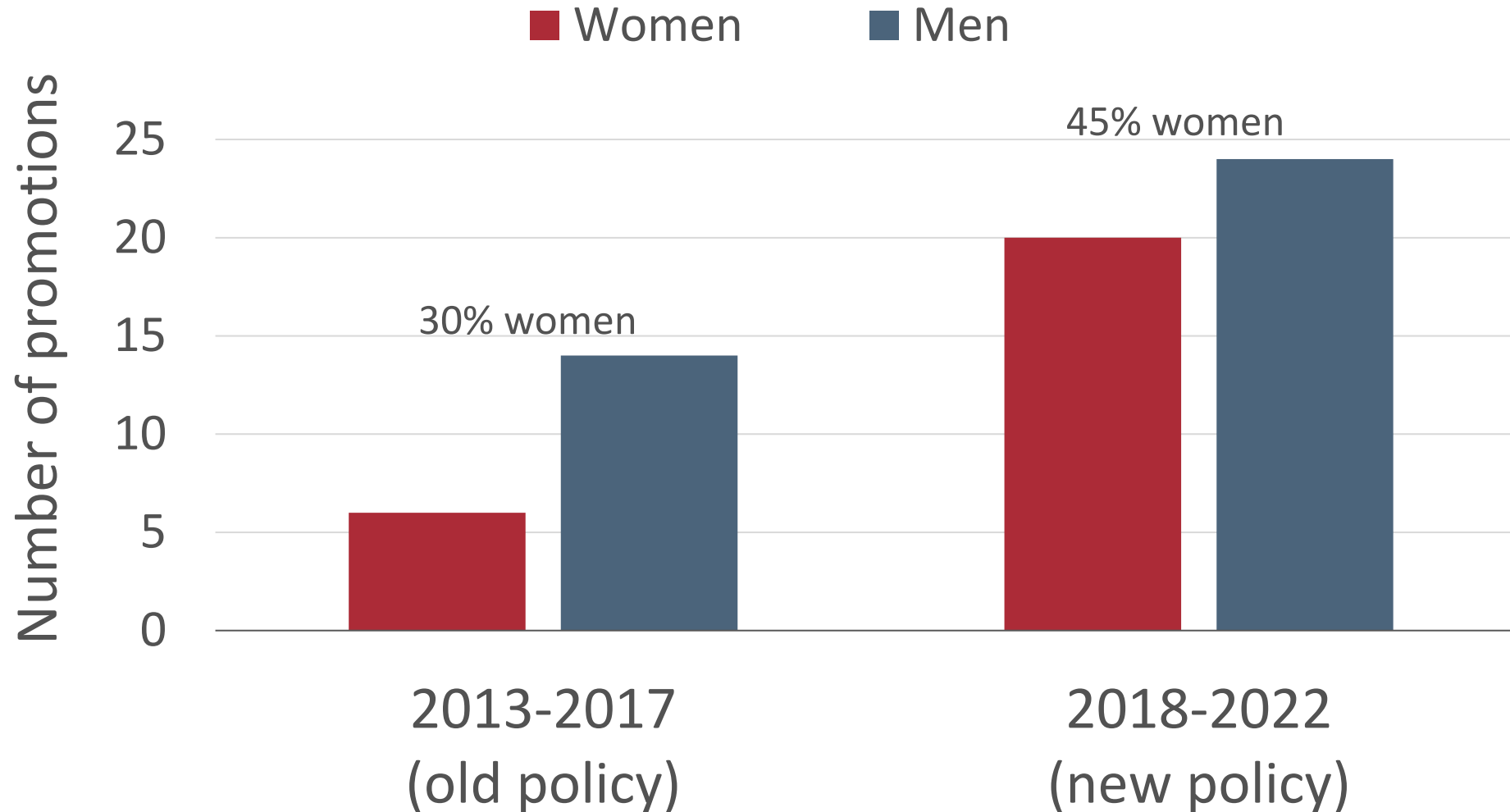
COACHE Benchmark: Promotion to Full  
(cluster of 8 questions\*, 1-5 scale)



\*\*FOC includes Asian and Asian-American. Same trend is seen for URM faculty.

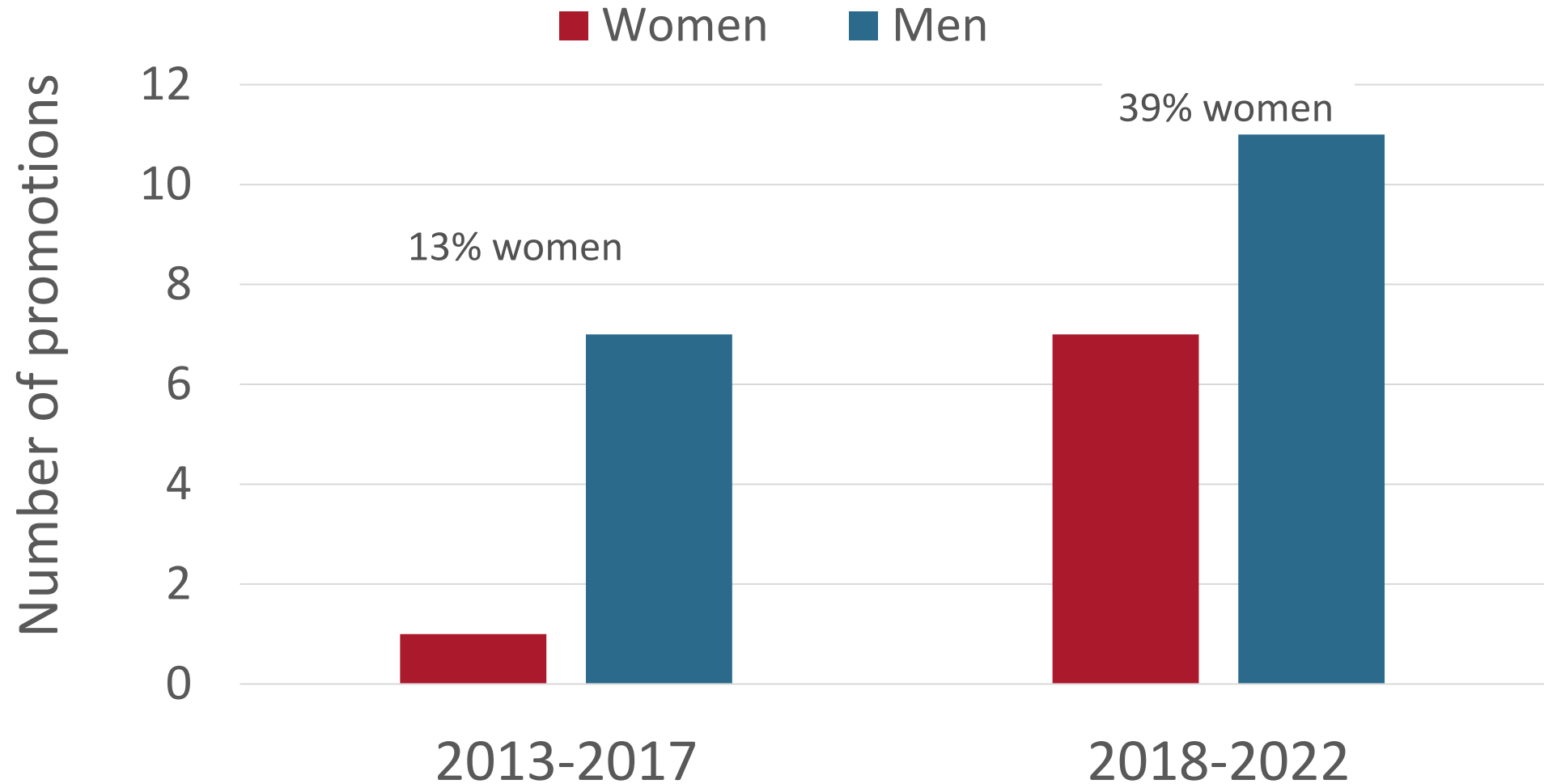
\*6 questions on various aspects of clarity, 1 on reasonableness, 1 on department culture related to promotion

The number of tenured women promoted to (full) Professor has increased significantly across five years of the new policy and processes.

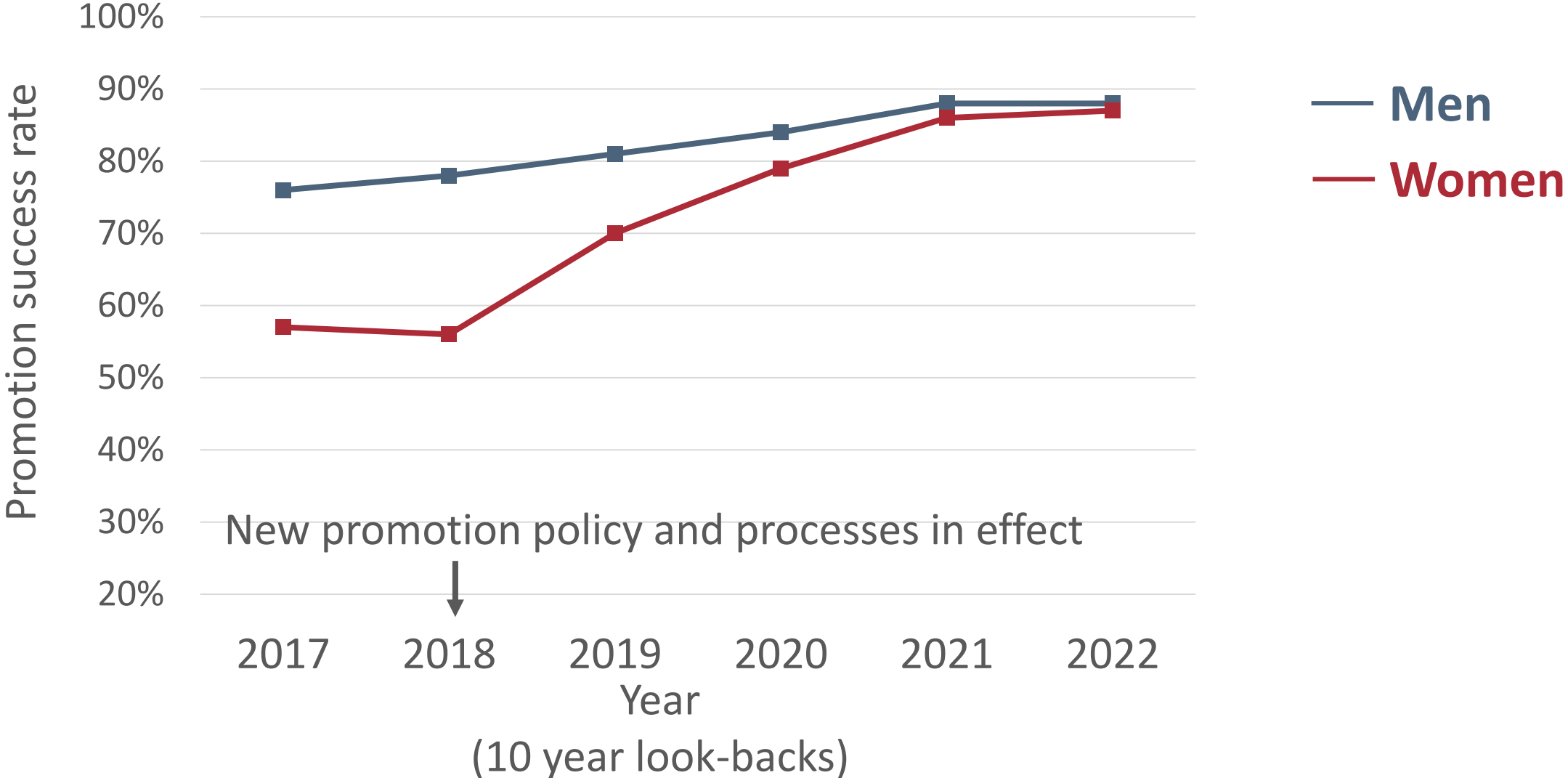




The number of women promoted to (full) Teaching Professor has increased significantly across five years.



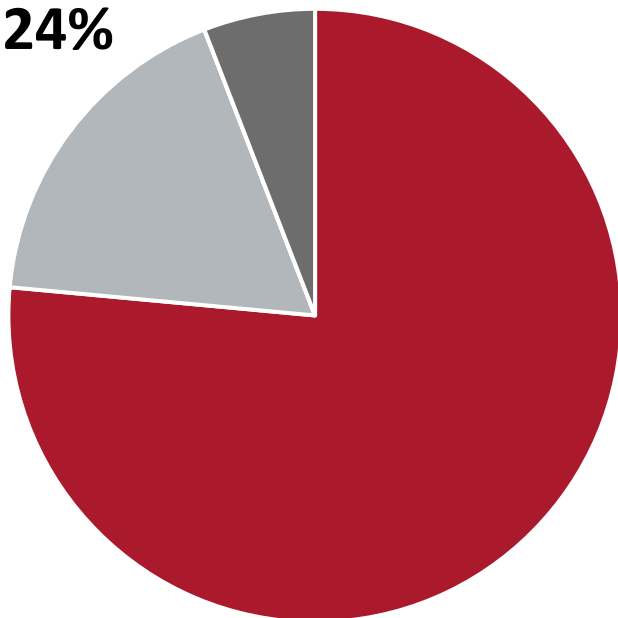
**The large gender gap in Associate-to-Full promotion success rate (TTT) has been narrowing since the new promotion policy went into effect.**



# Under the new policy, a larger proportion of successful promotion candidates have emphasized non-discovery forms of scholarship.

*Which type of scholarship did you emphasize **most** in your promotion case?*

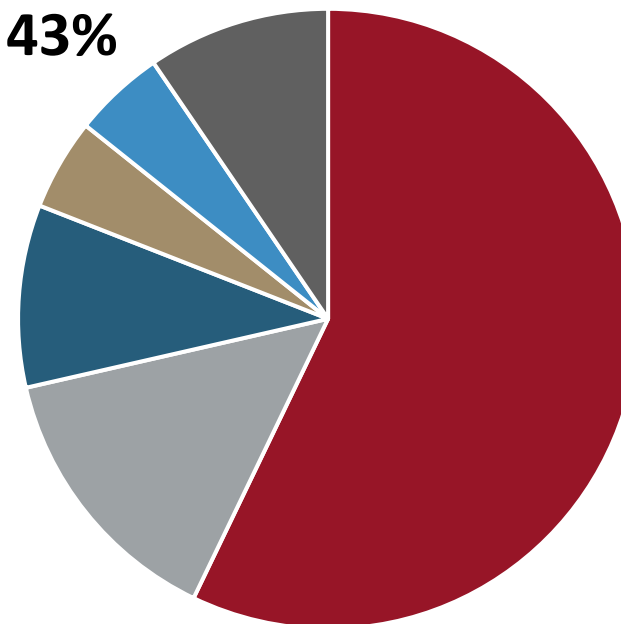
**24%**



Old policy: 2013-2017  
(85% response rate)

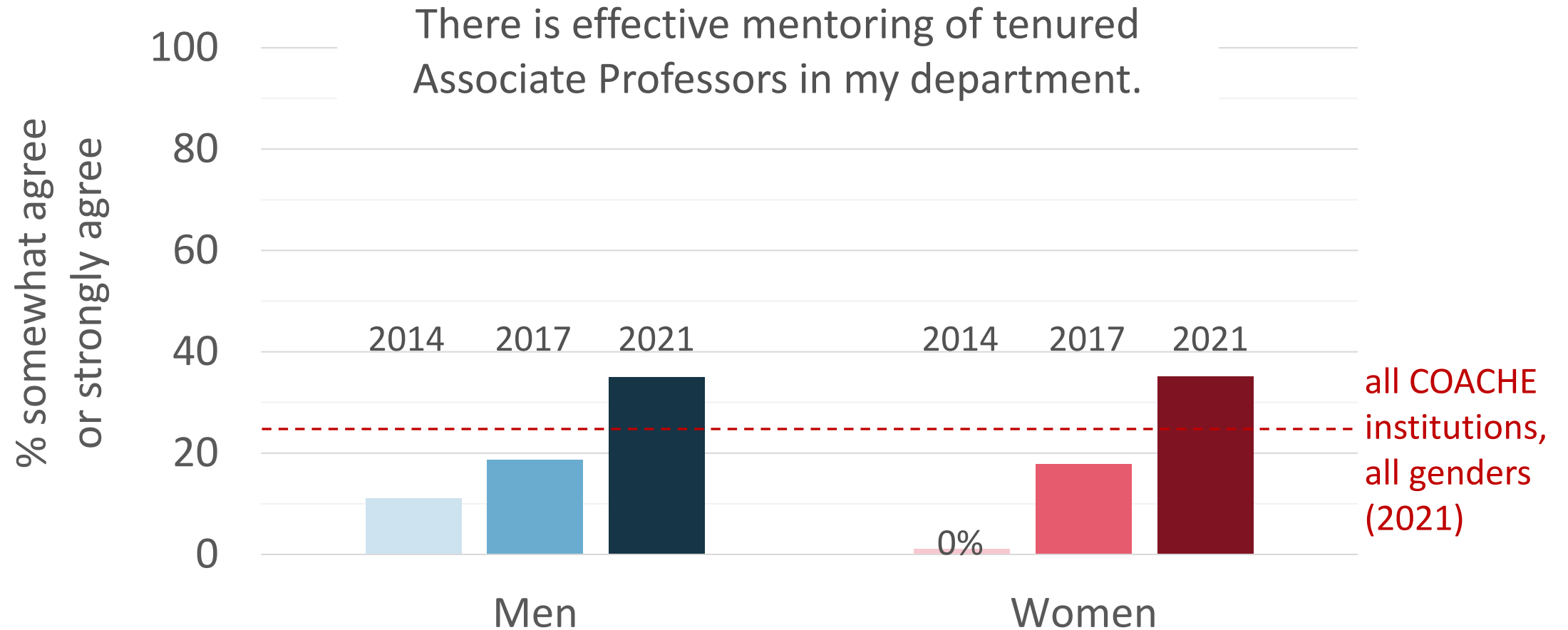
- Discovery
- Application and Practice
- Integration
- Teaching and Learning
- Engagement
- Cannot classify

**43%**

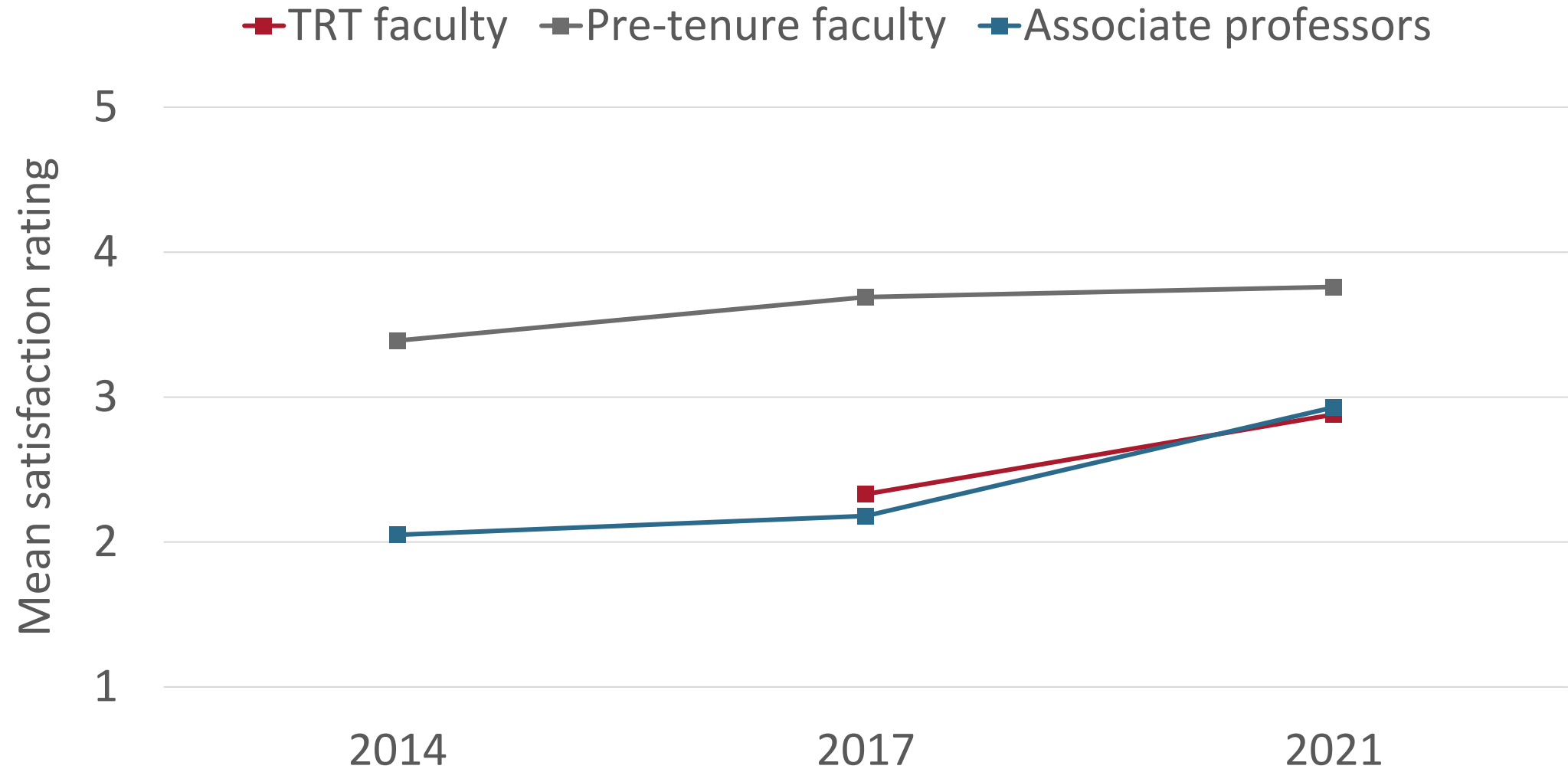


New policy: 2018-2020  
(81% response rate)

# Satisfaction with associate professor mentoring at WPI has increased and the gender gap has closed.



# Ratings of mentoring effectiveness have a positive trajectory but vary by track and career stage.



# Promising Practices to Take Forward

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1. Sustain intentional programming for Associate faculty
2. Continue summer working groups for ongoing “small wins” toward more equitable reward systems
  - Interim Provost supported a CTAF-driven group in summer 2022
3. Formalize leadership development mechanisms for Department Heads: annual conversation model *and more*
4. Embrace bias mitigation practices across all of our faculty evaluation committees

# Some Concluding Observations

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1. Equity-minded policy implementation and practices require a lot more work from COAP, CTAF, DHs, Faculty Governance Office, and Provost's Office
2. Distribution and valuing of service is still problematic and limits our ability to address inequalities in an intersectional way
3. Many constituencies want to discuss having a uniform definition of scholarship across career stages and tracks

# **Additional Data**



# Annual Conversations with DHs: How faculty felt before...

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“Here’s how our meetings went before: They basically just said, ‘Check, check, check. Need anything?’ Ok. 15 minutes and done. That’s a review?”

“I left feeling like ...my greatest accomplishments, were only given token appreciation. Instead, what I heard more of was ‘keep achieving more’ or ‘what is the next accomplishment going to be?’”

# Annual Conversations with DHs:

## How faculty felt after...

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“I really liked the prompts that we had this year. They were much more forward-looking. Previously, I have felt like my annual review was just going over my report and saying, yes, I did a lot of stuff.”

“I feel like this was the first time I ever heard from the department head about what their strategy was for the department, and explored how my work fit into that.”

# Department Head Reflections on New Model

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“Had to read over faculties’ reports in more depth to really engage and think about what I was proud of and how [it] fit into my strategy.”

“Really appreciated the framing around integrative creative leadership—and having a conversation where we talk about the individual and fit with strategic vision for the whole department. It is absolutely about both.”

“Strategy of starting off with what *I* was proud of was amazing. For the first time, this senior colleague opened up. We had a great conversation about prioritizing what he was working on. I think he was surprised; I know I was.”

# Department Head Reflections on New Model (cont'd)

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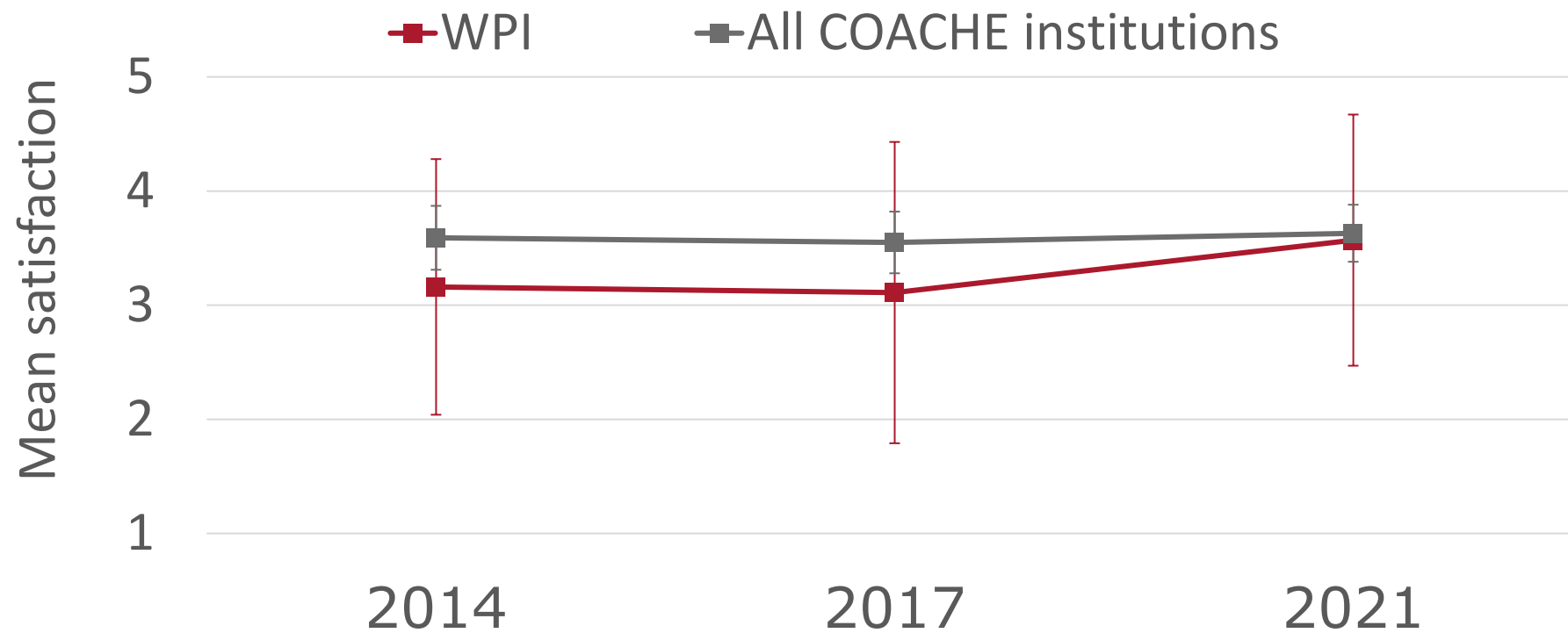
“Talking about interests and passions led to a whole different conversation—and let me see them in a whole new way. This was especially the case for NTT faculty, who I don’t get to talk to much.”

“Instead of asking them for what they needed, I made suggestions of alternatives—not just funding—which helped them feel like I was actively supporting them.”

“Was eye-opening to hear what they were most proud of—some of that stuff was not even on my radar.”

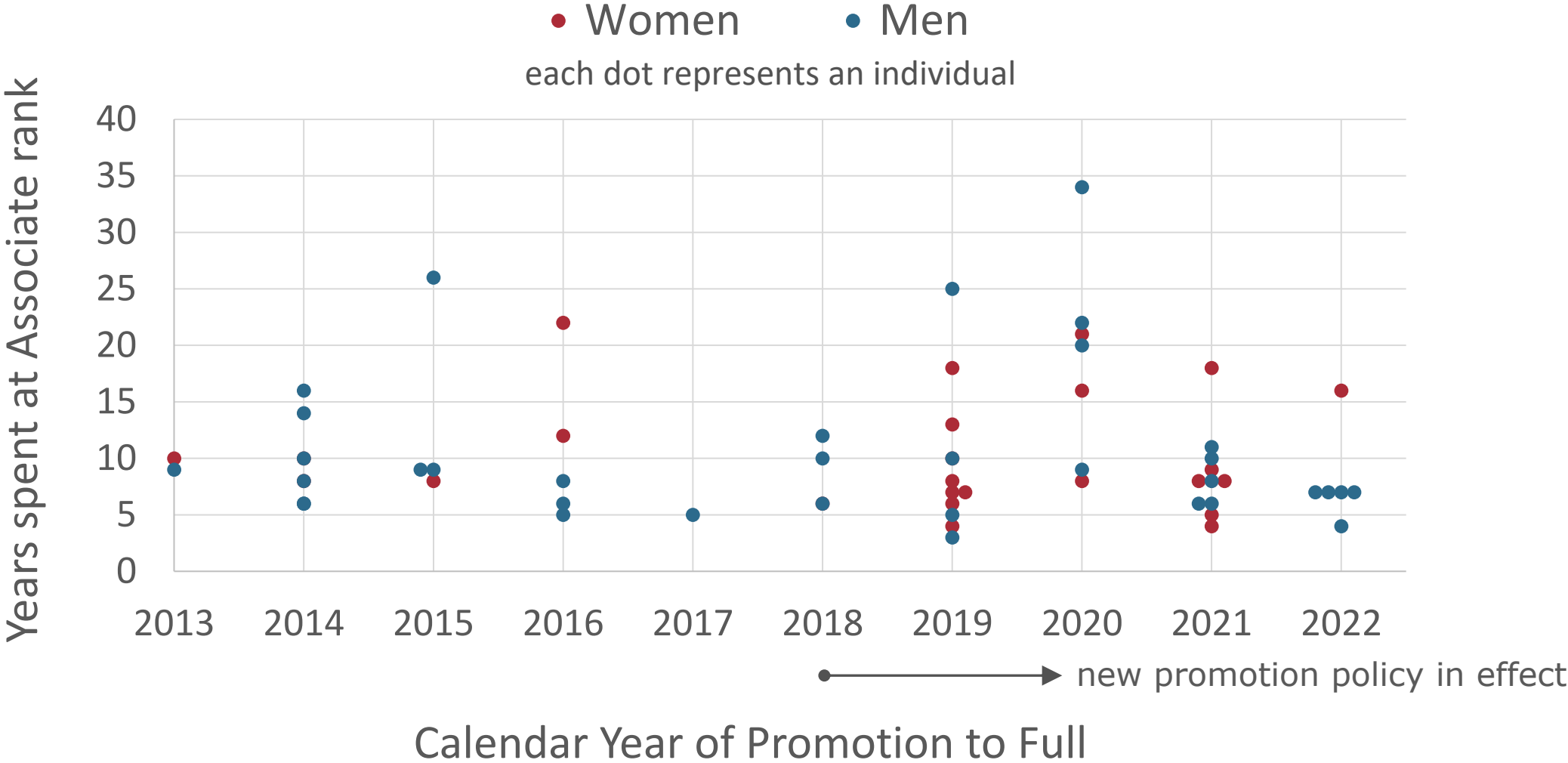
# Faculty satisfaction with promotion to full was an institutional weakness in both 2014 and 2017, but not in 2021.

COACHE Benchmark: Promotion to Full  
(cluster of 8 questions, 1-5 scale)



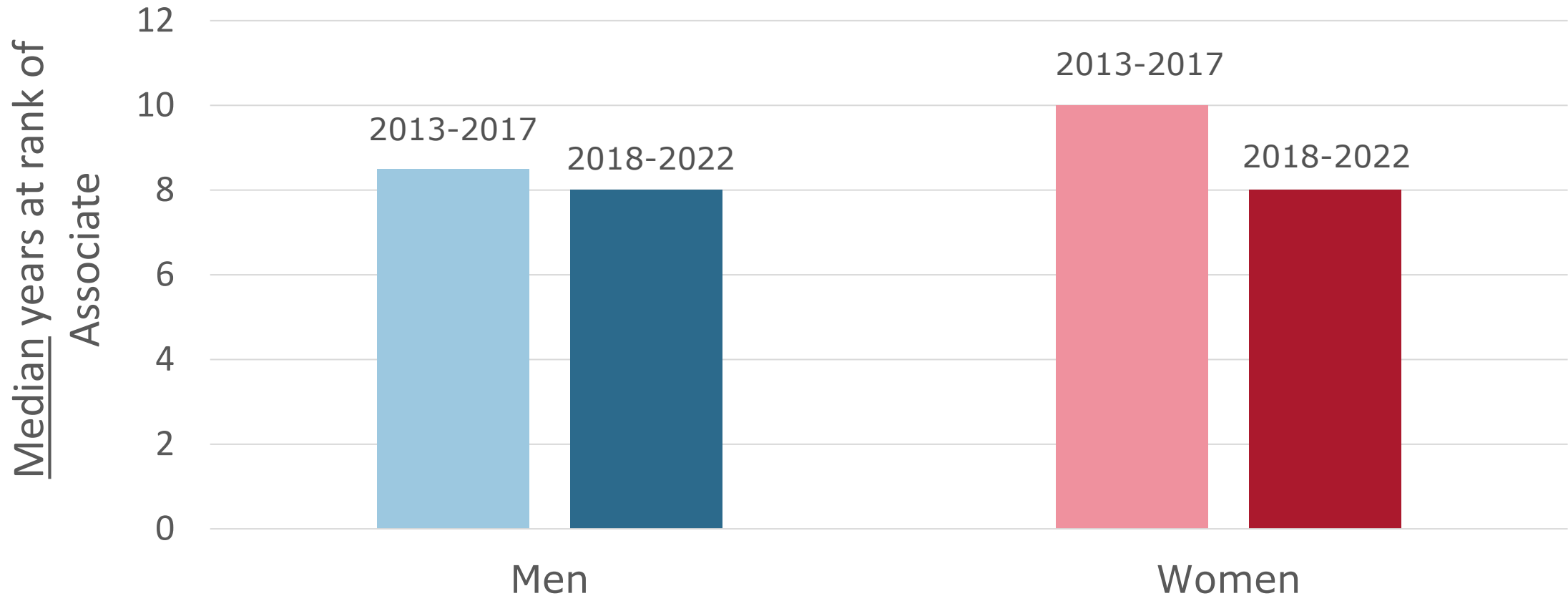
\*6 questions on various aspects of clarity, 1 on reasonableness, 1 on department culture related to promotion

# The new promotion policy opened paths of recognition for many more faculty who had spent >15 years at the Associate rank.

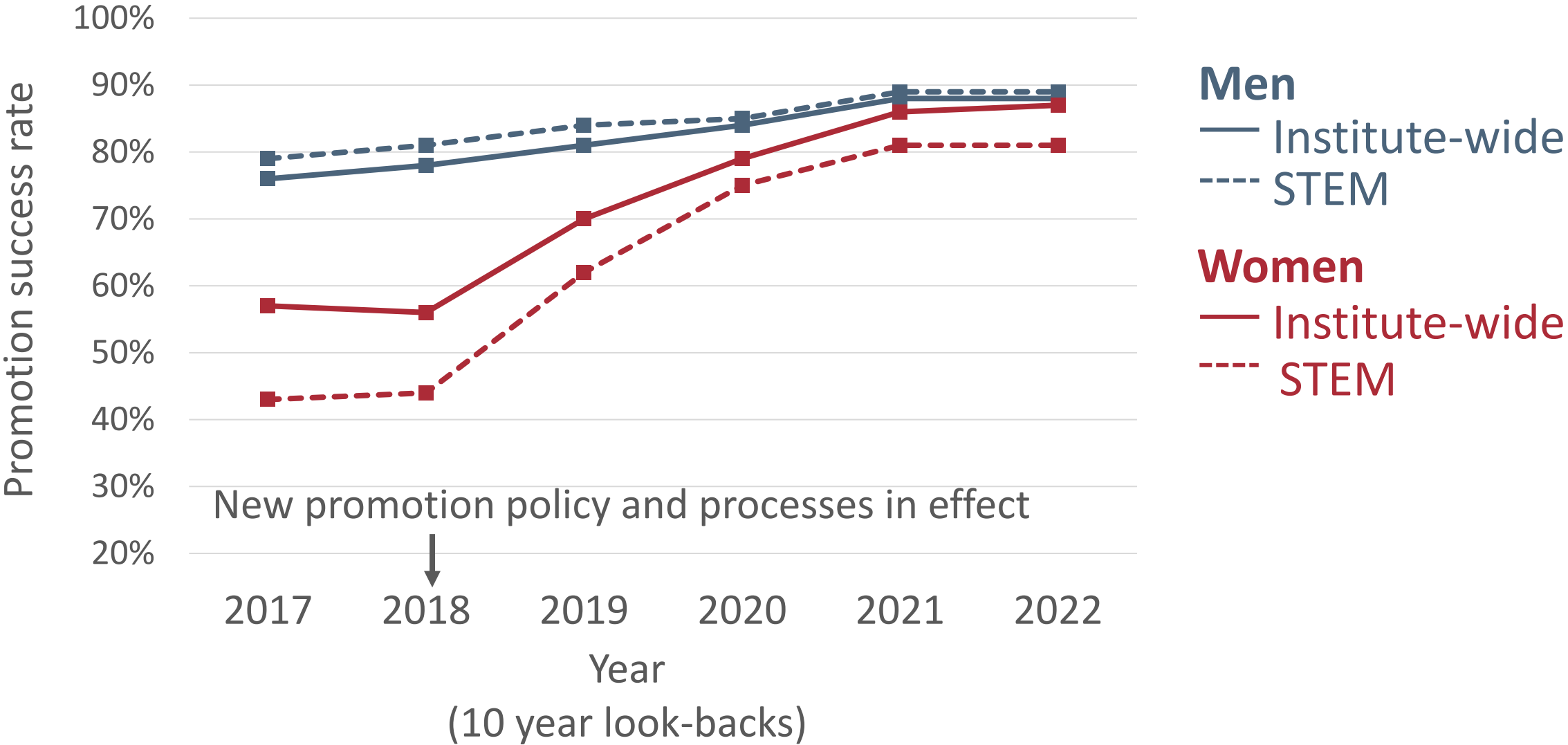


# Since the new policy went into effect, women promotion recipients have spent fewer years at the rank of Associate.

**Analysis group:** faculty who earned tenure at WPI and were promoted to rank of Professor, in 5-year spans before and after the policy change

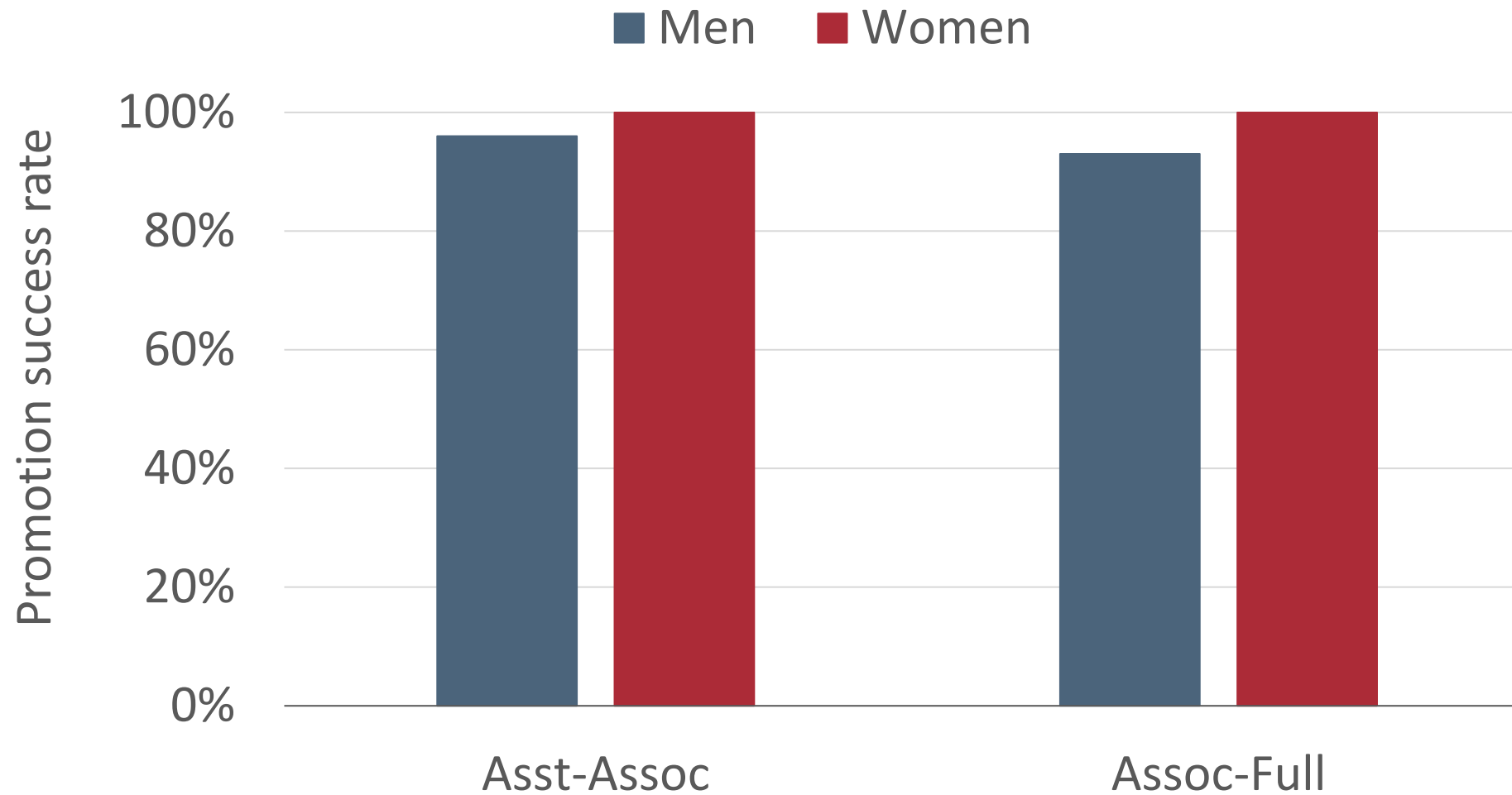


The large gender gap in *Associate-to-Full* promotion success rate has been narrowing since the new promotion policy went into effect.



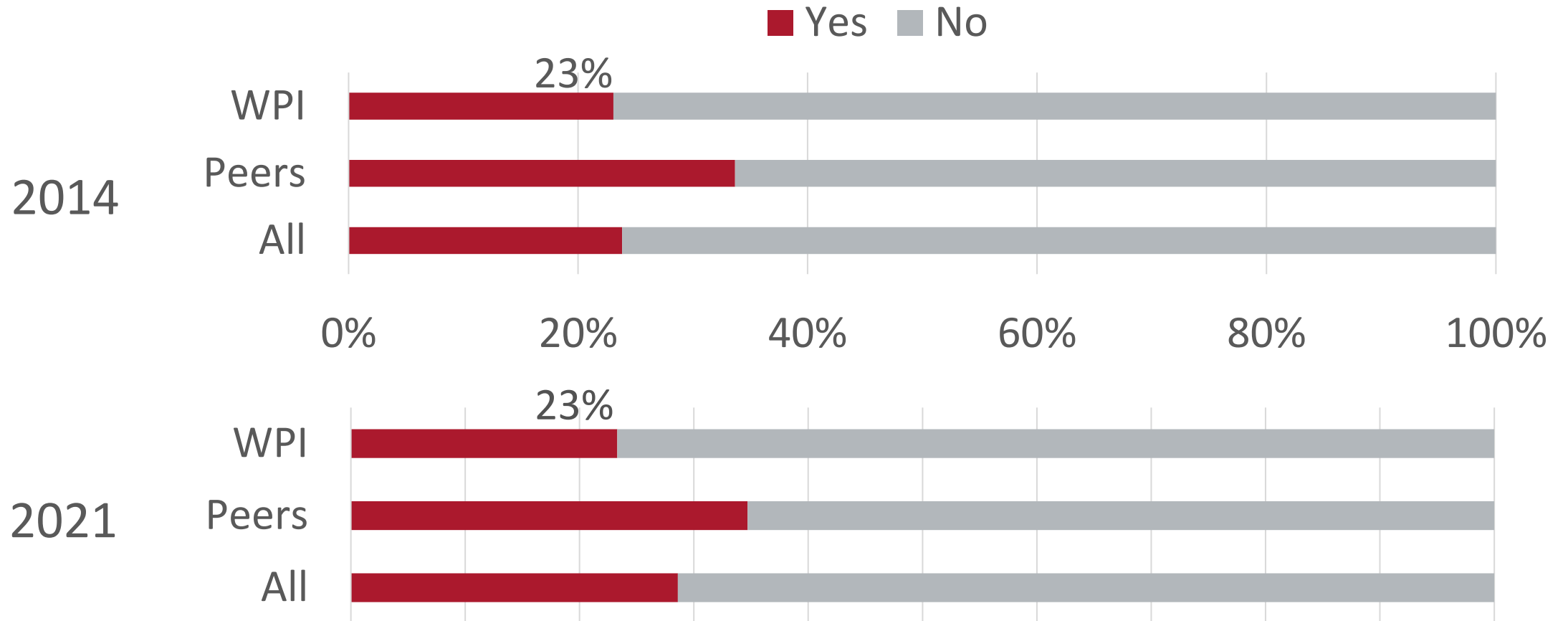


## Promotion success rates have been consistently high for teaching-track faculty (2015-2022)



# The proportion of WPI faculty reporting formal feedback about progress toward promotion remains low.

Have you received formal feedback on your progress toward promotion to full?



# The membership of the Committee on Appointments and Promotions (COAP) has become more gender-diverse.

