

Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom Annual Report 2020-2021

Committee Members: Jim Doyle (Chair), Lauren Mathews (Secretary), Mark Claypool, Mike Timko, Constance Clark, Sarah Olson (through Dec 2020), Nima Rahbar (starting Jan 2021)

CTAF took the following actions during the 2020-2021 Academic Year:

1. With departmental tenure committees, reviewed 6 tenure cases and made recommendations to the Provost.
2. Reviewed 3 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 2020.
5. Held an open meeting on April 14, 2021 with untenured tenure-track faculty to provide information on the tenure process at WPI.
6. Held an open meeting on April 21, 2021 with departmental tenure committees to discuss the tenure review process.
7. Adopted a requirement for a Covid Impact Statement to be included with the tenure application materials of all candidates for tenure, beginning in AY21/22, and developed and distributed comprehensive guidelines for writing these statements.
8. Developed a set of formal procedures that will govern the expedited review process that CTAF uses to evaluate hire-with-tenure cases. The list of procedures requires Department Heads or Program Directors to assemble a set of supporting documents for the review process.
9. Elected a member of CTAF (Nima Rahbar) to serve on the Teaching Path to Tenure Implementation Committee
10. Finalized CTAF policy for allowing for an alternative composition of the Departmental Tenure Committee for faculty with significant responsibilities in programs.
11. Developed and distributed comprehensive guidelines for probationary faculty on the development of a teaching portfolio, which was required of all candidates for tenure beginning AY20/21.
12. Developed a proposal (in collaboration with the Committee on Governance) to extend the opt-out deadline for the Covid-19 related clock extension that the Faculty approved in April of 2020 to 25 months before candidates' deadline for submitting a tenure application. The motion was presented to and approved by the Faculty on April 8, 2021.
13. Developed a proposal (in collaboration with the Committee on Governance) to stop the tenure clock for one year for tenure-track faculty with start dates at WPI in AY20/21 due to the Covid-19 pandemic with an opt-out option. These faculty were not included in the motion passed in April 2020. The motion was presented to and approved by the Faculty on April 8, 2021.
14. Prepared and distributed a roster of non-tenured tenure track faculty, along with their tenure years.
15. Appointed L. Mathews (until 2022) as the new Chair and M. Claypool (until 2023) as the new Secretary of CTAF. Continuing members are J. Doyle (until 2022), N. Rahbar (until 2023), and C. Clark (until 2024). CTAF welcomed newly elected member K. Wobbe (until 2025).

Respectfully submitted,

Lauren Mathews
2020-2021 CTAF Secretary