APAFT Committee Final Report
2022-2023

The 2022-2023 Appointment, Promotion, Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee (APAFT) was assigned nine charges by The Executive Committee and Faculty Senate. Subcommittee members worked throughout the academic year and the entire committee met monthly to complete charges and other duties. A summary of the committee's activities is included below.

2022-2023   Charges and Outcomes

1. Ensure that the language of new or updated documents are inclusive. As issues are identified, consult with EDI committee for guidance. (Ongoing)

APAFT committee members considered this charge with every discussion. All new and edited language was reviewed for inclusivity. Per discussion with Stephanie Hollist, J.D., there is also a new member of University Legal Counsel who will be reviewing the PPM for inclusive language.

2. In coordination with University Legal Counsel, finalize recommendations regarding policies 9-9, 9-11, 9-14, and 9-15, for accuracy, clarity and consistency.

Action Taken: It was noted that this charge is connected with other charges and action items to PPM 9 that date back over the past two years. These items have been under review by University Legal Counsel and were shared with APAFT in April which did not allow adequate time for review and discussion.

Revisions to 9-7 and 9-8 were noted to be ready to move forward, and they were approved by APAFT, Executive Committee, and Faculty Senate. PPM 9-7 clarifies faculty responsibilities regarding on-campus, off-campus and virtual activities and adds policy cross-references. 9-8 clarifies faculty responsibilities as citizens, including the applicability of policies and laws. These revisions were approved by APAFT, Executive Committee, and Faculty Senate.

Committee Recommendation: APAFT and University Legal Counsel recommend this charge continue as a priority for the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year.

3. Explore policy concerning external reviewers for tenure and promotion. (Benchmark peer institutions)

Policy Overview: The subcommittee explored the policy and procedure documents from designated WSU peer institutions (e.g., Boise State University, Eastern Kentucky University, University of Alaska Anchorage, University of North Florida, etc.) to ascertain use of external reviewers for tenure and promotion. A few peer institutions (e.g., Boise State, Clarion University, Ferris State, Northern Kentucky) noted that letters of support from external references are suitable forms of evidence for promotion and tenure. Only Boise State University (BSU) and University of North Florida (UNF) require the use of external reviewers to more impartially determine the quantity and quality of a candidate's accomplishments relevant to the candidate's field of study (particularly service and scholarship activity). The BSU and UNF policies note that candidates provide department chairs with a list of at least three potential external reviewers with the caveat that the reviewers are not mentors or recent collaborators of the candidates.

Committee Recommendation: The APAFT committee recommends that WSU remains aligned with the majority (80%) of WSU peer institutions and not require the use of external reviewers for tenure and promotion. The committee feels no additional action is need at this time.

4. Review and make recommendations concerning channel values for promotion from *Assistant Professor* to *Full Professor*. Discrepancies remain between the university evaluation channels for rank and college requirements for tenure. PPM 8-11
   a. Two WSU colleges allow granting of tenure with only a *satisfactory* in teaching, which seems inconsistent with WSU emphasis as a teaching institution.

Committee Recommendation: APAFT recommends that colleges continue to be allowed to have channels for tenure that require satisfactory teaching, for the following reasons:
- PPM 8-11 currently has two channels for promotion to associate professor that require only satisfactory teaching. Thus, allowing channels with satisfactory teaching for tenure is consistent.
- Diversity of requirements is already built into PPM 8-11 and college tenure documents. Allowing strength in other areas should be allowed for satisfactory teachers.
- Satisfactory isn't unsatisfactory. With sufficiently high offsetting ratings in scholarship and/or service, a satisfactory teaching rating can be an appropriate qualification for tenure.
- Requiring a minimum teaching evaluation of "good" will likely just inflate teaching ratings
- The Goddard School reports they have a high scholarship requirement because of accreditation. Some faculty opt to focus on scholarship more than faculty without high research requirements. Allowing a satisfactory teaching rating is consistent with AACSB International accreditation expectations. *Note: AACSB International is the premier accreditor of business schools globally.*

b. There is ambiguity in the criteria for evaluating service to the university.

Committee Recommendation: APAFT concurs that language regarding the evaluation of service is vague. However, APAFT does not feel our committee should standardize and dictate this language because colleges and departments best know which service activities matter and how. Therefore, the committee recommends that the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate inform college deans and the provost of the need for each unit to develop clear, consistent service expectations in tenure documents and, where appropriate, in PPM 8-11.

c. Review college-specific requirement for promotion (EAST, Business, Library)

Action Taken: APAFT has been reaching out to college deans regarding updating PPM 8-11 and has received various responses.

Revisions from the Goddard School of Business & Economics and the College of Social & Behavioral Sciences were approved by APAFT, Executive Committee, and Faculty Senate. The revisions updated college and department names and some degree requirements in correlation with the college tenure documents. These updates were moved forward without waiting for other revisions to PP 8-11 due to hiring needs and impending accreditation dates.

Revisions to the College of Engineering, Applied Science & Technology were drafted to update department names and align the degree requirements with the EAST tenure document. Revisions passed in Executive Committee, but were met with opposition in Faculty Senate as some faculty members report they do not support current degree policies in the college document. The PPM revisions did not pass faculty senate.

Revisions to the Library were approved by APAFT, Executive Committee, and Faculty Senate.

Members of APAFT have reached out to faculty in the Dumke College of Health Professions and the Lindquist College of Arts & Humanities to see if there are any needed revisions.

Committee Recommendations: APAFT recommends the discord regarding degree requirement and tenure be first addressed within EAST. We welcome recommendations for revisions with *data demonstrating faculty support* and are happy to move those forward. APAFT recommends continuing this charge to address any needed revisions for the remaining colleges.

5. Make recommendations regarding faculty roles
   a. *Visiting Assistant Professor/Visiting Faculty* – clarify role, language, criteria of relationship with another institution.

Action Taken: Benchmarking was done regarding faculty visiting faculty roles in other institutions. The following revisions were made to PPM 8-6: The definition of Visiting Faculty was expanded to remove the stipulation that the individual had a primary affiliation with another organization i.e. faculty currently retired or not yet otherwise employed. The time limit of 3 years was added to maintain the integrity of the visiting role. A note was made regarding the potential to expand the timeframe in "extraordinary circumstances" with approval of the chair and dean (such as a visitor from a country now at war). This policy was discussed with Executive Committee, and an additional revision was made to clarify that there is no expectation of tenure or rank advancement and the visiting faculty does not have voting rights. These new revisions are currently under review by University Legal Counsel.

Committee Recommendations: Executive Committee may want to consider a new charge to explore pros and cons of granting apportionment and voting to visiting faculty.

      b. Explore tenure track options: i.e. *Assistant Teacher of Practice or Teaching*
      c. Benchmark faculty status between teaching and tenure

Action Taken: These two elements of charge 5 go together and will be moved forward to next year. APAFT was waiting to see movement and feedback on the visiting teaching role and the Senior Instructor position. Further clarification is requested by the subcommittee regarding this charge.

6. Expand and clarify policy language describing faculty sabbaticals in PPM 3-25.

Action Taken: Revisions to PPM 3-25 were made to define and emphasize the value of faculty sabbatical leave. A note was added that a one-course reduction in a tenure-track faculty member's workload may be available to promote scholarly activity before tenure is granted. These revisions were passed by APAFT, Executive Committee, and Faculty Senate.

APAFT benchmarked other universities and identified a variety of sabbatical policies that may be useful to explore and consider. These included a sabbatical rubric, faculty sabbatical review boards, method of appeals for sabbatical denials.

The subcommittee met with Ravi and discussed the value of sabbaticals and more sweeping revisions to the sabbatical policy.

Committee Recommendations: APAFT recommends consideration of more broad revisions to the sabbatical policy such as a development of a decision rubric, faculty sabbatical review board, and a method of appeals for sabbatical denials. This could potentially be explored by an ad hoc committee or the Constitutional Review, Apportionment and Organization (CRAO) Committee.

7. Make recommendations regarding peer review and promotion process
    a. Single letter for rank and tenure

Action Taken: APAFT recommended language be added to PPM sections 8-17 and 8-18 to note that ranking tenure evaluation committees may use a single letter to make recommendations for both tenure and rank advancement. These PPM revisions were approved by Executive Committee and Faculty Senate.

    b. Standardization of peer review process especially for online classes

Action Taken: The subcommittee requested from Oliver Snow, the director of the WSU Online program, suggestions to improve faculty peer reviews for online and hybrid courses. Oliver recommended faculty use the "Tier-Based Course Design" process, recently implemented by WSU Online and based on online best practices, as a means for faculty to identify and suggest effective online practices when providing peer reviews. The tier-based course design process allows faculty to focus a peer review to the design tier most relevant to each individual instructor (Foundational Tier, Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3), and provides evidence-based and cited recommendations to make online course design more manageable for faculty.

Conclusions and Recommendations: APAFT recommends this be shared with the Assessment Committee, Teaching and Learning Committee or other university entity to explore and revise peer review processes. Recommendations to include revisions in the PPM are welcome as they are developed.

    c. Faculty survey: student evaluations, canvas template use, electronic autobiographical form.

Action Taken: The subcommittee contacted Gail Niklason, the Executive Director of the WSU Office of Institutional Effectiveness, to request survey items—measuring faculty satisfaction with student evaluations, the Canvas template, and electronic autobiographical form for tenure and promotion—be added to the 2023 *WSU HERI Faculty Satisfaction Survey*. Quantitative (to rate the level of faculty satisfaction) and qualitative (to obtain open-ended feedback from faculty) survey items for each of the aforementioned areas (SETs, Canvas template, Autobiographical Form) were added to the HERI survey.

Summary Results from Survey:

Student Evaluations of Teaching: 47% of faculty either agreed or strongly agreed that the course evaluation instrument provides useful feedback (29% neutral; 24% disagreed or strongly disagreed).

Explorance Blue Platform: 38% of faculty either agreed or strongly agreed that *Blue* is a useful way to deliver student evaluations (45% neutral; 17% disagreed or strongly disagreed).

Autobiographical Form: 55% of faculty were somewhat or very satisfied with the current *Autobiographical Form* (37% neutral; 9% dissatisfied or very dissatisfied).

Canvas Rank & Tenure Template: 55% of faculty were satisfied or very satisfied with the *Canvas Rank and Tenure Template* (39% neutral; 6% dissatisfied or very dissatisfied).

Conclusions & Recommendations:

Given that the majority of faculty respondents were satisfied with the current *Autobiographical Form* (55%) and *Canvas Rank and Tenure Template* (55%) used by the University—with less than 9% dissatisfied with either item (the remainder of respondents noted being "Neutral")—APAFT believes that no immediate updates or changes are necessary to these documents.

A plurality of faculty noted that the "new" SET instrument and delivery platform were effective (38% agreed or strongly agreed that *Blue* was effective to deliver evaluations; 47% agreed or strongly agreed that the course evaluation instrument provides useful feedback). **APAFT recommends that a follow-up survey be developed and administered in 2024 to identify specific concerns with the delivery method, course and instructor questions used for student evaluation of teaching.**

8. Align language in faculty board of review (1-13) – coordinate with PPM 9-10

Action: Revisions were made to 1-13, 9-10, and 9-15 and approved by APAFT. The edits remove redundancy and aligned wording with the Utah Government Records Access and Management Act. Per request of University Legal Counsel, this charge is on hold to be combined with Charge 2 since they both address PPM 9.

Committee Recommendation: Finalize recommendations in coordination with other revisions to PPM 9 for accuracy, clarity and consistency.

9. Align PPM 8-8 and 8-24 regarding bringing years of service to tenure track.

Action: Revisions were made to 8-8 and 8-24 to align years of service that count toward both tenure-track appointment and rank at two years. The policies were edited to cross-reference each other, and revisions include a clarification that credit may be given for internal time served as well as service from other accredited institutions. These PPM revisions were approved by Executive Committee and Faculty Senate.

Report submitted by Cynthia Beynon, APAFT Chair 2022-2023

Suggested Charges for 2023-2024

1. Ensure that the language of new or updated documents are inclusive. Review those documents to see how they may inadvertently impact particular communities in an adverse manner. As issues are identified, consult with EDI committee for guidance. (Ongoing)

2. In coordination with University Legal Counsel, finalize recommendations regarding PPM 9 including 9-9, 9-11, 9-14, and 9-15 for accuracy, clarity, and consistency. Add approved revisions to 1-13, 9-10, and 9-15 to these policies.

3. Continue to review college-specific requirements in PPM 8-11 to assure names and requirements are current and consistent with college tenure and promotion document.

4. Continue to benchmark and propose recommendations regarding faculty roles
   a) *Visiting Assistant Professor/Visiting Faculty* – clarify role at the university (apportionment and representation). language, criteria of relationship with another institution.
      Discussion regarding apportionment and voting
   b) *Senior Instructor* – returned from stakeholders with additional questions.
   c) Explore tenure track options: i.e. *Assistant Teacher of Practice or Teaching*

5. APAFT wanted to mention there was another policy revision that addresses the role of Senior Instructor. This policy 8-7 was returned from stakeholders with comments that need to be addressed next year.

A process is needed to follow PPM revisions after they leave APAFT.