Task Force on Academic Promotion Members

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Perceptions of Promotion at WPI

• Department Heads, Task Force survey:
  – Procedures vary widely by department

• Associate Professors, Task Force focus groups unifying themes:
  – Unnecessary uncertainty regarding criteria, mentoring, and timing
  – Lack of recognition for people who spend time on activities that are essential to WPI’s mission

• Non-Tenure Track Faculty, Task Force survey unifying themes:
  – Academic departments need to clarify and publicize NTT promotion procedures
  – Process needs to have transparency
  – *Note*: Issues related to Professors of Practice deserve separate discussion
COACHE: “Department culture encourages promotion to full prof”

agree + strongly agree

Percent response

- Faculty overall
- Full profs
- Associate profs
- Men
- Women

WPI Peers All Institutions
Women Faculty Perceptions of Promotion at WPI

• Task Force survey of women faculty, unifying themes:
  – Women are not promoted at the same rate as men
  – Women often have a higher service load and may value teaching more
  – Service and teaching were not valued as highly as research for promotion at WPI
A National Problem

Why Are Associate Professors So Unhappy?

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER ED
Mid-Career Faculty Planning and Mentoring

Step 1: Articulate Your Career Goals
* Promotion to Full Professor:
  - Define your area of distinction.
  - Set a time frame.
  - Establish shorter-term goals to take you there.
  - Align your activities with departmental needs and expectations.

Step 2: Understand Promotion Criteria
* Examine college and departmental criteria; seek needed clarity.
* Attend ADVANCE-sponsored Faculty Forum, “Pathways to Professor.”
* Discuss criteria and promotion guidelines with chair, dean, mentor, etc.
* Examine samples of recently promoted candidates in your area.

Step 3: Conduct a Self-Assessment
* Consider your career trajectory thus far:
  - How has its course changed and why?
  - Were the departures intentional and aligned with your changing interests and/or departmental needs?
* Do service and administrative duties interfere with your scholarship?
* Assess your strengths and the areas in which you need to develop:
  - Determine what resources and mentoring you need.
  - Seek input from peers and mentors.
  - Examine previous performance feedback.

Step 4: Write a Mid-Career Plan
* Map out a general path and match your skills, strengths, and performance expectations to your career choices and work.
* Continuously examine your plan:
  - Include Steps 1-2.
  - List strengths and skills you can build on.
  - Update short- and long-term career goals and timeframes.
  - List activities, resources, and strategies to enact your plan.

Step 5: Discuss Plan with Mentor and Chair
* Seek input on how realistic your plan and timetable are.
* Obtain resources and implementing your plan.
* The alignment of your plan with departmental needs.
* The alignment of your plan with the performance criteria.

Step 6: Implement the Plan
* Put your plan into action.
* Modify it as needed.
* Regularly review the plan with your mentor and chair.

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Recommendaions

Broaden Criteria for Promotion from Associate to Full Professor

Establish Professional Development and Promotion Committees in each Department

Revise COAP Procedures on Promotion
Current Criteria for Promotion from Associate to Full Professor

Approved in 1978:

• Recent accomplishments of high quality in both teaching and scholarship/creativity
• Demonstrated leadership in one of these two areas
• Some appropriate degree of service to WPI

• “Outstanding candidates should not be deprived of promotion because of the uniqueness of their contribution”
• Recent interpreted as within the last five years
Task Force: Broaden Criteria for Promotion from Associate to Full

- High quality contributions in teaching, scholarship/creativity, and service
  - Each an essential (but not sufficient) requirement for promotion
- a record of outstanding accomplishment in at least one of these three areas
- emphasis on work since tenure and/or promotion to Associate
- Multiple paths to professor. Each candidate will be evaluated on the outstanding accomplishments in the path they have chosen
Professional Development and Promotion Committees

- Required in every department
- Provide mentoring on professional development and on nomination for promotion; they are *not* performance reviews
- Meet periodically with all Tenured Faculty and all Continuing Non-Tenure Track Faculty
- Two elected department members and the Department Head
- These meetings would replace Post-Tenure Review in the Faculty Handbook
Schedule for Professional Development Meetings

• Associate Professors: 3 years after tenure to discuss a mid-career plan, and between 5-10 years after tenure to discuss professional development and promotion

• Continuing Non-Tenure Track Faculty: 5 years after initial appointment to discuss professional development and promotion, and every 5-10 years thereafter

• Tenured Full Professors: 10 years after promotion to full professor or after the last 10-year meeting to discuss professional development
Revise COAP Promotion Procedures

• Election and Composition of COAP
  – Add one elected member (committee of seven)

• Recusal Process
  – Each promotion case heard by six elected COAP members; one member recused from each case

• COAP Decision Letter
  – Addressed to the candidate as well as the Provost

• Appeals Procedure
  – Only based on procedural grounds

• COAP Reporting
  – Department Professional Development and Promotion Committees report schedule of meetings (not contents)
COAP Reactions and Options

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Task Force and COAP Reactions

- Modify COAP Procedures
- Professional Development & Promotion Committee in each Department
- Promotion criteria with high quality in each: teaching, scholarship, service
- Promotion based on outstanding teaching, scholarship or service
- Modify COAP Procedures
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Discussion