An Overview of the Tenure Process at WPI

Meeting with Department Heads
and Departmental Tenure Committees

Lauren Mathews, Chair
Mark Claypool, Chair-Elect
Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom (CTAF)

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"CTAF is in charge of the process by which tenure recommendations are reached for each probationary member of the tenure track Faculty."
          -- WPI Faculty Handbook*

- A faculty governance committee comprising 6 members from among the tenured faculty
- Members are elected by the Faculty to 4 year terms
- No department is represented twice
- Administrators and department heads are ineligible

*https://www.wpi.edu/sites/default/files/faculty-governance/Faculty_Handbook.pdf

Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom (CTAF): current membership

Lauren Mathews (BBT)
Chair

Mark Claypool (CS)
Secretary

Constance Clark (HUA)

Kris Wobbe (CBC)

Nima Rahbar (CE)

Jim Doyle (SSPS)

Goals for Today's Session

- Explain the details of how the tenure process works at WPI
- Update on CTAF's process for providing guidance to teaching track faculty
- Focus on the role of the DTC throughout the probationary period
- Emphasize recent procedural changes
- Address your questions and concerns

The Primary Purpose of Tenure is to Protect Academic Freedom

- "Faculty Members are entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results, subject to the adequate performance of other academic duties."

- "Faculty Members are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subjects and evaluating their students . . ."

- "During their probationary period, untenured Members of the Faculty have the same academic freedom enjoyed by tenured faculty members."

--WPI Faculty Handbook

The Tenure Clock (pre-Covid)

Candidate's tenure review year:
- Is your 6th year, unless they received credit for previous TT experience.
- May be adjusted with Provost approval, but minimum of 2 years at WPI for probationary appointments

Stopping the tenure clock
- New child provision: birth or adoption of a new child allows probationary faculty member to stop the clock for 1 year by submitting written notification to the provost, with limits on when the notice must be submitted
- Unpaid leaves/reduction to part time for at least 6 months/12 months, with terms & conditions of leave negotiated with provost
- Does not affect the standard of evaluation at final tenure review.

Early Tenure
- Is possible, but the standards are higher, requiring some "special or significant contribution".

Tenure Clock (Pre-COVID)

Tenure review takes place:
- In the 6th year at WPI, unless the candidate received credit for previous TT experience.
- May be adjusted with Provost approval.
- <mark>DHs, please make sure appointment letters unambiguously state the tenure year!</mark>

Stopping the tenure clock
- Birth or adoption of a new child allows probationary faculty member to stop the clock for 1 year by submitting written notification to the provost
- Unpaid leaves/reduction to part time for at least 6 months/12 months, with terms & conditions of leave negotiated with provost
- Does not affect the standard of evaluation at final tenure review.

Early Tenure
- Is possible, but the standards are higher, requiring some special or significant contribution.
- The tenure decision may be tabled.

The Tenure Clock (current, for faculty starting AY21/22 or earlier)

A faculty member's tenure review year:

- Is their **stated tenure year +1** (for most faculty, this will be their 7th year).
- The one-year clock extension because of Covid impacts applies to all tenure-track faculty by default, **unless and until the candidate opts out**

To opt out . . .

- Candidate must notify Deb Graves in the Provost's Office and cc the DH, Dean, and the Provost
- Candidate should discuss options with Department Tenure Committee, but please remember that **it's the candidate's choice, they don't need DH/DTC approval**

The Tenure Clock (current)

Opt-out deadlines

Year at WPI	6	5	4	3	2	1
Starting Year	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22
Previous Tenure Year	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27
Current Tenure Year (with COVID extension)	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28
Opt out deadline	N/A	5/4/21	5/2/22	5/1/23	5/1/24	5/1/25

Note: This table assumes a candidate hired with the standard tenure clock that has had no clock stoppages other than due to the COVID pandemic.

Clock extensions

The actions CTAF can take are limited:
- We can offer more time, but only departments can offer more resources
- We can offer general policies, but only departments can offer targeted responses

Not all of the impacts of clock extensions are positive:
- Clock extensions delay promotions and salary increases
- Clock extensions may not benefit all Faculty equally

CTAF depends on DTCs to provide guidance to faculty members:
- Clock extensions DO NOT change a JTCs expectations for what constitutes "high quality" teaching and scholarship
- Candidates should be given unequivocal guidance that clock extensions **do not result in higher expectations** in any of the three domains of teaching, scholarship, service

Departmental Tenure Committees

- Department Chair + 2 elected, tenured faculty
  - Elections are by secret ballot including ALL full-time faculty in the department
  - Elections should take place by April 1 each year
- Elected faculty serve 2 years
  - Terms should be staggered
  - No one can serve consecutive terms (at least 1 year between terms)
- Conduct annual reviews of each probationary faculty member by May 1
- Summarize the review in writing
  - Confirm with Penny Rock that this has been done
  - Review is shared with the candidate and kept on file
  - Review is NOT shared with anyone else
- Can recommend a terminal appointment
- DTC becomes part of the joint tenure committee (with CTAF) for final tenure review

Other advice for departmental review

1. Annual review procedures should be standardized across departments

2. General advice: Review your candidates the way CTAF will review them, so far as possible
   - Read project reports
   - Review CTAF format CVs, citations, journal quality
   - Review teaching portfolios (see guidance on CTAF Canvas site)
   - Review statements

3. In departments with diverse disciplines, DTC members may need to educate themselves on norms for scholarship in candidates' subdisciplines.

4. You can give candidates advice right up until the moment they submit their tenure materials.

Reasons for a potential conflict of interest

1. Familial relations, including past and/or present relationships created by marriage (e.g. in-laws).
2. Past and/or present amorous relationships, other than marriages.
3. Past and/or present business relationships.
4. Past and/or present cases involving litigation.
5. Individuals named in past and/or present academic freedom cases.
6. Advisor/Advisee relationships at the M.S. or Ph.D. level.
7. Research collaborators.

DTCs with a candidate going up next year should review this list and let the CTAF chair know if they may have a conflict of interest in any of these areas.

Tenure Criteria: Dual Mission

High quality teaching, undergraduate and/or graduate, is an essential but not sufficient requirement for obtaining tenure

High quality scholarship is an essential but not sufficient requirement for obtaining tenure

Service is valued and considered in tenure deliberations

--Approved by the Faculty, 1988; amended, 2011.

Tenure Criteria: Teaching Path

Excellent undergraduate and/or graduate teaching is a necessary but not sufficient requirement for obtaining tenure as a Professor of Teaching at WPI

- Teaching practice is excellent when it is of *high quality* and has *significant impact* on WPI students and curriculum.

Continuing professional growth and currency is a necessary but not sufficient requirement for obtaining tenure as a Teaching Professor at WPI

- Professional growth refers to developing knowledge, acquiring skills, and/or accumulating experiences that enhance WPI's educational mission and visibility
- Currency refers to making intellectual contributions to and remaining active in professional communities both within and beyond WPI

Service is a necessary but not sufficient requirement for obtaining tenure as a Professor of Teaching at WPI

--Approved by the Faculty, 2021

Teaching

The candidate's activities should demonstrate the capacity for <u>continued</u> high quality performance.

High quality teaching can be evidenced in many ways including, but not limited to:
- faculty peer evaluations
- alumni evaluations
- MQP, IQP, Inquiry Seminar or Practicum quality
- freshman, academic and graduate advising
- teaching innovations
- new course introductions
- course redesign
- course evaluations (both WPI form or other forms)

Teaching

- Both dual-mission and teaching track candidates will prepare and submit a teaching portfolio
- Detailed guidance on how to demonstrate high-quality teaching is available on the CTAF Canvas site ("CTAF Guidance for Demonstrating High Quality Teaching")
- CTAF is currently working to develop similar materials for teaching track faculty members
  - there will be broad overlap with advice for dual-mission faculty
  - additional guidance on demonstrating "significant impact"

Scholarship: dual mission candidates

The candidate's activities should demonstrate the capacity for <u>continued</u> high quality performance.

High quality scholarship can be evidenced in many ways including, but not limited to
- peer-reviewed publications (in journals and conference proceedings, depending on discipline)
- books, authored or edited
- exhibitions and performances
- professional awards
- citations in the professional literature
- presentations at professional meetings
- grant proposals and awards
- journal editorships
- reviews of papers and proposals
- patents

Professional growth & currency: teaching track candidates

- Candidates are "expected to submit materials that best demonstrate their *commitment* to and the *impact* of their continuing professional growth and currency, including how it enhances the effectiveness of the candidate's teaching and/or furthers a general understanding of effective teaching practices"
- CTAF is actively engaged in developing materials & outreach to this group to provide guidance on how to document professional growth & currency, which may include:
  - Archived guidance documents available on Canvas site
  - Additional sessions with teaching-track probationary faculty
  - Outreach to DHs/DTCs
  - Drafting of letters to external reviewers

Service

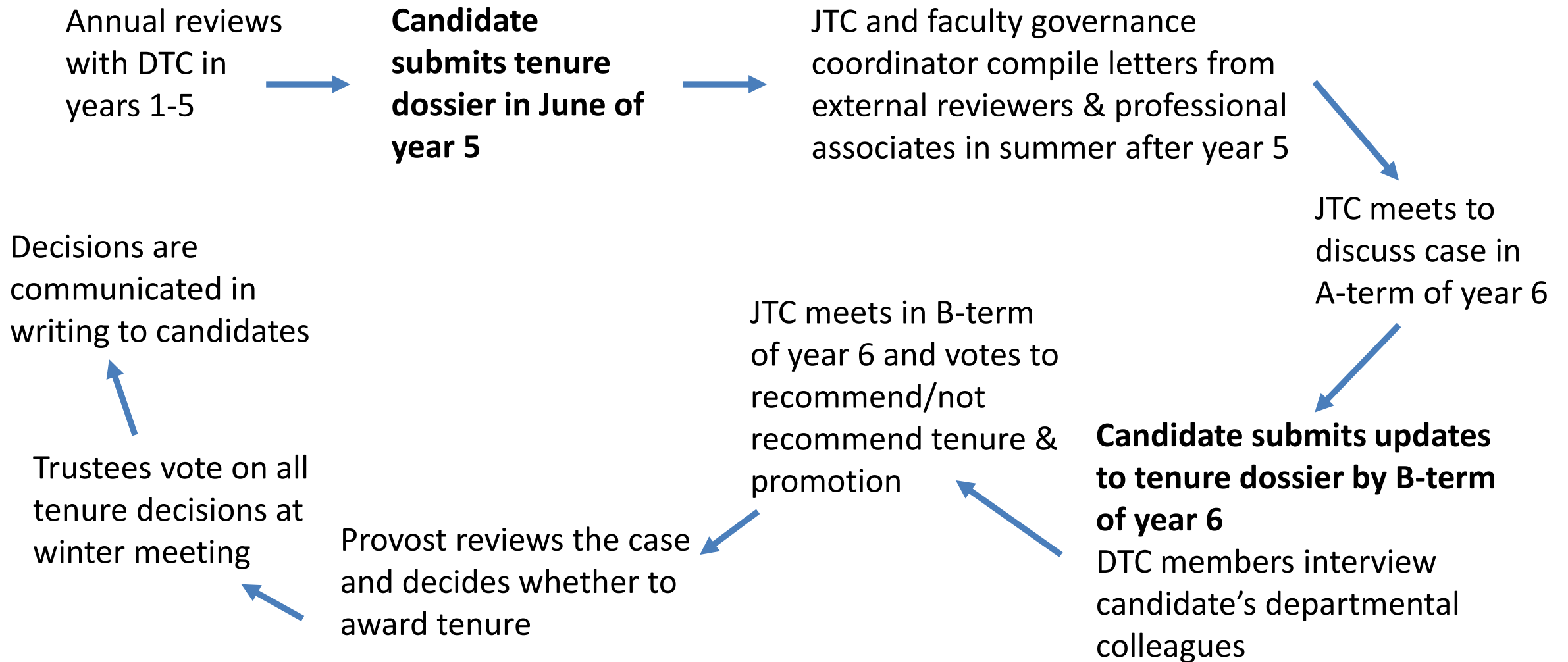**Service** can be evidenced in many ways including, but not limited to:
- Service to WPI (e.g., faculty governance, *ad hoc* committees, administrative offices)
- Service to the department (e.g., curriculum committees, MQP coordinators, faculty recruitment)
- Service to the local community (e.g., board or committee memberships in social service, cultural, government institutions)
- Service to the professions (e.g., participation in local, national, international committees and panels, peer reviews, conference organization)

NOTE difference in language:
- For dual mission faculty, service is "valued"
- For teaching track faculty, service is "necessary"

Standard tenure timeline

Annual reviews with DTC in years 1-5

→

Candidate submits tenure dossier in June of year 5

→

JTC and faculty governance coordinator compile letters from external reviewers & professional associates in summer after year 5

JTC meets to discuss case in A-term of year 6

Candidate submits updates to tenure dossier by B-term of year 6
DTC members interview candidate's departmental colleagues

JTC meets in B-term of year 6 and votes to recommend/not recommend tenure & promotion

Provost reviews the case and decides whether to award tenure

Trustees vote on all tenure decisions at winter meeting

Decisions are communicated in writing to candidates

Components of the tenure dossier for dual-mission faculty:

The candidate compiles a dossier by June 1 prior to their tenure year, including but not limited to:

- CV (in CTAF format!)
- Sample publications (usually three, sometimes permission for 4)
- 6-page statement of accomplishments and future plans
- List of professional associates
- Citation report
- Journal quality report
- Teaching portfolio (see guidance document on CTAF Canvas site)
- COVID impact statement

Other components compiled by JTC/faculty governance coordinator: letters from external reviewers & professional associates, official student course reports (minus comments sections), survey responses from alumni, summaries of interviews with departmental colleagues

Components of the tenure dossier for teaching track faculty:

- CTAF is actively engaged in developing guidance on specific materials requested as part of the dossier
- The candidate compiles a dossier by June 1 prior to their tenure year, which will PROBABLY include:
  - CV (in CTAF format)
  - 6-page statement of accomplishments and future plans
  - List of professional associates
  - Teaching portfolio (see guidance document on CTAF Canvas site)
  - COVID impact statement
  - Other materials TBD

Other components compiled by JTC/faculty governance coordinator: letters from external reviewers & professional associates, official student course reports (minus comments sections), survey responses from alumni, summaries of interviews with departmental colleagues

Professional Associates

By May 15 prior to their tenure year, the candidate chooses 5-8 professional associates
- Can be internal or external to WPI, any rank
- Should be people who can comment, from their professional interactions with the candidate, on their scholarship and/or teaching and/or service
- They should pick people they know are in their corner

External reviews

By June 1 the DTC chooses and gains the cooperation of 7-10 External Reviewers and provides to Faculty Governance Coordinator:

- Titles and contact information
- Summary of how and why they were selected
- CTAF working on guidance for how to select ER for teaching track faculty

External reviewers should be senior (associate or full), external scholars with expertise in the candidate's research area

- May not be research or other close collaborators
- Should representative of the diversity of scholars in the field
- DTCs are responsible for follow up

External reviewers receive:

- For dual mission candidates, WPI's tenure criteria and instructions, candidate's CV, candidate statements, sample publications, COVID impact statement, and citation report
- For teaching track candidates, TBD, but will include tenure criteria and instructions, candidate's CV, candidate statements, & other materials

Formation & actions of the JTC

- A Joint Tenure Committee of 8 Faculty is formed from the 3-person DTC and 5 CTAF members to review the case.

  - Departmental colleagues who are on CTAF are automatically recused

  - Any CTAF or DTC member with a conflict of interest is recused

  - Candidates with program affiliations/strong interdisciplinarity can petition the CTAF chair to be permitted a 4-member "DTC"

- JTC vote:

  - All votes are strictly confidential

  - A majority of 5 affirmatives to support tenure, 4 negatives to deny tenure (vote count stops when either threshold is reached)

  - All cases result in just a recommendation for or against tenure to the provost; provost does not know vote count or hear dissenting opinions

Information for DHs on hire-with-tenure cases

- Applies to offers to job candidates that are made at either the associate professor/professor level, with tenure awarded at appointment

- Cases must be considered by CTAF, with recommendations for or against tenure forwarded to the Provost

- Usually reserved for "high value" hires, and often a tenure decision is needed FAST to retain the candidate

- In response to an (apparently) increasing number of hire-with-tenure cases, CTAF adopted formal policies regarding review of such cases and <u>sent these policies to all DHs at the end of AY20/21 for comment</u>

Information for DHs on hire-with-tenure cases

- Policy is in place and is available in full on CTAF Canvas site
  - To enroll: https://canvas.wpi.edu/enroll/X4HR8P or contact a member of CTAF
- Requires submission of a number of materials that are not typically submitted as part of normal job application materials
  - Most can be assembled fairly easily
  - BUT DHs/search committees should PLAN AHEAD regarding external reviews for hire-with-tenure candidates, since these can take a while to obtain
  - Additional materials regarding teaching are also very useful, since such candidates will rarely have a teaching portfolio to submit
- It is important to note that CTAF considers these additional materials, <u>especially the external reviews,</u> to be critical in evaluating these cases!!

Questions?