

Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom Annual Report 2023-2024

Committee Members: Kris Wobbe (Chair), Renata Konrad (Secretary), Raghvendra Cowlagi, Tanja Dominko, Aaron Sakulich, Erin Solovey, Stephan Sturm, Mike Timko, Lyuba Titova

CTAF took the following actions during the 2023-2024 Academic Year:

1. With departmental tenure committees, reviewed 17 tenure cases and made recommendations to the Provost.
2. Reviewed one proposal for appointment with tenure and made a recommendation to the Provost.
3. Presented a session on the tenure review process during New Faculty Orientation in August 2023.
4. Reviewed and provided feedback on a motion, proposed by the CTAF ad-hoc committee, to establish a formal procedure to resolve allegations of academic freedom violation. After additional revisions by COG, CTAF voted to approve the motion.
5. Developed a guidance document for DTCs for selection of external reviewers for Professors of Teaching. Posted these guidance documents on the CTAF Canvas page.
6. Developed a guidance document for candidates regarding the Teaching Statement, differentiating between dual mission and teaching professors. Posted these guidance documents on the CTAF Canvas page.
7. Modified and documented procedures regarding Expedited Review for hire with tenure. Posted these guidance documents on the CTAF Canvas page.
8. Developed guidelines and templates for department heads for recommendation letters to the Provost.
9. Developed guidance document and email templates for DTCs conducting interviews of departmental faculty for tenure reviews. Committee members emphasized the significance of departmental interviews, advocating for a 100% participation rate from **all** full-time faculty (tenured, tenure-track, and secured contract) department members. CTAF is suggesting candidates submit their complete dossier to the department as sharing materials can be particularly beneficial for pre-tenure department members and informing the department about the work of their colleagues.

10. Reviewed the handbook language around CTAF constitution and reached a unanimous decision that the current eligibility criteria for CTAF in the Faculty Handbook are appropriate. The handbook specifies that "tenured faculty," now inclusive of both tenured Professors of Teaching and dual mission faculty, are eligible to serve on CTAF. CTAF comprises critical thinkers who, regardless of their tenure track type, the WPI community trusts to evaluate candidates.

CTAF also determined that discussing CTAF eligibility at a Fall 2024 faculty meeting is needed.

11. Held open meetings, remotely and in person, in March of 2024, with untenured Professors of Teaching and DTC members to provide information on the tenure process at WPI.
12. Held an open meeting remotely on March 14 for tenure-track dual-mission faculty and DTC members to provide information on the tenure process at WPI.
13. Planned meeting for incoming DTCs in A-term 2024.
14. Discussed upcoming tenure cases noting that in AY25/26, even with the current number of nine CTAF members, each member will be expected to have 13-14 cases and CTAF proposed having a temporary member for a 2-year period. This will be brought for a faculty vote in the fall.
15. Prepared and distributed a roster of non-tenured tenure track faculty, along with their tenure years, to all faculty.
16. Appointed K. Wobbe as Chair and R. Konrad as Secretary. Continuing members are Aaron Sakulich, Lyuba Titova, and Erin Solovey.

Respectfully submitted,

Renata Konrad
2023-2024 CTAF Secretary