

APAFT Committee Final Report  
2021-2022

The 2021-22 Appointment, Promotion, Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee (APAFT) was assigned seven charges by The Executive Committee and Faculty Senate. Additionally, APAFT was asked to discuss and/or make suggestions on several other items. 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 appears below.

### **2021-2022 Charges and Outcomes**

1. Review the WSU tenure and post-tenure documents and ensure that the language of generated policies is inclusive and considers diverse populations. (*Ongoing*)

All new proposed language and all existing language in sections of the Weber State University Policies and Procedures Manual (PPM) reviewed in the process of completing APAFT charges was edited for language inclusivity.

2. Review and recommend revisions to the Deans Evaluation Survey instrument.

APAFT reviewed the 2021 Dean Evaluation Form and suggested numerous changes. Following lengthy discussion, committee member Diana Meiser incorporated additions, subtractions and edits into the final document, which was again reviewed by APAFT and subsequently approved by Executive Committee and Faculty senate. Changes included:

- Adding specificity and clarity to some questions
- Changing language to reflect more clearly that some faculty and staff may not feel they have sufficient experience with their dean to provide an evaluation
- Added questions asking about a dean's commitment to transparency and personnel diversity
- Changed list of five most important items for a dean's success from unordered checkboxes to ranked order
- Edited ratings evaluation terms for consistency
- Replaced binary gendered language with non-gendered alternatives

3. Complete a regional and national benchmark regarding the use of “channels” and external reviewers for tenure and promotion.

An APAFT subcommittee consisting of Afshin Ghoreishi, Cynthia Beynon and Paul Crow looked to Utah System of Higher Education – approved peer institutions and others for benchmarks on these items. Few institutions were found to use WSU’s channel structure for rank (or tenure) evaluations, and most institutions’ criteria were less structured and employed terms more open to broad interpretation. Crow recommends that no further action is needed at this time on the use of channels per se, but acknowledges that issues remain concerning disparities between acceptable ratings combinations in channels for granting tenure between WSU colleges, and between ratings for rank and tenure at the university and college levels (see recommendation below).

On the issue of external reviewers for tenure and promotion, insufficient information was found among peer institutions, but among other regional and national universities, several examples of this requirement were found. It is recommended that discussion continue on this issue.

4. Coordinate with SBBFP to recommend changes to PPM 8.6 to create a new rank that supports promotion of instructors.

After discussion among the full APAFT committee and consultation with Weber State University Legal Counsel, committee member Jim Turner drafted a description for a new *Senior Instructor* position, which could be applied for by a person holding the position of Instructor after six years of cumulative teaching at Weber State University. It was felt this was needed to support retention of valued faculty colleagues teaching in non-tenure track Instructor positions. Evaluation criteria for the promotion and a compensation increase will be determined at the college level. The proposed position was approved by Executive Committee and then by Faculty Senate.

5. Review and consult with ASSA (Admissions, Standards and Student Affairs Committee) to reconcile student code PPM 6-22.5.2.7.13 with PPM 8-11.II.C and other references to frequency of student evaluations.

This charge began as a straightforward proposed language change to reconcile the opportunity for all students to evaluate each of their courses (as stated in the Student Code) with the more limited requirement that tenured faculty need only provide student evaluations from two classes per year in an application for promotion to professor or for performance compensation. The committee noted that since student evaluations moved to the Chi Tester system, all of a faculty member’s courses are currently evaluated but as few as two can be chosen for a promotion application, and it was

unclear what happened to the others. However, discussions within APAFT and with University Legal Counsel led to the recognition of further complexities, including where and how all course evaluations would be archived and who would have access. APAFT recommended to ASSA that for stability and continuity of the archive, evaluations should be stored in the office of the appropriate college dean and, in consultation with University Legal Counsel, the committee recommended that public access be limited because in the unlikely event that a student included identifying information in their course evaluation, the disclosure of the contents of that evaluation could constitute a FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) violation.

6. Review timing of letters, tenure file date gaps and overlap in PPM 8-12 dated guidelines.

APAFT reviewed the dated guidelines for faculty rank and tenure applications in PPM 8-12 and corrected and removed entries to eliminate redundancy and for accuracy and consistency. These proposed changes were approved by the Executive Committee and then by Faculty Senate.

7. In coordination with University Legal Counsel, review and make recommendations regarding policies 9-9 through 9-10, 9-11, 9-14, and 9-15, for clarity and consistency with particular reference to PPM 9-10.II Section H. Faculty Board of Review and the timeframe for operations. (Continuing)

Committee work continued on this charge and progress was made (see attachment below), but continuing questions from APAFT concerning language changes suggested by University Legal Counsel prevented the committee from finalizing new language for section nine of the PPM. It is suggested that this charge continue next year.

8. 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)

As noted in charge one above, all new proposed language and all existing language in sections of the Weber State University Policies and Procedures Manual (PPM) reviewed in the process of completing APAFT charges was edited for language inclusivity.

## Suggested Charges for 2022-2023

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 policies 9-9, 9-11, 9-14, and 9-15, for accuracy, clarity and consistency.
3. Draft policy concerning external reviewers for tenure and promotion.
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. Variations also exist in requirements between colleges (two WSU colleges allow granting of tenure with only a *satisfactory* in teaching, which seems inconsistent with President Mortensen's and others' emphasis on WSU as a teaching institution). Finally, there is ambiguity in the criteria for evaluating service to the university.
5. Review and make suggestions to amend the description of the Visiting Assistant Professor position. The requirement that a Visiting Assistant Professor is required to have a primary relationship with another institution is not reflected in policies of peer and comparable institutions.
6. Expand and clarify policy language describing faculty sabbaticals in PPM 3-25.
7. Explore whether separate letters for rank and tenure are required from department chairs, deans, etc., or whether policy can be amended to allow for a single letter that addresses both tenure and rank.

Report submitted by Paul Crow, APAFT chair 2021-2022.