

COAP: Departmental Promotion Processes

Committee on Appointments and Promotions (COAP) notes that while there is an established procedure for the actions of departmental tenure committees, a wide range of departmental procedures exist for the way that departments select and nominate faculty for promotion.

For the tenure process there is an established schedule for meetings between untenured faculty and departmental tenure committees. However, some departments do not follow a regular schedule for promotion consideration, and may not even have a departmental promotion committee. However, all WPI faculty should have a fair and equal chance to be considered for and nominated for promotion.

COAP recommends the following guidelines for promotion procedures in each academic department. Given the distinct differences between departments, minor variations may be necessary.

The basis of any procedure should be the fact that the purpose of the departmental promotion committee is to provide consultation and guidance about promotion to all faculty members below the rank of full professor.

- The departmental promotion committee should consist of full professors and the department head. The size of the committee may vary from department to department, and members may either be elected by the department faculty members or appointed by the department head.
- Every tenure track faculty member below the rank of full professor should be invited by the committee to meet every other year to discuss their accomplishments and goals as they relate to promotion. This meeting should be scheduled no later than C-term. The faculty member is not obliged to take advantage of this opportunity.
- The departmental promotion committee shall provide a written summary of that discussion to the faculty member. This letter is for personal communication only: the faculty member has the right to use this material as he or she sees fit. The faculty member shall have the right to respond to this communication.
- The letter and the written response from the candidate should be kept by the department.

- In most normal cases, the letter from the committee forms the basis of the nomination for promotion that is submitted to COAP by the Department Head.
- The letter from the departmental promotion committee, in addition to describing the current strengths and weaknesses of the faculty member, can indicate whether the committee recommends nomination for promotion.

COAP welcomes feedback or questions regarding these guidelines as well as information regarding existing departmental promotion procedures that could be used to enhance these recommendations in the future.

Note: This document was produced by D.C.Brown with input from the 2009-2010 COAP, and posted with their approval.

Version: DCB / Wed Jun 16 15:07:31 EDT 2010