Over the past three or four decades, the nature and scope of university faculty work has become increasingly complex. Tenure policies have been slow to reflect changes. Evaluation processes also have changed slowly and not always reflected changing expectations. Globalization and commercialization are just two examples of changing faculty expectations and practices that are not clearly delineated in Purdue’s promotion and tenure policy. Interdisciplinary and joint appointments are also a contemporary reality and not addressed in our promotion and tenure policy. In the last decade, many universities have modified policies to extend the probationary period to help untenured faculty members meet the challenges of work life balance (e.g. child birth, parental care, extended illnesses, etc.). More recently, universities have modified the probationary period to account for the time it takes those in some disciplines to demonstrate impact. Medical schools, for example, have led this recent move to extend the tenure clock to nine or 10 years, in part because it takes an average of eight years for most faculty members to land their first R01 award from the National Institutes of Health. At some universities, the time to tenure varies across colleges. Despite the tenure policy reviews undertaken in recent years at most of our peer institutions and the many changes in faculty work life, Purdue has not examined its entire policy since the late 1970’s. It seems more than time to begin this work. We are charging the Provost’s Task Force on Promotion and Tenure to examine the issues below and any other issues deemed relevant to such a review. The goal is to recommend by April 1, 2012, a draft of suggested modifications to Purdue’s Tenure and Promotion policy.

Issues to be considered by the Task Force include:

1) **Impact and how it should be measured** (e.g., citations and h-indices vs. number of publications in high impact journals; licensed technology instead of invention disclosures or both; impact on policy as well as or instead of participation on committees; outcomes of sponsored research instead of or in addition to dollars awarded; success of graduate students instead of or as well as number of graduate students guided to a degree; the number and kind of courses and students taught vs. how creative pedagogy changed the teaching and learning of a discipline, etc).

2) **Time to tenure**: Eliminating the concept of early consideration; using impact instead of time elapsed to determine when one is considered for tenure; reconsidering the six-year timeframe.

3) **Teaching and learning**: How can we better value and evaluate teaching and its effectiveness in promoting learning? Should we explicitly highlight synergy between the discovery and learning missions (e.g., through undergraduate research; development of inquiry-based or authentic research experiences in coursework; more attention to intentional efforts to mentor and develop graduate students, etc.)?

4) **Alternative indicators of impact**: Although peer review is generally required of scholarly products used in evaluating faculty, should we also value reach and exposure beyond scholarly products? How do we value a lecture online that has “gone viral” or an on-line class that attracts thousands of students, or a blog that generates thousands of responses? Do we value contributions of faculty who serve as experts in popular news forums or testify before governing bodies? Do we limit consideration of such impact to those instances when the exposure is
directly related to a peer-reviewed scholarly product or a body of scholarly work?

5) **Post tenure review:** Should we institute post-tenure review, and if so, what form(s)? Should we develop a “ladder” or one or two additional levels for which an external review is performed and additional salary bonuses are offered? Should there at least be an opportunity for periodic reflection on career direction following promotion to professor?

6) **The concept of tenure:** Is it time to reconsider the nature of the tenured faculty position? In its present incarnation, tenured faculty members are expected both to develop new knowledge and disseminate existing knowledge through teaching and engagement, but the current policy only requires excellence in one area. We try to value synergy between these roles, and we expect excellence in research along with teaching and engagement. Is there a need to reconsider how excellence is defined and what categories will be reviewed and how? Or, is there a need to expand our definitions of faculty with more focused roles? Should we be more flexible in terms of leaves and joint appointments across institutions?

7) **Interdisciplinary work and joint appointments:** There are growing numbers of faculty who work at the crossroads between disciplines. Many would contend that the most important problems can only be solved through multiple perspectives focused together on them. Many of our faculty are educated in interdisciplinary ways, and many of our faculty have interdisciplinary affiliations. That was the explicit intent of Discovery Park centers. Despite increasing numbers of calls for interdisciplinary proposals and faculty working in interdisciplinary areas, our promotion and tenure policy does not account for these variations. Is it time to address both internal as well as external joint appointments? How would the policy be modified to capture our aspirations?

8) **External letters:** How many letters should be expected? Who should be exempt from writing external letters? What do we mean by “collaborators?” Should all collaborators be exempt?

9) **Review committees:** How should committees be populated? Voted on by peers, appointed by dean or provost, assignment by position (heads, deans, appointed/elected representatives from University Senate, colleges, departments, rank, etc.)

10) **Appealing promotion and tenure decisions:** At present, tenure decisions are not grievable through the University Faculty Grievances policy. Only procedural grievances are allowable, and those are to be taken directly to the provost. The procedures for such are not detailed. A number of our peers have policies that allow for appeals at each decision making level, and others only allow for procedural appeals, but the process is detailed in the promotion and tenure policy. Should tenure decisions be grievable? If so, at what level and under what circumstances?

11) **Collegiality:** Should collegiality or civility be an evaluation criterion for promotion and tenure? If so, how might it be defined and evaluated?

In examining the issues on this list and others of interest, investigate how our aspirational peers have modified their promotion and tenure policies in the last decade. Talk with colleagues and administrators at peer institutions and examine materials provided online. Consider what we can learn from the early outcomes of their modified policies and procedures, and develop a revised policy that incorporates what appear to be the best practices that support Purdue University’s mission and 21st century goals.

Respectfully,

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