

**WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE**

October 6, 2022

To: The WPI Faculty  
From: Mark Richman  
Secretary of the Faculty

The second Faculty meeting of the 2022-2023 academic year will be held on **Thursday, October 6, 2022 at 3:15pm in OH 107** with refreshments available at 3:00pm.

1. Call to Order M. Richman
  - Approval of the Agenda
  - ~~Consideration of the Minutes from September 1, 2022~~
2. Opening Announcements
3. Committee Business:
  - Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom (CTAF) M. Claypool
  - Committee on Governance (COG) L. Albano
    - Motion to increase the number of members on CTAF and to update the Faculty Handbook description of CTAF (for discussion, only)
4. Committee Reports:
  - Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom (CTAF) M. Claypool
    - **Providing Additional Flexibility in the Timing of Final Tenure Reviews**
  - Committee on Financial and Administrative Policy (FAP) D. Spanagel
    - **Executive Compensation at WPI: In Theory and in Practice (2010-2019)**
5. New Business
6. President's Report W. Soboyejo
7. Provost's Report A. Heinricher
8. Closing Announcements
9. Adjournment

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Note: This motion is for discussion, only.

**Date:** October 6, 2022

**To:** The WPI Faculty

**From:** Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom (Prof. Claypool, Chair)  
Committee on Governance (Prof. Albano, Chair)

**Re:** Motion to increase the number of members on the Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom (CTAF) and to update the Faculty Handbook description of CTAF

**Motion:** The Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom and the Committee on Governance recommend and we move that the number of members on the Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom (CTAF) be increased from six to nine, and that the description of CTAF in the Faculty Handbook (PART ONE, Bylaw One, Subsection V) and two other related parts of the Faculty Handbook (PART ONE, Appendix A, Section D; and PART ONE, Appendix A, Section B, Subsection 2) be modified accordingly and updated, as described below.

**Description of the Proposed Modifications:**

- The proposed modifications to **Part One, Bylaw One, Subsection V** of the Faculty Handbook (**shown in track-changes below**) would:
  - increase the number of CTAF members from six to nine (shaded in **gray**);
  - update the charge of CTAF to include tenure recommendations for Professors of Teaching (shaded in **blue**);
  - clarify the criteria for determining the Chair and the Secretary of the committee (shaded in **yellow**);
  - clarify the nature of the recommendations made to the Provost (shaded in **green**); and
  - reorganize and edit the current description of CTAF:

Modifications to **PART ONE, Bylaw One, Subsection V** (shown in track changes):

V. The Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom (CTAF):

Roles and Responsibilities:

(CTAF) is given the authority and responsibility for overseeing tenure recommendations to the Administration. The committee is in charge of the process by which tenure recommendations to the Provost are reached for each tenure-track probationary faculty member of the tenure track Faculty. In the case of Assistant Professors who have also been nominated for promotion to the rank of Associate Professor, the each recommendation is either for or against tenure with promotion to Associate Professor or against tenure. In the case of Assistant Professors of Teaching, each recommendation is either for tenure with promotion to Associate Professor of Teaching or against tenure. In the cases of Associate Professors, Associate Professors of Teaching, and Professors, and Professors of Teaching, the each recommendation is for or against tenure with no consideration given to a recommendation made concerning promotion.

CTAF is also concerned with questions relating to academic freedom, and the committee is charged with the responsibility of reviewing problems involving the academic freedom of both tenured and non-tenured all faculty members, whether part-time or full-time.

Membership:

CTAF consists of six-nine faculty members having tenure. Department Heads, the Provost, and Deans are not eligible for membership on this Committee, and there will not be more than one committee member from any one Department. The term of office for this Committee is four

years. No member may serve successive terms. Department Heads, Deans, and the Provost are not eligible to serve on CTAF.

*(NOTE: The following paragraph is brought in from Appendix A: Section D.)*

The Chair of CTAF shall be the member whose term of office expires in June of the current academic year. ~~has served the longest among the members in their current terms. In the case of ties in length of current service, CTAF will select the Chair from among those tied.~~ The Chair shall rule on all matters of procedure and shall be responsible for interpreting all Faculty rules regarding tenure. The Chair's rulings are subject to review by the Faculty only. The Secretary of CTAF shall be the member ~~aside from the Chair whose term of office expires in June of either the current or the following academic year. has served the longest among the members in their current terms. In the case of ties in length of current service, CTAF will select the Secretary from among those tied. All four members of CTAF must be present to conduct official business.~~

#### *Election Procedures:*

Nominations and elections for CTAF are conducted by the Secretary of the Faculty. ~~Membership on this Committee is limited to no more than one elected Faculty Member from any one academic discipline.~~ The election procedure is as follows. The Secretary prepares a nominating ballot listing eligible Faculty Members by ~~discipline department~~ and distributes it to all voting members of the Faculty, with instructions to nominate up to one person from each ~~discipline department~~. The member of each academic ~~discipline department~~ who receives the largest number of nominations in their department and is willing to serve if elected is then placed on an ~~electing election~~ ballot to be distributed ~~with voting instructions~~ to all voting members of the Faculty. In the normal pattern, the number to be elected annually will be ~~alternately two, two, two, and one three~~ in successive years. Vacancies to unexpired terms will be filled by the same nominating and election procedure as for full terms.

#### *Tenure Cases:*

For the purpose of considering each tenure case, a Joint Tenure Committee is formed, consisting of five members from CTAF and the three-member Department Tenure Committee. If the candidate and one of the CTAF members are from the same department, then that CTAF member is recused from the Joint Tenure Committee automatically. The Joint Committee shall also consider whether any of its members should be recused due to direct conflict of interest. In the event of no departmental overlap or conflict of interest, the selection of the five CTAF members to sit on the Joint Tenure Committee will be governed by CTAF procedures developed to lead to an overall pattern of recusals distributed over the CTAF membership so as to ensure appropriate participation for each CTAF member. ~~If recusal of two CTAF members is necessary, the most recent qualified past chair of CTAF will serve for that particular case.~~ The Joint Tenure Committee is chaired by the senior elected member of the five CTAF participants. Normally, each Department Tenure Committee consists of two elected department members with tenure plus the Department Head; in the cases of interdepartmental or interdisciplinary candidates the structure of the Department Tenure Committee shall be modified as explained in Appendix A, Section B2. In the event that recusal of one of the Department Tenure Committee members is necessary due to conflict of interest, the most recent qualified past Department Tenure Committee member will serve on the Joint Tenure Committee for that particular case.

#### *Academic Freedom Cases:*

~~CTAF is also charged with the responsibility of reviewing problems involving the academic freedom of both tenured and non-tenured faculty, whether part-time or full-time.~~ At the start of a particular academic freedom case, CTAF shall consider whether any of its members should be recused due to direct conflict of interest. If a Committee member is recused, the review will proceed with the remaining members. In the event that CTAF is unsuccessful in the resolution of such problems, the subsequent procedures as well as the procedures to be followed in the granting of tenure will be those

~~in the report of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Tenure approved by the Trustees in June, 1968, and procedural amendments proposed in the Tenure Committee Report, 1968-69, and approved by the Faculty on March 17, 1969. (These reports are appended to this document as Appendix A) described in this Faculty Handbook.~~

- The proposed modifications described above to Part One, Bylaw One, Subsection V of the Faculty Handbook would modify and absorb the following two parts of **PART ONE, Appendix A, Section D**; and **PART ONE, Appendix A, Section B, Subsection 2** of the Faculty Handbook. Consequently, these two parts can be deleted from the Faculty Handbook.

Text to be **deleted** from **PART ONE, Appendix A (Report of the ad hoc Tenure Committee), Section D (Procedural Amendments)**:

The Chair of CTAF shall be the member whose term of office expires in June of the current academic year. The Chair shall rule on all matters of procedure and shall be responsible for interpreting all Faculty rules regarding tenure. The Chair's rulings are subject to review by the Faculty only. The Secretary shall be the member whose term of office expires in June of the following academic year. All four members of CTAF must be present to conduct official business.

.....

Text to be **deleted** from **PART ONE, Appendix A (Report of the ad hoc Tenure Committee), Section B (Procedure for Granting Tenure); Subsection 2 (Joint Tenure)**:

.....

CTAF shall be composed of six Faculty Members having tenure who shall be elected by the Faculty, by secret ballot, under the direction of the Secretary of Faculty. Department Heads and Deans are not eligible for membership on this Committee, and there shall not be more than one member from any one department. No member may serve successive terms.

.....

### **Rationale:**

- ***Rationale for reorganizing and editing the current description of CTAF*** (shown in red underline and ~~red strikethrough~~):

There is ongoing work-in-progress revising the Faculty Handbook. The guiding principle is to remove redundancies, unify sections and parts of sections that all relate to the same topic and subtopic, and increase readability and usability of the Handbook. The remainder of the changes are meant to align with this effort without changing the substance as it pertains to CTAF.

- ***Rationale for expanding the number of members on CTAF from 6 to 9*** (shaded in gray):

The Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom (CTAF) is in charge of the process by which tenure recommendations are reached for each probationary Member of the tenure-track faculty. As such, the primary workload for CTAF is in reviewing tenure cases for probationary faculty.

Recently, the faculty created a new path to tenure (the "Professor of Teaching") and WPI has subsequently placed an additional 30 faculty on that tenure track, with an additional 15 appointments planned next academic year. This has led to a marked increase in the expected tenure case review load. The past, present and projected number of tenure cases are below.

Academic Year	Cases	CTAF-6	CTAF-9
2018-2019	6	5.0	-
2019-2020	7	5.8	-
2020-2021	6	5.0	-
2021-2022	7	5.8	-
2022-2023	12	10.0	-
2023-2024	14	11.7	7.8
2024-2025	19	16.9	11.6
2025-2026	23	19.2	12.8
2026-2027	24	20.0	13.3
2027-2028	12	10.0	6.6
2027-2028	11	9.2	6.1

The above data includes all faculty currently on the tenure track (offer letters signed) as well as the additional 15 Professors of Teaching faculty appointments that are planned (expected offer letters this academic year). CTAF-6 shows the average number of per-person cases if CTAF remains at size 6, and CTAF-9 shows the average number of per-person cases if CTAF expands to 9.

Without changes to the current CTAF membership and/or tenure review process, the massive workload that faces CTAF as early as next year may hurt the quality of the deliberations (too much work, not enough people to do it), greatly extend the time required to consider all cases (not providing decisions on tenure in a timely fashion), and/or deter faculty from voluntarily serving on CTAF.

An estimate for a reasonable workload (i.e., a service load that should not impinge upon teaching or research for those serving on the committee) for each CTAF faculty member is to review about one and a half tenure cases per week over a term, or about 10.5 cases total. Since there are 5 CTAF members on each case (that combine with the 3 Department Tenure Committee members to form the Joint Tenure Committee), CTAF at its current size can handle about 13 tenure cases per year. If CTAF expanded to 9, it could reasonably handle about 19 cases per year, close to the estimated peak case load. Increasing the size of CTAF beyond 9 is not recommended since large committees can be unwieldy, a sudden influx of new members can make continuity of process and culture a challenge, and there can be at most one member from each department which limits the CTAF candidate pool. Moreover, once the original influx of 45 Professors of Teaching has been fully incorporated (about after AY 28-29), it is anticipated that the tenure case load will decrease to about 19/year or fewer - meaning a CTAF of size 9 should be sufficient long-term.

As noted, the faculty handbook mandates there can be only 1 CTAF member from each department. WPI currently has 16 academic departments, so there are 10 departments that do not have members on CTAF. These 10 should be an adequate pool from which to elect the additional 3 CTAF members needed under this proposal.

- ***Rationale for updates to the charge of CTAF to include tenure recommendations for Professors of Teaching (shaded in blue):***

Since there are now probationary faculty that are Professors of Teaching, the CTAF charge needs to be expanded beyond the current wording that specifies recommendations for Assistant, Associate and Full Professors to also include recommendations for Assistant, Associate and Full Professors of Teaching.

- ***Rationale for clarify the criteria for determining the Chair and the Secretary of CTAF*** (shaded in yellow):

When choosing the CTAF Chair and Secretary, the current wording assumes there is a single CTAF member who's term expires each June (a throwback from when there were CTAF had only 4 faculty members). The revised wording clarifies how the CTAF Chair and Secretary should be selected given there may be multiple CTAF members who's terms expire in June.

- ***Rationale for clarify the nature of the recommendations made to the Provost*** (shaded in green):

As currently worded, the tenure recommendation provided by the Joint Tenure Committee (JTC) to the Provost in each case is not clearly defined. The added language (in green) is to clarify exactly when the JTC is recommending for or against tenure and promotion (when the candidate is at the Assistant rank) versus when the JTC is recommending for or against just tenure (when the candidate is already at the Associate or Full rank).

**Proposed Implementation:**

In addition to electing CTAF members to fill two regular vacancies (by following the regular “*Election Procedures*” included in the description of the committee proposed here) in spring 2022 for terms beginning in AY 22-23, the faculty will at the same time expand the membership of CTAF in AY 23-24 by also electing three *additional* CTAF members using the same election process.

In order to ensure that the number of regular vacancies follow a 2-2-2-3 pattern beginning in AY 24-25, the terms (beginning in AY 23-24) of the five members elected in spring 2022 will be set as follows:

- three members will be elected for four-year terms;
- one member will be elected for a three-year term; and
- one will be elected for a one-year term.