

## WPI Faculty Handbook: Chapter Three - Tenure

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## Chapter Three - Tenure

As a consequence of the primary obligation of members of the academic community to pursue truth, the tenure concept has evolved for the protection of individuals from internal and external community pressures.

### 1. Eligibility and Conditions For Tenure, Probationary Periods, and Mandatory Tenure Reviews

Tenure will be granted only in one of the following manners:

- With respect to probationary tenure-track faculty members, and with respect to candidates for initial appointment with tenure who undergo a formal review conducted by the Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom (CTAF), with the results communicated to the Provost, and after a positive vote by the Board of Trustees.
- With respect to candidates for initial appointment-with-tenure who do not undergo review by the Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom (CTAF), after a positive vote by the Board of Trustees.

Only full time tenure-track faculty members are eligible for tenure.

The probationary period of a tenure-track faculty member refers to the total time served at WPI as a tenure-track faculty member regardless of whether the tenure clock is running or is stopped, including time served during the academic year of the tenure review. (For more detail on the tenure clock, see Section 2.)

Each Assistant Professor and Assistant Professor of Teaching receives a combined review for tenure and promotion to the associate rank in their respective tracks. This is because the tenure criteria in each track are the same as the criteria for promotion to the associate rank in the corresponding track (see Chapter Four: Promotions, Section 1.a.i).

A mandatory tenure review is conducted for all tenure-track probationary faculty members in the academic year immediately after they have accumulated five years on the tenure clock (unless early tenure was previously granted following the early tenure process described in Section 2.c). As a result of the mandatory tenure review, either tenure (and, in the cases of assistant professors and assistant professors of teaching, promotion to the corresponding associate rank) will be granted or a terminal appointment will be offered for only one additional academic year beyond the academic year of the tenure review.

Normally the mandatory tenure review will occur during the sixth year of the probationary period, but it may be scheduled sooner in the probationary period because of credit granted on the tenure clock for previous full time service at the assistant rank or higher at WPI or at other academic institutions at the time of the initial probationary appointment, or it may be scheduled later in the probationary period if the tenure clock is stopped during the probationary period.

The minimum and maximum durations of probationary appointments prior to tenure reviews are set as follows:

- The minimum time served on a probationary appointment at the assistant rank in either the dual-mission or teaching-mission tenure track prior to the tenure review is three years because Assistant Professors and Assistant Professors of Teaching each receive a combined tenure and promotion review and must have completed at least three years in the same track prior to review for promotion to the associate rank (see Chapter Four: Promotions, Section 1.a.i).
- The minimum time served on a probationary appointment at the associate or full rank in either the dual-mission or teaching-mission tenure track prior to tenure review is two years because no probationary faculty member may serve less than two years on the tenure clock prior to tenure review.
- The maximum time served on a probationary appointment for all faculty members is limited by the requirement that the mandatory tenure review must be conducted in the academic year immediately after five years have been accumulated on the tenure clock. The probationary appointment continues for one additional year during the academic year of the mandatory tenure review.

The number of years credited on the tenure clock and the academic year of the scheduled mandatory tenure review accounting for all time credited on the tenure clock must be specified in the letter of the initial tenure-track appointment, and it must be in the possession of both WPI and the faculty member before the appointment is consummated (see Chapter Two: Academic Appointments, Section 3.a.i).

## **2. The Tenure Clock**

The tenure clock measures the five years that must be accumulated prior to the academic year of the mandatory tenure review. Time is accumulated on the tenure clock in only two ways: through actual time served as a tenure-track faculty member at WPI while the tenure clock is running; and through time credited on the tenure clock at the time of the initial tenure-track probationary appointment.

### **a. Starting and Running the Tenure Clock**

A tenure-track faculty member's tenure clock begins running on the July 1 closest to the starting date of the initial probationary appointment, and normally runs

continuously from its starting moment, except as noted in the following section under conditions for stopping the tenure clock.

At the time of the initial probationary appointment, credit may be given on the tenure clock for previous full-time service at the assistant rank or higher at WPI or at other academic institutions.

For consistency with the minimum duration of probationary periods permitted prior to tenure review (as described in Chapter Two: Academic Appointments, Section 3.a.i), probationary faculty members at the assistant rank in either tenure track may be given no more than two years of credit on the tenure clock at the time of the initial probationary appointment, and probationary faculty members at the associate or full rank in either tenure track may be given no more than three years of credit on the tenure clock at the time of the initial probationary appointment.

## **b. Stopping the Tenure Clock**

The tenure clock may be stopped during the probationary period prior to the academic year of the mandatory tenure review. The number of years served in the probationary period will exceed the number of years accumulated on the tenure clock while at WPI if the tenure clock is stopped during the probationary period.

Anytime the tenure clock is stopped, the Provost must send a letter to the faculty member indicating the academic year of the latest clock-stoppage and the new date of the mandatory tenure review. This information should also be included in the next reappointment letter (see Chapter Two: Academic Appointments, Section 3.a.i).

Specifically, the tenure clock may be stopped according to either the New Child Provision or for Unpaid Leaves and Part-Time Employment, as described below:

### **i. New Child Provision**

Tenure-track faculty members who undertake significant childcare responsibilities due to the arrival of a biological or adopted child during their probationary appointment are entitled to stop the tenure clock for one year, thus postponing the mandatory tenure review and the academic year in which the tenure decision will be made. The stopping of the tenure clock will be automatically granted by the Provost upon written notification by the faculty member. Procedure Notification to stop the tenure clock must be submitted to the Provost in writing. A copy of the notification must also be sent to the appropriate Dean and Department Head. For a biological child, the notification may be made as early as the second trimester of pregnancy but no later than six months after the birth of the child. For an adopted child, the notification may be made as early as the date that the child is legally placed in the home and no later than six months after the child's arrival at the adoptive home. If the birth or adoption of a child occurs during the academic year prior to the

faculty member's scheduled tenure review, then the notification must be submitted by January 15 of the academic year prior to the scheduled tenure review. The Provost will acknowledge the notification within two weeks, and will state the academic year in which the tenure review will occur. The Provost's communication will be copied to the faculty member's Dean and Department Head and to CTAF.

## ii. Unpaid Leaves and Part-Time Employment

Tenure-track faculty members are entitled to stop the tenure clock for unpaid full-time leaves or for intervals of part-time employment during which the faculty member's activity is at or below the half-time level. The need for such unpaid leaves or part-time intervals may arise from a variety of situations, including but not limited to parenting, extenuating circumstances related to a personal or family members' health, personal relations within a family which impose special or arduous burdens, or for other reasons as may be provided for in the "Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993." The terms and conditions of the leave are arranged by negotiation between the faculty member and the Provost. It is also understood that the leave or part-time interval is not to be imposed by the Administration, but that it is available at the election of the faculty member. (Exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom.) The following table gives the time intervals for which the tenure clock is stopped for these two types of leave.

Type of Leave	Duration	Period for which Tenure Clock is Stopped
Unpaid Full-time Leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less than 6 months</li> <li>• 6 to 18 months</li> <li>• More than 18 months</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not stopped</li> <li>• One year</li> <li>• Two years</li> </ul>
Half-time Activity Interval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less than 12 months</li> <li>• 12-24 months</li> <li>• More than 24 months</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not stopped</li> <li>• One year</li> <li>• Two years</li> </ul>

## iii. Effect on Tenure Review

The tenure review of a faculty member who has exercised their entitlement to stop the tenure clock will be conducted under the same criteria for tenure as a candidate who has not stopped the tenure clock.

### **c. Early Tenure Review Prior to the Scheduled Tenure Review**

The policy of the Faculty toward early tenure review is that it should be conducted only if there has been some special or significant contribution by the nominee to WPI or to the nominee's Department, or if the academic freedom of the nominee is in serious jeopardy.

#### **i. Early Tenure Review for Special or Significant Contributions by the Faculty Member**

In this case, CTAF shall oversee the tenure review of those faculty members who are on the tenure track at WPI and have been nominated for tenure by any voting faculty member consistent with the minimum time that must be served on a probationary appointment prior to the tenure review described in Chapter Two: Academic Appointments, Section 3.a.i and in Chapter Three: Tenure, Section 1). Notification of these early tenure nominations are due in the Faculty Governance Office by April 15 for review during the following academic year, with a copy submitted to the Secretary of the Faculty.

The special or significant contributions by the nominee must be explicitly documented in a separate detailed letter written by the nominator and included in the materials to be reviewed by the Joint Tenure Committee in the case.

In these cases, the normal tenure review procedures will be followed and the recommendation shall be that tenure (and, in the cases of assistant professors and assistant professors of teaching, promotion to the corresponding associate rank) be granted or that the nomination be tabled. If tenure is recommended, the Provost is notified by the method used in regular tenure reviews. If the nomination is tabled, the Provost is not notified and the nominee is notified in writing by the CTAF member who served as the Chair of the Joint Tenure Committee for the case.

#### **ii. Early Tenure Review when the Academic Freedom of the Faculty Member is in Serious Jeopardy**

(Amended by the Faculty, *March 13, 2024*)

CTAF has the responsibility of reviewing problems involving the academic freedom of all faculty members - whether they are tenured, non-tenured, full-time, or part-time. In cases where faculty members allege that their academic freedom has been violated, the Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom shall follow the process described in Chapter Five: Faculty Grievance Procedures, Section 1.

In the event that CTAF determines that the academic freedom of a tenure-track faculty member is in serious jeopardy and is unsuccessful in the resolution of such problems, the committee shall invite the faculty member to apply for tenure and shall in any case recommend tenure (and, in the cases of assistant professors and

assistant professors of teaching, promotion to the corresponding associate rank) only when there is good evidence that the nominee would eventually be tenured by the normal procedure. Otherwise, the case is tabled and the faculty member is notified personally by the Chair of CTAF.

At the start of any such tenure case, CTAF shall consider whether any of its members or any members of the Department Tenure Committee should be recused due to direct conflict of interest. If a CTAF or DTC member is recused, that member either will be replaced in a manner determined by CTAF or the review will proceed with the remaining members. The procedures otherwise to be followed in the tenure review and the granting of tenure (and, in the cases of assistant professors and assistant professors of teaching, promotion to the corresponding associate rank) will be, to the extent possible without exposing the faculty member to further jeopardy, those followed in a normal tenure case, including promotion to the associate rank when the faculty member is at the assistant rank.

### **3. The Tenure Criteria**

#### **a. Tenure Criteria for Associate and (full) Professors**

(Approved by the Faculty, *October 13, 1988*)

(Amended by the Faculty, *March 24, 2011*)

1. High quality teaching (undergraduate and/or graduate) is an essential (but not sufficient) requirement for obtaining tenure at WPI. The candidate's activities should demonstrate the capacity for continued high quality performance. High quality teaching can be evidenced in many ways, including (but not limited to): course evaluations; faculty peer evaluations; evaluations by alumni; the quality of the Major Qualifying Projects, Interactive Qualifying Projects, and the Humanities Inquiry Seminar or Practicum; freshman advising, academic advising and graduate theses advised by the candidate; teaching innovations; new course introductions; and redesign of existing courses.
2. High quality scholarship is an essential (but not sufficient) requirement for obtaining tenure at WPI. The candidate's activities should demonstrate the capacity for continued high quality performance. High quality scholarship can be evidenced in many ways, including (but not limited to): peer-reviewed publications such as journal articles, conference papers, and/or book chapters; books; exhibitions, and performances; professional awards; citations in the professional literature; presentations at professional meetings; grant proposals and grants awarded; offices held in professional societies; journal editorships; reviews of papers and proposals; and patents.
3. Service is valued and considered in the tenure deliberations at WPI. Service can be evidenced in many ways, including (but not limited to): service to WPI (fac-

ulty governance and ad-hoc committees, assistance to administrative offices); service to the candidate's department (curriculum committees, MQP area coordinators, faculty recruitment, seminar series participation and coordination), service to the local community (board and committee membership in social service and cultural institutions, local government participation); and service to the profession (participation in national and international committees and panels, in local chapters of professional societies, in conference organization).

## **b. Tenure Criteria for Associate and (full) Professors of Teaching**

(Approved by the Faculty, *January 28, 2021*)

### *Preamble:*

The mission and distinctiveness of WPI depends on the essential contributions of teaching-intensive faculty members who continuously innovate and improve upon our student-centered educational programs and practices. In part, WPI recognizes the long-term value of these faculty members through a category of tenured and tenure-track teaching-intensive Professors of Teaching, thus providing these faculty members with the highest level of academic freedom and institutional commitment. These positions are part of WPI's broader commitment to inclusive excellence and development and retention of faculty talent aligned with WPI's institutional mission.

### *Criteria:*

Assistant, Associate, and Full Professors of Teaching are expected primarily to contribute to the teaching mission<sup>1</sup> of WPI. Therefore the tenure criteria for these faculty members are focused on the quality of their teaching, their broader contributions to WPI's overall teaching mission, and their demonstrated and potential contributions to a broader community of educators, practitioners, and/or scholars within or beyond WPI, especially when it clearly enhances the effectiveness of the candidate's teaching and/or furthers a general understanding of effective teaching practices. Consideration is also given to each candidate's level of active engagement with and service to WPI and/or the broader professional communities. The candidate's activities should demonstrate the capacity for continued excellent performance.

Professors of Teaching are expected to contribute in three categories: teaching practice; continuing professional growth and currency; and service. These categories are defined below.

*Teaching Practice:* Excellent undergraduate and/or graduate teaching - whether it is delivered in the classroom, through project advising, or via online or blended courses

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<sup>1</sup>The WPI teaching mission is distinguished by inquiry-based learning, open-ended problem solving, and integrative and interdisciplinary thinking. A WPI education balances personal responsibility with cooperation, collaboration, and mutual respect, and encourages critical reflection, sound decision making, and personal growth. WPI prepares its graduates broadly to lead fulfilling lives as responsible professionals, informed community members, and ethical citizens.

- is a necessary but not sufficient requirement for obtaining tenure as a Professor of Teaching at WPI. Teaching practice is excellent when it is of high quality and has significant impact on WPI students and curriculum.

In any teaching setting, faculty members must communicate in compelling ways that demonstrably enhance the educational growth of their students. Effective teachers develop students as creative thinkers, life-long learners, and effective communicators able to use evidence with logic, clarity, and persuasion. Effective teachers draw on many skills to support student learning that may include but are not limited to the following (as needed):

- Expertise in and enthusiasm for the subjects taught and projects advised;
- Clear and effective communication of concepts and material taught;
- Awareness of the strengths, weaknesses, and educational needs of their students;
- Development of general strategies for the successful educational advancement of all students;
- Ability to make suitable adjustments to content, organization, and pacing of course and project work to support student learning and engagement;
- Development of inclusive strategies that ensure the success of a more diverse student population;
- Devotion to personalized professional mentorship of students and/or advisees, including as Insight and academic advisors.

*Continuing Professional Growth and Currency:* Continuing professional growth and currency is a necessary but not sufficient requirement for obtaining tenure as a Teaching Professor at WPI. Professional growth refers to developing knowledge, acquiring skills, and/or accumulating experiences that enhance WPI's educational mission and visibility. Currency refers to making intellectual contributions to and remaining active in professional communities both within and beyond WPI.<sup>2</sup>

Professors of Teaching are committed to meaningful professional growth and currency that has significant impact on teaching and learning networks and support systems, on approaches to and understanding of teaching and learning, and/or on one's own scholarly discipline and/or scholarly communities.

Professors of Teaching seek opportunities for ongoing professional growth and currency, especially in ways that inform their own teaching experiments and innovations and disseminate this knowledge to others within and outside of WPI. Professional growth and currency for these purposes takes on many forms that may include but are not limited to the following (as appropriate):

- Assessing and improving courses, projects, curricula, and pedagogy, and sharing their own pedagogical and scholarly discoveries as these emerge;

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<sup>2</sup>Currency is not defined by any product or artifact, including peer reviewed journal articles or extramural funding.

- Questioning existing teaching boundaries and experimenting with ideas that overcome the constraints of current teaching practice;
- Remaining active as scholars through the scholarship of discovery, teaching and learning, integration, application and practice, or engagement;
- Continuing to learn about developments in the field of education to enhance their practice of teaching and educating others of their innovations within and/or outside of WPI;
- Remaining current in their disciplines and incorporating recent developments in the field into their course teaching and project advising;
- Understanding student learning and developing creative new approaches to teaching when needed to improve student learning;

*Service:* Service is a necessary but not sufficient requirement for obtaining tenure as a Professor of Teaching at WPI. The institution flourishes when faculty members are fully engaged not only in their classrooms and project advising but also in the lives of the institution, the local community, and professional organizations. Effective faculty members exploit opportunities to contribute to these various communities.

### **c. Guidance for Documenting and Assessing Activities Toward Tenure for Professors of Teaching**

(Approved by the Faculty, *January 28, 2021*)

*For Documentation and Assessment of Teaching Practice:* When reviewed for tenure, each candidate is expected to submit a teaching portfolio that best demonstrates excellent teaching as measured by the quality and impact of their teaching skills and activities. The teaching portfolio typically includes a thoughtful statement about the candidate's teaching practices, accomplishments, and approach, as well as sample materials that demonstrates teaching quality and impact.

Teaching activities may include but are not limited to the following:

- Courses delivered, designed, and/or redesigned in any format for undergraduate, graduate, or continuing education students;
- Major Qualifying Projects, Interactive Qualifying Projects, and HUA Inquiry Seminars and Practicums advised or co-advised;
- Dissertations, theses, and research projects advised and co-advised;
- Independent studies supervised;
- Project centers developed, directed, or co-directed;
- Students and research trainees advised or mentored.

The quality of each candidate's teaching activities will be assessed for supporting evidence such as - but not limited to - the following:

- Course and project goals that are clear and appropriately challenging, and content that is appropriate to the goals;

- Course activities that are well planned and reflect an effective approach to helping students learn;
- Experiments with new pedagogical techniques;
- Modifications to existing courses based on well-grounded rationale;
- Efforts to support the success of diverse students and students with a range of learning styles;
- Statements and self-reflections demonstrating how one's learning design is grounded in current educational research;
- Use of feedback from students and faculty peers;
- Leadership demonstrated at project centers.

The impact of each candidate's teaching activities on students, on curriculum, and on teaching practice (through one's own teaching practices and/or those of their WPI colleagues or their department) will be assessed for supporting evidence such as - but not limited to - the following:

- Student learning outcomes assessment, student engagement, program outcomes, student well-being, and other measures of student success;
- Changes in program curriculum;
- Assessments demonstrating that course, project or program improvements have led to gains in student learning in the short term and/or over time;
- Influence on faculty peers (evidenced in the form of letters and/or rubrics, including from project co-advisors);
- Student reflections on their experiences in MQPs, IQPs, and HUA Inquiry Seminars and Practicums;
- Student reflections on their experiences in dissertation, thesis, or research projects;
- Feedback from project sponsors;
- Relevant awards, honors, or positive media coverage;
- Evaluations by students (through student course evaluations and surveys of former students).

*For Documentation and Assessment of Continuing Professional Growth and Currency:* When reviewed for tenure, each candidate is expected to submit materials that best demonstrate their commitment to and the impact of their continuing professional growth and currency, including how it enhances the effectiveness of the candidate's teaching and/or furthers a general understanding of effective teaching practices.

Commitment to continuing professional growth and currency can be documented in a combination of many ways that may include but are not limited to engaging in the following activities:

- Leadership by example, through continued innovation in approach and enhancement of one's own teaching methods;

- Teaching collaborations with other faculty members, particularly in new approaches, areas, or pedagogies;
- Development of methods of assessment that better measure educational outcomes;
- Record of active scholarship (of Discovery, Teaching and Learning, Integration, Application and Practice, or Engagement);
- Research collaborations with other faculty members, including those regarding teaching practices, theories, or outcomes;
- Involvement in professional and academic creative output, inclusive of performance, visual, and written art forms;
- Organizing and/or participating in teaching institutes, professional workshops, or professional conferences;
- Proposals submitted and grants awarded for funding related to teaching improvements or experiments, scholarship, or fellowships;
- Participation as a mentor in programs within or outside of WPI;
- Participation in competitive external professional development programs;
- Service as a reviewer on national, regional, or local grants panels;
- Completion of professional short courses;
- Earned professional certifications.

The impact of professional growth and currency may be on approaches to and understanding of teaching and learning, on teaching and learning networks and support systems (through delivery of workshops, seminars, mentorship, training; involvement in communities of practice, etc.); or on one's own scholarly discipline and/or scholarly communities. Such impact can be documented in a combination of many ways that may include but are not limited to the following:

- New courses, curricula and/or academic programs based on emerging new fields, topics of contemporary relevance and/or interdisciplinary connections between emerging and/or existing areas (including data on enrollments and students positively affected);
- Significant revisions to existing curricula and/or academic programs based on the changing content of a disciplinary field, the emergence of a new field, and/or interdisciplinary connections between emerging and/or existing areas that had not previously been available to WPI students (including data on enrollments and students positively affected);
- Demonstrably effective new or improved techniques or strategies to engage students in the classroom, via online delivery, or project advising;
- Dissemination of new or improved teaching approaches, techniques and strategies to colleagues at WPI and beyond;
- Adaptation of approaches, techniques, and strategies by other faculty members, programs, and institutions;
- Feedback on teaching innovations from faculty peers.

- Feedback on scholarship from peers in the scholarly community and/or beneficiaries of the scholarly work.
- Invited keynotes and other invitations to speak or share teaching materials or scholarly work personally or in a public venue, conference, or workshop;
- Relevant awards, honors, or positive media coverage.

*For Documentation and Assessment of Service:* Commitment to service can be documented in many ways, including but not limited to engagement in some of the following activities:

- Service to WPI (faculty governance and ad-hoc committees, assistance to administrative offices);
- Service to the candidate's department (curriculum committees, MQP area coordinators, faculty recruitment, seminar series participation and coordination);
- Service to the local community (board and committee membership in social service and cultural institutions, local government participation);
- Service to the profession (participation in national and international committees and panels, in local chapters of professional societies, in conference organization).

## 4. Department Tenure Committees

Each Department Tenure Committee (DTC) shall be composed of the Department Head and two tenured faculty members of the department. The elected DTC members will be nominated and elected by secret ballot by the voting faculty members in the department for terms of two years each with one DTC member being elected each year, after the first year. The Chair of each Department Tenure Committee shall be the elected member whose term of office expires in June of the current academic year. No DTC member may serve two consecutive terms, unless the limited number of department faculty members with tenure makes this restriction impossible. No member of CTAF may serve on a Department Tenure Committee.

## 5. Joint Tenure Committees

For the purpose of considering each tenure case, a Joint Tenure Committee (JTC) is formed, consisting of five members from CTAF and the three-member Department Tenure Committee. The Joint Tenure Committee is chaired by the senior elected member of the five CTAF participants.

If the tenure 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 Tenure Committee shall also consider whether any of its members should be recused due to direct conflict of interest. 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.

In the event of no departmental overlap or conflict of interest, the selection of the five CTAF members to sit on Joint Tenure Committees 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 a member of the Joint Tenure Committee must resign, a replacement shall be selected to fill the unexpired term in the manner prescribed above as though the member were recused.

In the cases of tenure candidates who have, or have had, interdepartmental affiliations to such an extent that CTAF determines it appropriate to have special composition of the Joint Tenure Committee, CTAF will name, after investigation of the circumstances, an Interdepartmental Tenure Committee in place of the Department Tenure Committee, and will specify the voting rules of this body (see Section 6).

In the event that a Department has only one tenured faculty member and a Department Head, to staff the Joint Tenure Committee, then CTAF will appoint another WPI tenured faculty member to serve on the Joint Tenure Committee, thereby bringing the membership of that Committee to eight. In the event that a Department has no tenured faculty members, in addition to the Department Head, to staff the Joint Tenure Committee, then the Joint Tenure Committee shall have only six members, the five members of CTAF and the Department Head. If tenure for a Department Head is under consideration, the appropriate Dean will sit in place of that Department Head.

## **6. Joint Tenure Committees for Interdisciplinary Candidates**

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 for the purpose of participating as members of the Joint Tenure Committee shall be modified to an Interdepartmental Tenure Committee as follows:

In the cases of tenure candidates who have, or have had, interdepartmental affiliations to such an extent that CTAF determines it appropriate to have special composition of the Joint Tenure Committee, CTAF will name, after investigation of the circumstances, an Interdepartmental Tenure Committee in place of the Department Tenure Committee on the Joint Tenure Committee. In the selection of the Interdepartmental Tenure Committee membership, the candidate's own preference will be solicited and considered, but determination of the membership will be the responsibility of CTAF. Both the membership of the Interdepartmental Tenure Committee and the voting rules for the Interdepartmental Tenure Committee on the Joint Tenure Committee

will be determined by CTAF consistent with the guidelines provided below. These decisions will be made by CTAF as early as practicable in the academic year prior to the academic year of the Joint Tenure Committee's tenure review of the case. The composition and roles in each such case will be reported to the candidate and to the Faculties of the candidate's departments.

Guidelines for the membership and voting rules of the Interdepartmental Tenure Committee on the Joint Tenure Committee are as follows: Except in those circumstances that preclude it, the total number of votes on the Joint Tenure Committee by the Interdepartmental Tenure Committee will be three. Two of these will be cast by two tenured faculty members who would normally be selected from each of the two Department Tenure Committees. The Heads of both departments will participate in the deliberations of the Joint Tenure Committee, and will provide the third vote (such as by one or the other being designated the voting member, or by the two department heads sharing the vote.)

## 7. Tenure Procedures

### a. General Overview

The WPI Faculty, through its Bylaws, has given to the Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom the authority and responsibility to oversee tenure recommendations to the Provost. Joint Tenure Committees, comprised of CTAF members and Department Tenure Committees as specified above (see Section 5), shall recommend to the Provost which members of the Faculty should be granted tenure or denied tenure, according to the policy and procedures on conducting tenure reviews and the granting of tenure and promotion.

The recommendation for or against tenure is a major decision point in an individual's life. Recognizing this, the Joint Tenure Committee utilizes operating procedures that protect the welfare of the individual under consideration. To that end the operating procedures are based on these criteria:

1. *A Complete Background Study:* The Joint Tenure Committee collects as much information as possible relative to the candidate's nomination from colleagues, students, alumni, and professional peers.
2. *Confidentiality:* The welfare of the candidate must be protected by all parties by observing strict rules of confidentiality concerning all phases of the tenure deliberation process.
3. *Unitary Recommendation:* The Joint Tenure Committee forwards to the Provost a unitary recommendation for or against tenure (and, in the cases of Assistant Professors and Assistant Professors of Teaching, for and against promotion to the corresponding associate rank); the recommendation contains no minority opinion, and does not attempt to weigh all the factors that were considered dur-

ing the deliberations. The purpose of this policy is to prevent the development of a class system of tenure.

4. *Shared Authority:* The WPI Faculty Constitution is based on a condition of shared authority among the Faculty, Administrative Officers, and the Board of Trustees.

For candidates who are Assistant Professors, each recommendation is either for tenure with promotion to Associate Professor or against tenure and against promotion. For candidates who are Assistant Professors of Teaching, each recommendation is either for tenure with promotion to Associate Professor of Teaching or against tenure and against promotion. For candidates who are either Associate Professors, Associate Professors of Teaching, Professors, or Professors of Teaching, each recommendation is for or against tenure with no consideration given to promotion.

If tenure is denied, then a terminal appointment will be offered for only one additional academic year beyond the academic year of the tenure review (see Chapter Three: Academic Appointments, Section 3.a.iii). In rare instances, Joint Tenure Committees may also review tenure-track faculty members for early tenure for reasons described in Section 2.c.

#### **b. Procedures for Tenure Reviews, Recommendations, Final Decisions, and Appeals**

By April 15th each year, the Provost shall provide to the Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom a list of tenure-track faculty members with their exact titles, department and/or program affiliations, and the academic year of their mandatory tenure reviews. This list shall be updated annually to reflect all changes due to tenure clock stoppages within the previous year and circulated to the Faculty.

The Committee shall then write to those candidates scheduled for mandatory tenure review or nominated for early tenure review in the ensuing year asking for information on which to base its review of the candidate's credentials. Among the items asked for are 1) a list of professional references, 2) a current curriculum vitae, and 3) copies of professional work. This information is due in June at a date set by CTAF, prior to the academic year of the tenure review.

The Joint Tenure Committee develops a list of external references to evaluate the candidate, solicits alumni and student evaluations, and other such evaluations as it deems appropriate to arrive at a fair and equitable evaluation of the candidate.

In A-term and B-term of the tenure review year, the Joint Tenure Committee meets to consider the candidate. All eight members of the Joint Tenure Committee must be present to conduct tenure deliberations.

When all the members of the Joint Tenure Committee agree that there has been

sufficient discussion, a vote is taken by the committee to recommend for or against tenure by means of a secret ballot (with no abstentions). A majority in favor of tenure is required for the Joint Tenure Committee to recommend the candidate for tenure.

For candidates who are Assistant Professors, each recommendation is either for tenure with promotion to Associate Professor or against tenure and against promotion. For candidates who are Assistant Professors of Teaching, each recommendation is either for tenure with promotion to Associate Professor of Teaching or against tenure and against promotion. For candidates who are either Associate Professors, Associate Professors of Teaching, Professors, or Professors of Teaching, each recommendation is for or against tenure with no consideration given to promotion.

If the vote is favorable, a unitary statement about some of the salient reasons for recommending tenure (and, in the cases of Assistant Professors and Assistant Professors of Teaching, recommending promotion to the corresponding associate rank) is prepared by the Department Head, signed by all members of the Joint Tenure Committee, and sent to the Provost. If it is voted to recommend against tenure for the candidate, then a unitary statement of the reasons for the denial is prepared by the Department Head, signed by all members of the Joint Tenure Committee, and sent to the Provost. The Joint Tenure Committee forwards its written recommendations to the Provost by the end of B-term.

The Provost reviews each case and consults with the appropriate Dean and the President. Department Heads and any Deans who might act as a Department Head in a particular case are restricted to their participation on the Joint Tenure Committee only.

Subsequently, the Provost may ask to meet with the Joint Tenure Committee to discuss its recommendation, and the Provost must meet with the Joint Tenure Committee in the case of a disagreement between the Joint Tenure Committee and the Provost. While it is the responsibility of the Provost to make recommendations for tenure to the Board of Trustees, as a consequence of the criterion of Shared Authority (described in Section 7.a above), final disagreements between the Joint Tenure Committees and the Provost are expected to be rare.

Lastly, the Provost sends to the Board of Trustees only the names of those candidates for whom the Provost recommends that tenure (and corresponding promotion to associate rank for candidates at the assistant rank) be granted. The Board votes on the Provost's positive tenure recommendations.

Regardless of the outcome of this process, the candidate is notified by the Provost of the final tenure decision at a time deemed suitable by the Provost.

If a candidate for tenure wishes to appeal a negative decision, faculty grievance procedures are available to the extent provided by the Procedure for Complaints

of Academic Freedom Violations (see Chapter Five: Faculty Grievance Procedures, Section 1; and Chapter One: Governance, Bylaw Three, Section II) and by the Faculty Grievance Procedure (see Chapter Five: Faculty Grievance Procedures, Section 2; and Chapter One: Governance, Bylaw Three, Section IX).