

# Proposed Changes to the Timing of Tenure Reviews

Mark Claypool, CTAF Chair

October 2022 faculty meeting

# Credits

## CTAF Spring '22

Lauren Matthews, Jim Doyle, Mark Claypool, Constance Clark, Kim Wobbe, Nima Rahbar



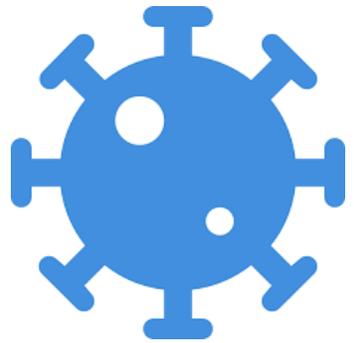
## ADVANCE team

Chrys Demetry, Jeanine Skorinko, Elizabeth Long-Lingo, Sue Roberts, Natalie Farny



# How Did We Get Here?

- COVID disrupted our probationary faculty: teaching, research, service (and home life)
  - Statements have been revealing about differences in impact
- Stopped all tenure clocks for one year
  - With option to not stop for **flexibility**
  - *Opt-out* not *opt-in*, to avoid **stigma**
  - Some took it, some did not, some are still deciding
- Considered stopping all clocks for a second year, but didn't
- Pandemic highlighted inequities in fixed tenure timeline
  - “One size does **NOT** fit all”





# Framing the Problem –

(more than just COVID, or childcare, or ...)

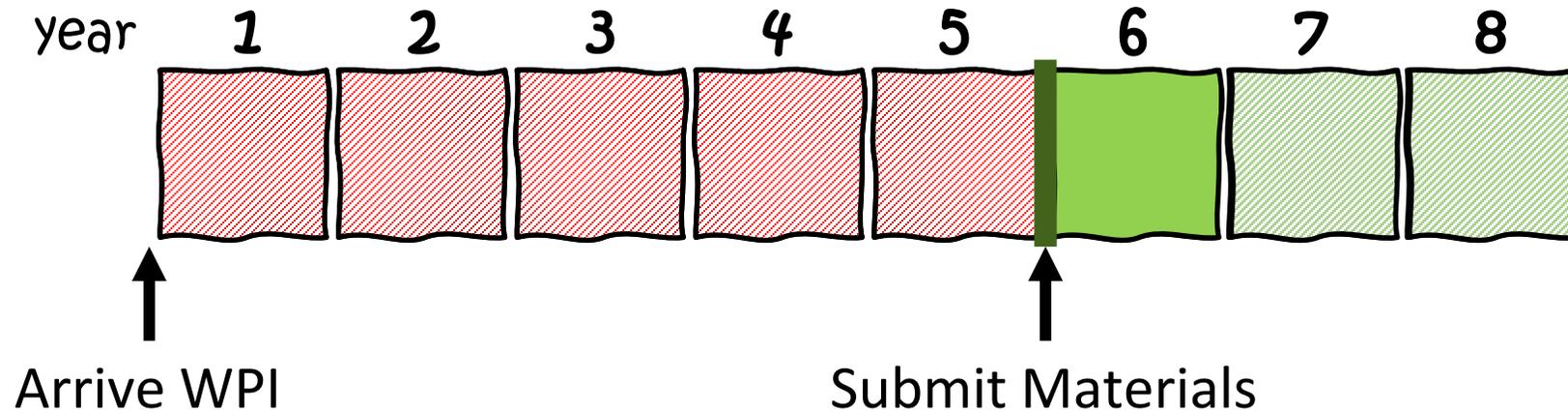


- Concerns about work-life balance in academia/at WPI
- Some probationary faculty report extreme (not just high) levels of stress
- Inequities particularly affect women & underrepresented groups
  - Evidence suggests on average, women disadvantaged in tenure process, and do not necessarily benefit from “stop the clock” policies
- But also, inequities persist at *individual level* – everyone’s probationary experience is unique! i.e., “life happens”
- Also, practical questions of retention of talented faculty

→ Can we build in **flexibility**?



# WPI's Current Tenure Clock Policies

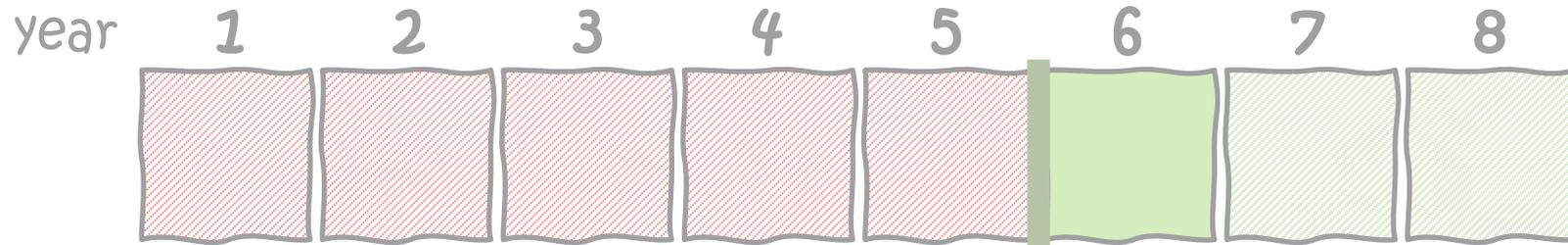


- Standard probationary period with no TT experience is decision in 6<sup>th</sup> year
- Shorter probationary period with prior TT experience (clock credit), but 2 year minimum
- Early tenure possible but with higher bar for tenure

## Clock stoppage mechanisms

- New child provision: 1- year for “significant childcare responsibilities”
- Unpaid leave/part-time status that meets duration requirements
- Criteria same as if clock not stopped

# Pros/Cons WPI's Current Tenure Clock Policies



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- Only sto

No prov

- Clock st

Instead of “stopping the clock”  
can we build in more flexibility?

Both at WPI and in general, male faculty better able to avoid using, achieving tenure & promotion faster

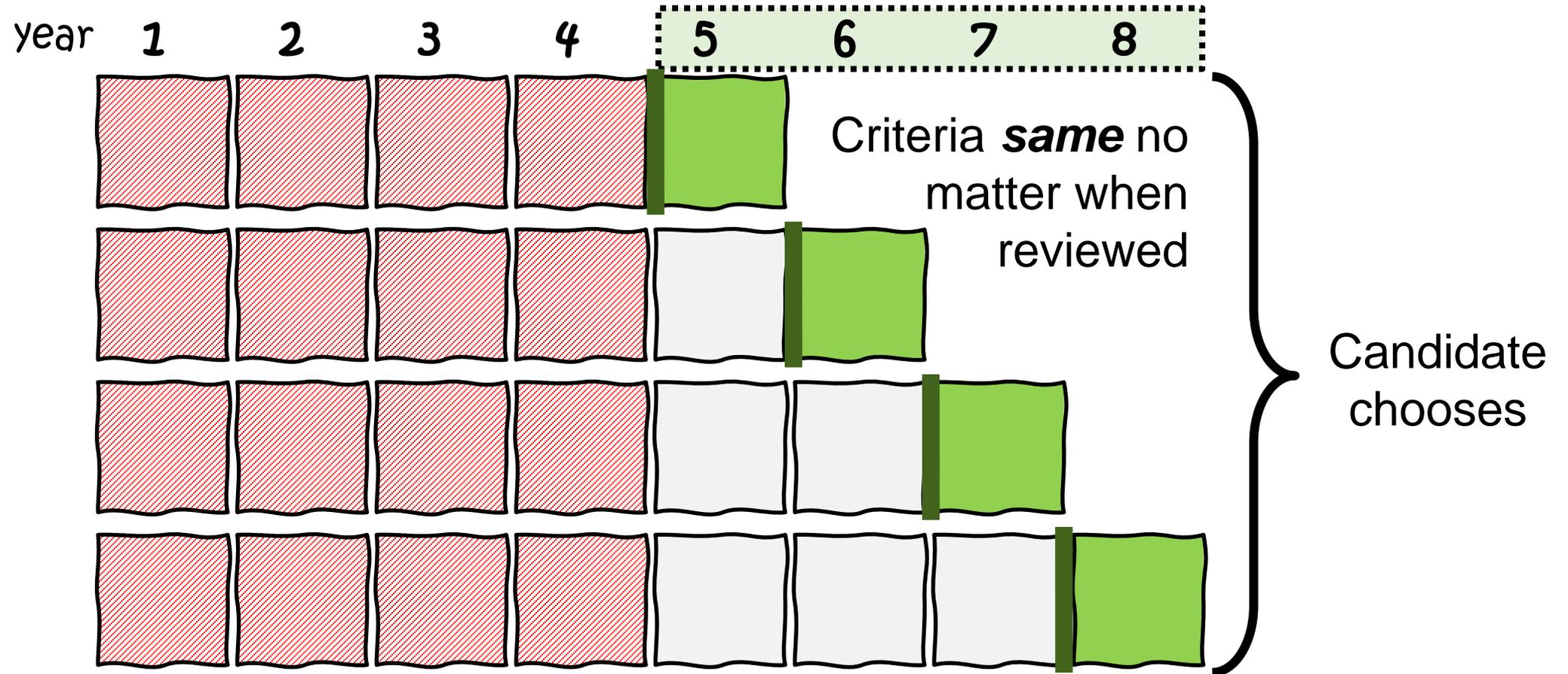
- Advised clock stoppages not used

Both at WPI and in general, probationary faculty express concern evaluated differently if exercise right to clock stoppage, and wary about using

Clock stoppages must be requested, not automatic

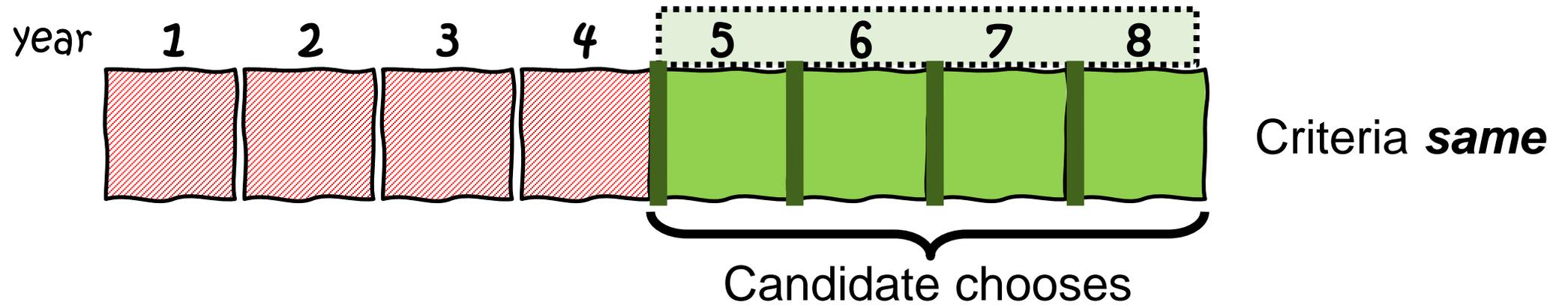
# Tenure Review Window –

## Tenure Review Timing with Integrated Flexibility



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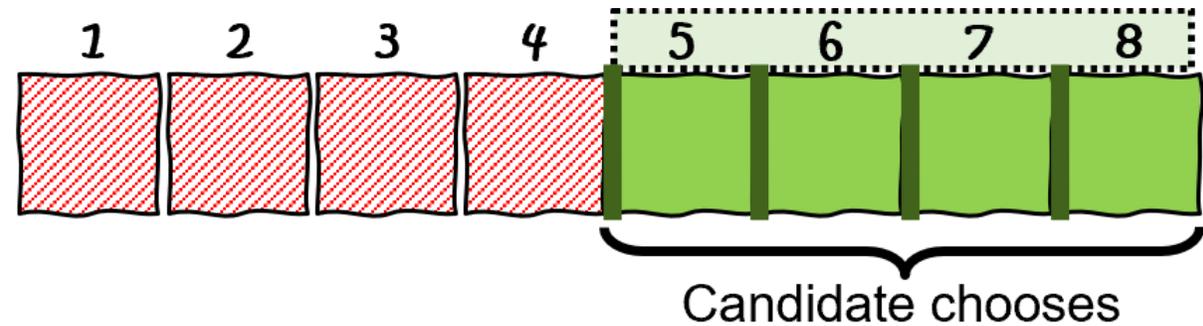


- Review window with no TT experience, decision in 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> year
  - Candidate consults with DTC, but decision on year *their own*
  - Tenure criteria *same* no matter when reviewed
- Keep current rules
  - Single review (one try only, not more)
  - Earlier window possible (clock credit) with prior TT experience
- Note: expectation is most reviews during 6<sup>th</sup> year, but now *flexibility*

# Tenure Review Window –

## Tenure Review Timing with Integrated Flexibility

What's still to figure out?



- Deadline for committing to review year (e.g., 1 year prior)?
- **Guidance** for DTCs and faculty to help with strategy?
- Eliminate or retain current **child provision** policy\*?
  - *Extenuating circumstances* statement/guidance (extrapolate)
- Eliminate or retain current **early tenure review** possibility?
- Eliminate or retain current **2-year minimum** before review?
- Have current probationary faculty follow new policy?
- Compensation retroactive to **5<sup>th</sup> year**, regardless of review?

\*WPI avg. ~2/year

Thank-you for your attention!

Questions? Comments? Suggestions?

# Proposed Changes to the Timing of Tenure Reviews

Please email me: Mark Claypool, [claypool@wpi.edu](mailto:claypool@wpi.edu)

Or anyone on CTAF: Constance Clark, Kim Wobbe,  
Nima Rhabar, Renata Konrad, Mike Timko

# Appendix

# Additional Qualifying Reasons to Stop the Clock Found at other Universities

*Saranna Thornton. "Implementing Flexible Tenure Clock Policies", Chapter in *New Directions for Higher Education – Special Issue: The Challenge of Balancing Faculty Careers and Family Work*, Volume 2005, Issue 130, Summer 2005*

- adoption;
- significant elder care or dependent care responsibilities;
- disability or chronic illness of the professor;
- injured spouse or domestic partner who needs care;
- death of a parent, child, spouse, or domestic partner;
- catastrophic residential property loss (e.g., hurricanes);
- military service;
- legal issues (e.g., settling estate, divorce, custody, civil suit, criminal defense);
- unavoidable delays in the completion of a research lab;
- natural disaster that destroys research materials;
- unexpected bankruptcy of publishing company after book accepted;
- periods of purely administrative duties.

# Clock Stoppage Policies – Survey Results (1 of 2)

<i>Policy</i>	<i>Doctoral</i> (45)	<i>Comprehensive Baccalaureate</i> (10)	<i>All Types</i> (21)	<i>All Types</i> (76)
Percentage with a policy	88.9	80.0	47.6	75.0
Percentage with an informal policy <sup>a</sup>	17.8	10.0	9.5	14.5
Percentage with a formal policy <sup>a</sup>	66.7	70.0	23.8	55.3
Percentage for birth or adoption <sup>a</sup>	66.7	40.0	28.6	52.6
Percentage for birth only <sup>a</sup>	15.6	40.0	19.0	19.7
<b>Women</b>				
Number eligible	49	16	15	80
Number using the policy	17	3	2	22
Utilization rate	34.7%	18.8%	7.5%	27.5%
<b>Men</b>				
Number eligible	182	40	8	230
Number using the policy	42	1	0	43
Utilization rate	23.1%	2.5%	0%	18.7%

# Clock Stoppage Policies – Survey Results (2 of 2)

<i>Policy</i>	<i>Doctoral</i> (45)	<i>Comprehensive Baccalaureate</i> (10)	<i>All Types</i> (21)	<i>All Types</i> (76)
Number of times clock can be stopped	One: 50%, two: 43%, three: 7% (N = 14)	One: 100% (N = 4)	Two: 100% (N = 1)	One: 58%, two: 37%, three: 5% (N = 19)
Directions to tenure review committees				
Use your own judgment	60.6%	0%	50%	53.1%
Evaluate years on clock	33.3%	85.7%	25%	36.7%
Evaluate total years worked	6.1%	14.3%	25%	6.2%
Average course load per year	3.92	5.30	6.29	4.8

*Note:* The numbers in parentheses in the column headings refer to the number of institutions in that category in the survey.

<sup>a</sup>Percentages may not sum to the percentage of institutions with a policy because of missing answers to some survey questions.