

# **Committee on Appointments and Promotions**

## **Guidelines for Decision Making Meetings**

These guidelines are intended to describe the way a Joint Promotion Committee conducts meetings at which it determines a unitary recommendation for or against promotion.

These confidential meetings are for members of a Joint Promotion Committee only, and all discussion remain strictly confidential. All members of the Joint Promotion Committee must be present before any discussion can take place. No discussion about candidates take place outside the meeting.

These meetings are typically held in Term B, after significant study of the candidate's material and letters of appraisal, as well as contributions from the Nominator and Advocate. The meeting for each candidate is typically an hour. By the end of a meeting, if any COAP member is not yet ready to vote, then another meeting is scheduled to continue the discussion before a vote on that candidate.

The meetings start with a reminder by the chair about confidentiality, the guidelines for the meeting, and the criteria for promotion in the Faculty Handbook. WPI endorses an inclusive definition of scholarship, and scholarly contributions may combine or cut across traditional categories of teaching, scholarship and service. The assessment of quality and impact may be based on any and all material in the promotion dossier.

The committee will discuss of the candidate's record in teaching, scholarship and service. Even if the record in one area appears clear—whether very strong or very weak—the committee will still discuss the strengths and weaknesses that may affect the committee's recommendation. Each committee member is encouraged to point out what he or she considers to be significant in the dossier. However, as the final ballot will be secret, members do not usually make their opinions known.

Once everyone is ready to vote to recommend for or against promotion, a secret ballot is conducted by the six voting members of the joint committee to determine the recommendation to the Provost. The result is a unified recommendation from the committee, regardless of how individual members voted. The Nominator and Advocate are present, and aware of the recommendation, but they do not vote.

When all aspects of the candidate's case have been reviewed, and all the members of the joint committee declare they are ready for a vote, the six voting members vote, one at a time, privately. The ballots are small sheets of paper with two letters on the sheet, an "N" and a "Y". Each voter circles his or her vote and places the ballot into an envelope. Once voting is completed, the secretary collects and counts the secret ballots. Once 3 negative ballots or 4 positive ballots are counted, the process is terminated. The result (either 3 negative or 4 positive ballots) is displayed to the committee. All ballots (seen and unseen) are destroyed by the secretary.

A letter to the Provost is prepared that states the Joint Committee's recommendation. This unitary recommendation for or against promotion comes from the whole committee, and all members of the joint committee sign the document. The letter discusses the strengths and weaknesses of the candidate in regard to the promotion criteria as its salient reasons for the committee's recommendation. This information is delivered to the Provost and to the appropriate Dean. The Provost reviews each case and consults with the Dean and the President. The Provost's decision to recommend the candidate to the Board of Trustees for promotion is at the sole discretion of the Provost.

After the committee has conveyed all recommendations regarding promotion to the Provost, the Provost may ask to meet with the Joint Committee to discuss any of its recommendations, and must meet with the Joint Committee in the case of potential disagreement. Lastly, the Provost sends to the Board of Trustees the names of candidates for whom promotion is recommended. The Provost will inform the candidate of the Board's decision.

In the event of a negative decision on promotion, a joint letter to the candidate discussing the strengths and weaknesses of the case for promotion will be written by the Joint Promotion Committee, the Dean, and the Provost. The purpose of this letter is to provide constructive advice to the candidate so that they may address any deficiencies and resubmit the case for promotion consideration in the future. The candidate may meet with the Provost, Dean, or the Nominator to discuss this letter.

Last revised: 6/27/2017