Overview:
Reorganization of and Revisions to the Faculty Handbook

Committee on Governance

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Background……and Goal

- <u>**The Good News:**</u>
  - The WPI Faculty Handbook has always been updated regularly to include the most recent changes approved by the Faculty.

  - The current version (July 1, 2022) of the Handbook reflects all such changes through May 2022.

- <u>**The Bad News:**</u>
  - Historically, **additions** to the Handbook have been made logically but in **piecemeal fashion** that **could not** be synthesized at every step.

  - As WPI has become more complex, the need to make continuous changes and additions to the Faculty Handbook has increased dramatically….

  - The result is that the current Faculty Handbook is up-to-date but increasingly difficult to navigate.

  - It now resembles a **Christmas tree** with ornaments that have been hung since 1968!

- <u>**The Goal**</u>: **Reorganization** rather than (gulp…) wholesale revisions.

Example: Tenure Process

- <u>Part One, Bylaw One:.....Standing Committees of the Faculty</u>
  - Section V: Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom
    - CTAF charge, membership, elections; **JTCs, Recusal process, exceptions...**

- <u>Part One, Appendix A: Report of the ad hoc Tenure Committee</u> (1968...with amendments in 1991, 2001, and 2011)
  - Section B: "Procedure" for Granting Tenure –
    - Partial descriptions of CTAF, CTAF elections, **JTCs, DTCs, exceptions....**
  - Section D: Procedural Amendments –
    - Stream of consciousness....partially related to tenure process*

- <u>Part Two, Section 1: Policies Regarding the Status of Faculty</u>
  - Subsection A: Academic Freedom and Tenure
    - Academic freedom; Tenure Criteria
    - CTAF; **JTCs; Partial info on eligibility and probationary appts.; principles of tenure process;**
    - **Brief description of tenure process**
    - **Stopping the tenure clock**

"Micro-Surgeries"

- Combining Sections

- Reorganizing Within Sections

- Extracting Elements from Different Sections and Combining into New Sections and Subsections

  - Involves weaving together related but separated pieces of information
    - Subsections, paragraphs, sentences, parts of sentences,…

- **Reassembling New Sections in Coherent Full Packages:**
  - **Governance**
    - Separated from Tenure, Promotion, Grievance and Conduct Processes
  - **Academic Appointments**
    - Separated from Tenure and Promotion
  - **Tenure**
    - Separated from Academic Appointments, Governance
  - **Promotions**
    - Separated from Governance, Academic Appointments

Faculty Handbook: New Combined DRAFT Sections

- **Governance**
  - **Constitution** – Definition of the Faculty, Duties, and Authority; Academic Freedom; Balance of the Faculty (general); Responsibilities of Faculty Committees (general)
  - **ByLaws** – Faculty Mtgs; Standing Committee charges, membership and elections; SOF; Membership on BoT committees…
- **Academic Appointments**
  - Categories, Titles, and Roles of Faculty, and Balance of the Faculty (numerical)
  - Process: Appointments, Reappointments, Reviews, Non-reappointments, Resignations
  - Department Heads: Roles, Responsibilities, Appointments, Reviews, Reappointments
  - Academic Administrative Appointments
  - Joint Appointments
  - Sabbatical and Unpaid Leaves
- **Tenure**
  - Eligibility, Probationary Periods, Mandatory Tenure Review, Tenure Clock
  - Tenure criteria
  - Process: DTCs; JTCs; Procedures for Review, Recommendation, Final Decision, Appeal
- **Promotions**
  - Eligibility, Time-in-Rank
  - Promotion Criteria
  - Process: JPCs, Materials Collected and Reviewed, Recommendations, Final Decision, Appeal
  - Mentoring

Tentative Table of Contents

- **Recombined Sections:**
  - **Governance:**   **30 pages**
    - Grievance Process from FRC
  - **Academic Appointments:**   **30 pages**
  - **Tenure**   :   **15 pages**
  - **Promotions:**   **20 pages**
- **Unchanged:**
  - Conduct Policies: 35 pages
    - Faculty Conduct, Research Conduct, Sexual Misconduct
  - Academic Principles/Policies: 10 pages
    - Undergrad Values, Learning Outcomes, Grading
  - Select Benefits Polices and Opportunities   3 pages
    - Consulting, Summer Salary, Retirement
  - Select Legal Polices   5 pages
    - Conflict of Int., Intel. Prop., Indemnif., Aff. Action
  - Awards and Awards Committees: 5 pages
- **TOTAL:**   **153 pages**

Hierarchy of the Possible Changes

- Pure Reorganization
  - No changes to text

- Necessary Editorial, Stylistic, and Grammatical Changes
  - Patching newly adjacent elements together
  - Reformatting

- Correction of Obvious Inconsistencies

- Helpful Clarifications (example...)
  - Changing text without changing substance

- Simple Process Improvements (example...)
  - Adding text without changing policy

- Documentation of **Accepted** Current Practices Not Yet Formally Adopted (example...)
  - Changing/eliminating text to reflect **accepted** current practice

Timeline

- <u>Summer 2022</u>
  - Prepared Preliminary Drafts
  - Shared with Chairs of:
    - COG (Lenny Albano) – all sections
    - CTAF (Mark Claypool and Lauren Mathews) – Tenure section
    - COAP (Sarah Strauss and Jeanine Skorinko) – Promotions sections

- <u>Fall 2022</u>
  - Reviewed extensively by COG (including Prov. Heinricher)
    - Section-by-section modifications, consistency checks, clarifications, etc.....
  - Shared evolving versions with Pres. Soboyejo and Office of General Counsel

- <u>Jan.-Feb. 2023</u>
  - Distributed updated versions for feedback:
    - Governance section to Committee Chairs
    - Promotions section to COAP; Tenure section to CTAF; Academic Appointments and Promotions sections to CTRF
  - Presented Overview to faculty (Feb. 2)

- <u>Spring 2023</u>
  - **Feb. 2023 – Distribute full draft to faculty and faculty committees for feedback, etc....**
  - March to May 2023 – Incorporate input from faculty, committees, etc.
  - March to May 2023 – Follow faculty governance process for approval by May 2023....

Additional Material….

Part One, Appendix A.D: Procedural Amendments

- The **Chair of CTAF** shall be the member whose term of office expires in June of the current academic year….. The **Secretary** shall be the member whose term of office expires in June of the following academic year.
- All members of CTAF must be present to conduct official business.
- The **Chairman of each Department Tenure Committee** shall be the elected member whose term of office expires in June of the current academic year.
- The **Provost shall provide annually to CTAF a list of untenured faculty members** with the length of remaining probationary period. This list shall be circulated to the Faculty.
- **When all the members of the Joint Tenure Committee agree that there has been sufficient discussion, a vote is taken for or against tenure** (no abstentions) by means of a secret ballot, with the majority ruling.
- If the vote is favorable, a statement about some of the salient reasons for recommending tenure is prepared by the Department Head and signed by all eight members of the Joint Tenure Committee. This is then sent to the Provost.
- If it is voted to deny tenure for the candidate, then a statement of the reasons for the denial is prepared, signed, and sent to the Provost.
- In either case, the candidate for tenure is notified by the Provost of the decision on the case at a time deemed suitable by the Provost.
- **Nominations for early Tenure must be submitted with a copy to the Secretary of the Faculty**. If tenure is recommended, the Provost is notified by the method previously stated. If the nomination is tabled, the nominee is notified personally.
- The policy of CTAF toward early tenure is that it should be granted only if there has been some special or significant contribution by the nominee to WPI or to the nominee's Department, or if the academic freedom of the nominee is in serious jeopardy……..
- **Copies of the minutes of the meetings of the Joint Tenure Committee will be filed with the Secretary of the Faculty after May 1.**

Helpful Clarification: Example

- Addressing Definitions and Policy Related to Probationary Periods, Tenure Clock, and Tenure Review Timing

    - **Probationary period** - refers to the *total* time served at WPI *as a tenure-track faculty* member (i.e. without tenure) prior to the academic year of the tenure review (regardless of whether the tenure clock is running or is stopped), as well as the time served during the academic year of the tenure review.

    - **Tenure Clock** - measures the time counted in determining the academic year of the mandatory tenure review. Time is accumulated from time served at WPI while the tenure clock is running plus time credited when initially appointed.

    - **Mandatory Tenure Review** - conducted for all tenure-track probationary faculty members in the academic year immediately after they have accumulated five years on the tenure clock.

Simple Process Improvements: Example

- Documenting tenure clock stoppages and their effect on the year of the mandatory tenure review:

    - "Anytime the tenure clock is stopped, the Provost must send a letter to the faculty member indicating the academic year of the latest clock-stoppage and the new date of the mandatory tenure review."

Accepted Current Practices Not Yet Formally Adopted: Example

- Promotion Process to Associate Teaching Professor and (full) Teaching Professor

    – Explicitly including these promotions (with appropriate modifications) in the extensive process described for promotion to (full) Professor and (full) Professor of Teaching.

    - **as is currently practiced but not described.**

    – Eliminating language from the current Faculty Handbook inconsistent with this process.