Procedures for Granting Academic Tenure and Promotion

These procedures supplement the policy on Academic Tenure and Promotion (XXX). Refer to the policy for contact information and applicable definitions. For policy and procedures governing clinical faculty, please see Policy XXX and for rules governing research faculty, see XXX.

Effective date: [TBD]

PROCEDURES

I. Nominations

   A. Prior to the beginning of the academic year, the chair of the Primary Promotions Committee publishes a timetable setting forth the dates of the committee meetings and suitable deadlines for faculty members to update their files and to receive and react to the appropriate segments of a nomination for Tenure and/or promotion. The chair convenes the Primary Promotions Committee at the beginning of each academic year.

   B. Faculty members who are in the penultimate year of their Probationary Period are automatically nominated for Tenure and promotion and voted on by the Primary Promotions Committee, unless the faculty member specifically requests otherwise in writing at any step in the process. Faculty members who have been in rank less than six years also may be nominated for promotion and Tenure by any member of the Primary Promotions Committee. Those whose nominations are seconded will be voted on by the committee.

   C. Faculty members with Tenure who are not nominated by a member of the Primary Promotions Committee but, nevertheless, consider themselves ready for promotion may nominate themselves and have their case for promotion considered by the Primary Promotions Committee if they have not been considered for promotion during the previous three years. Review of candidates in the final year of their Probationary Period requires prior approval by the Provost (PWL) or the VCAA (regional campuses).

   D. It is possible that a faculty member received an extension of his/her Probationary Period by virtue of the procedures outlined in Section V of these procedures. Under these circumstances, the criteria for Tenure and promotion are the same in terms of both quantity and quality; committees may not impose additional requirements on candidates with extensions when compared to those without extensions. When applicable or appropriate, this language will be included in the request for an external review letter.

II. Review, Voting and Approval

   A. Throughout the entire review process, Primary, Area and Campus Promotions Committee members respond to each Tenure or promotion nomination as individuals, interpreting
achievements described in the nomination documents in light of standards appropriate for the nominee’s discipline and the University’s criteria for promotion. In the course of these evaluations, open and candid discussions are a critical element to informing each committee member of the candidate’s accomplishments. The confidentiality of remarks made at such meetings should, therefore, be carefully preserved and, under normal circumstances, restricted to those within the promotions process to allow for full, fair and free discussion of the merits of the case. Nothing in this provision of confidentiality allows participants in primary or other promotion committees to engage in illegal, unethical or inappropriate behavior with impunity.

B. Attendance requirements for the members of the Campus Promotions Committee are determined by the Provost in consultation with committee members. Current practice is that campus committee members must attend in person in order to cast a ballot. Attendance requirements for Primary and Area Promotions Committee meetings are determined by the dean of the college/school. In cases where the dean is not the chair of the Area Promotions Committee, the Area Promotions Committee attendance requirements are determined by the committee chair. All eligible members participating in Primary or Area Promotions Committee deliberations are required to vote on all candidates unless a conflict of interest with a particular candidate has been identified, in which case, the member should recuse him/herself from all discussion and deliberations of a candidate’s case. Members of the Primary Promotions Committee must participate in all substantive discussions of a candidate’s record in order to vote on that record. Deans determine the specific rules governing the meaning of full participation in substantive discussion for their college/school. Similarly, the chair of the Area Promotions Committee makes these determinations for the committee when he/she is not a dean. Eligible committee members must be present to submit a ballot. Recusals, blank ballots, and otherwise unsubmitted ballots are not counted as votes.

C. Each nomination is first considered and discussed by the Primary Promotions Committee, and members cast a secret ballot for each candidate individually. The result of the ballot is recorded on the Nomination for Promotion form. In addition to providing for a “yes” or “no” vote, the ballot provides an opportunity to show reasons for the vote, with space allocated for comments and/or explanations. The reasons for all votes are expected to be provided, but this is especially important in the case of negative votes since comments can be the basis for feedback for faculty improvement. Unless otherwise noted in Appendix A of policy XXXX, the chair of the committee does not cast a vote. Rather, her/his recommendation appears separate from the Primary Promotions Committee’s recommendation on the Nomination for Promotion form.

D. Those candidates who receive a simple majority vote are sent forward to the Area Promotions Committee for review, unless candidates choose to withdraw their candidacy at this stage. In addition, the chair of the Primary Promotions Committee may endorse a candidate who does not receive the majority vote and send forward the nomination with his/her statement providing a rationale for the divergence from the Primary Promotions Committee. The Area Promotions Committee follows the same process as the Primary
Promotions Committee described in II.B above.

E. Those candidates who receive a simple majority vote of the Area Promotions Committee are forwarded to the Campus Promotions Committee along with documentation of whether and why the candidate also has the chair’s endorsement. The chair also may endorse and send forward those candidates who do not receive a majority of the Area Promotions Committee with a statement including the rationale for sending the case forward.

F. The Campus Promotions Committee reviews the recommendations of the Primary and Area Promotions Committees. Each nomination is considered individually and voted on by secret ballot. All candidates who receive the supporting vote of a simple majority of the Campus Promotions Committee will be recommended to the President for promotion and/or Tenure. The chair of the campus committee will include her or his endorsement and comments, where appropriate, on the Nomination for Promotion form. In cases where the candidate’s recommendation for Tenure and/or promotion was supported by at least two-thirds of the Area Promotions Committee, but is not approved by the Campus Promotions Committee, the candidate’s dean or department head/chair may request from the Campus Promotions Committee chair a written explanation for non-approval. On Regional Campuses where the chair of the Campus Promotions Committee is not the Chancellor, the Nomination for Promotion form is transmitted to the Chancellor for review. The Chancellor, VCAA or chair of the Campus Promotions Committee on each Regional Campus forwards the recommendations to the Provost. The Provost reviews and forwards the recommendations for promotion to the President who, in turn, makes his/her recommendation to the Board of Trustees for final action.

G. Faculty members will be advised of their promotion progress, in a discreet manner and without undue delay, by their department head/chair after the Primary Promotions Committee review and by their dean after the Area and Campus Promotions Committee reviews. Official notice will be sent to Tenured and/or promoted faculty members after the President and the Board of Trustees approve the recommendations. The reasons for negative decisions will be conveyed in writing by the chair of the committee at which the candidate failed to receive the recommendation to go forward.

H. Tenure without promotion is generally only considered under exceptional circumstances. It requires endorsement by both the Primary and Area Promotions Committees, a recommendation by the candidate’s dean and approval by the Provost (West Lafayette campus) or Chancellor (Regional Campuses).

I. The process outlined in E-G above does not cover new faculty appointments that include the awarding of Tenure with an offer of employment. Immediate Tenure requires an endorsement by either the Primary or Area Committee, a recommendation by the dean, approval by the Chancellor (Regional Campuses only) and approval by the Provost.

J. Faculty with joint appointments may participate in Tenure and promotion proceedings in each of their departments according to the policy set by that department and college.
Such policies may not exclude jointly appointed faculty members from voting on Tenure and/or promotion decisions in the department listed as their Tenure home.

III. Tenure Effective Dates

A. Tenure is effective with the start of the next academic year following approval. If Tenure is requested and approved outside of the normal promotion timeline, it will be effective with the start of the semester following approval. For example, Tenure approvals in the fall semester will be effective the following spring semester. Spring semester approvals will be effective with the start of the next academic year for academic-year faculty and the start of the next fiscal year for fiscal-year faculty. Approvals in the summer will be effective at the beginning of the next academic year for both academic-year and fiscal-year faculty.

B. In cases where Tenure is awarded with an offer of employment, Tenure is effective with the start date of the contract.

IV. Documentation

A. Nomination for Promotion form

A Nomination for Promotion form must be completed for all faculty members as described below.

1. All Tenure-track faculty members in the penultimate year of their Probationary Period, regardless of the vote at the Primary or Area Promotions Committees and even if the faculty member has chosen not to be reviewed.

2. Faculty members who are nominated for Tenure and receive a majority affirmative vote from the Primary Promotions Committee, regardless of their year in rank.

3. Faculty members who are nominated for promotion to associate professor or professor and receive a majority affirmative vote from the Area Promotions Committee, regardless of their year in rank.

B. Supporting Documents

1. Supporting documents are not required with the Nomination for Promotion form if the faculty member is in the penultimate year of his/her Probationary Period and has chosen not to be considered for promotion.

2. Each campus must determine and clearly disseminate expectations for letters of assessment that are to be included in a candidate’s documentation for Tenure and promotion. The campus may allow each college/school to set these expectations. Minimally, the expectations must include the number of letters, internal versus external referees and the acceptability of the nature of referees’ relationships with the
candidate (e.g., collaborators, co-authors, former mentors). The Candidate has the opportunity to suggest letter writers and to identify those letter writers who should not be asked.

It should be noted to external reviewers that, under Purdue University policies, their replies will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. The following statement should be included in all external review letter requests:

*Candidates may request a summary of all evaluations in their file; however, sources remain confidential. We cannot guarantee that at some future time a court or government agency will not require the disclosure of the source of confidential evaluations. Purdue University will endeavor to protect the identity of authors of letters of evaluations to the fullest extent allowable under law.*

3. The department/school head/chair is responsible for making sure candidates are aware of their right to review and augment the Nomination for Promotion form as outlined below, and is responsible for communicating the timetable of relevant meetings to all candidates.

4. Candidates will be given the opportunity to help create and review their promotion documentation and may receive a copy of any document (with confidential statements omitted) that will be submitted to the Primary, Area and/or Campus Promotions Committee(s). It is the right of candidates to have included in their departmental file whatever the candidate chooses to add, including the candidate’s own brief comments about teaching, research, creative activities, service or engagement. Candidates may choose to attach or append their comments to the promotion document.

5. Candidates may include a statement highlighting and explaining the contribution of their interdisciplinary activities. This statement may include the candidate’s relative contribution to the projects that are listed. Departments/schools may wish to ask for additional advisory input on the interdisciplinary accomplishments as appropriate. This may include review from both Purdue and non-Purdue faculty members.

6. Candidates may include statements about their role in collaborative work as well as supporting statements of work and responsibilities from collaborators. Collaborators may write outside letters as long as any relationship is named and as long as it is the policy of the department and the Primary Promotions Committee to admit such letters.

7. Documentation of research, teaching and engagement accomplishments will depend on the disciplinary and interdisciplinary fields in which the scholar works. Candidates should consult the campus criteria as well as department and college guidelines to determine the standards for minimal levels of accomplishment and excellence in these fields on their campus.
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8. Candidates for Tenure and/or promotion who remain in consideration beyond the Primary Promotions Committee level, additional documentation should contain, if appropriate: basis of nomination, prior experience, teaching assignments and evaluations of performance, **any curricular innovations or special activities which may have contributed to teaching effectiveness**, research responsibilities and achievements, extension and engagement assignments and evaluation of performance, scholarly work in progress, publications, administrative and committee responsibilities, other pertinent activities (membership and positions held in professional societies, consultation, committee and public service, etc.), prospects for future development, comments and recommendations by the department head/chair, and a standard/minimum number of reference letters as established by the college/school for the applicable type of Tenure and/or promotion on that campus. Documentation should also report the vote of the primary committee and area committee where applicable. The Provost, in consultation with the VCAA, will issue instructions for completing the Nomination for Promotion form.

Content may not be changed after submission of the promotion document to the Area Promotions Committee apart from minor editorial corrections, typographical errors and the like. The department head and/or dean may communicate additional accomplishments or updates to the President’s Nomination for Promotion Form that occur after submission of the document to the appropriate committee members on behalf of the candidate.

V. Extensions of the Probationary Period

A. Purdue recognizes that faculty may encounter circumstances that interrupt or prevent progress toward professional and scholarly achievement. This is an especially critical issue for faculty working toward Tenure within a limited and specified timeframe. The process outlined below provides faculty the opportunity to seek an extension of the Probationary Period when certain situations arise that slow, or hinder achieving Tenure.

B. Deans and department heads/chairs have a responsibility to inform faculty of this process, especially upon recognition that a qualified faculty member’s progress toward Tenure may be impeded by circumstances cited below. Faculty members are encouraged to discuss this process with their department heads when qualifying circumstances arise or are anticipated.

C. A one-year automatic approval will be granted for birth or adoption of a child, provided the faculty member submits a Request for Probationary Period Extension form to the Provost (PWL) or VCAA (regional campuses) prior to the start of the penultimate year of his/her Probationary Period. This provision applies to either or both parents. Upon approval, the Provost will initiate a revised Appointment to the Faculty form (President’s Office Form 19) that reflects the change to the end of the maximum Probationary Period. The Provost or VCAA adjusts the tenure clock accordingly and distributes notification of the adjustment to the deans and department heads/chairs.
D. When conditions and personal circumstances arise that substantially interfere with progress toward achieving Tenure, a faculty member may request that his/her Probationary Period be extended. Justifiable conditions for granting extensions include, but are not restricted to, severe illness or disability or the need to care for a family member, unanticipated destruction of research materials or assigned lab space or equipment, or unexpected obstacles to field research. Approval of the request is at the discretion of the Provost (PWL) or the VCAA (regional campuses). Verification that the conditions leading to the request occurred or continue to exist and that the faculty member demonstrated progress toward Tenure prior to the onset of the conditions will be made. Requests for extensions in these cases are to be made as soon after the conditions that precipitated the request as possible, but no later than the start of the penultimate year of the Probationary Period. The steps for initiation, review and approval are as follows:

1. Except in the case of childbirth or adoption, the faculty member submits to the department head/chair a completed Request for Probationary Period Extension form. In the case of childbirth or adoption, a Notification of Probationary Period Extension form is submitted directly to the Provost’s office (PWL) or to the VCAA (regional campuses). The Provost or VCAA adjusts the tenure clock accordingly and distributes notification of the adjustment to the deans and department heads/chairs.

2. The department head transmits the request to the dean. The department head and/or dean ascertain, to the best of their knowledge, that the conditions cited in the request are valid.

3. If the dean approves the request, he/she forwards it to the Provost.

4. If the Provost approves the request, he/she initiates a revised Appointment to the Faculty form to reflect the change to the end of the maximum Probationary Period.

5. Any faculty member who feels it necessary to appeal a decision may utilize established grievance procedures.

E. Ordinarily, approvals for extensions are for one year. However, Tenure-track faculty with part-time appointments may request an extension of the Probationary Period for up to three years following the steps above.

F. A faculty member whose initial appointment is on a full-time basis and is adjusted to a part-time basis during the first three years of service to the University may request an extension equivalent to the Probationary Period for those who begin with a part-time appointment.

VI. Review of Negative Tenure and Promotion Decisions

A. Upon receipt of a concluding negative Tenure or promotion decision (one that stops the review process from moving to the next level), candidates may request in writing from their dean a written statement of the reasons for the decision. The candidate must submit
his/her request within 15 business days of receiving the decision, and the dean must provide the written statement to the candidate within 15 business days of receiving the request.

B. Candidates who believe the decision was based on one or more of the reasons listed below may submit to the Vice-Provost for Faculty Affairs (West Lafayette campus) or the Chancellor (Regional Campus) a written request for reconsideration. The request must be submitted within 20 business days of receiving the written statement of reasons, specify the grounds for the request and include any new material germane to the issue.

C. Grounds for Requesting Reconsideration

1. Unjustifiable judgments of professional competence
2. Judgments based on erroneous or misinterpreted information
3. Evidence of retaliation, demonstrable prejudice or other bias against a candidate*
4. Violation of the principles of academic freedom
5. A “sea-change” in the record during the penultimate year, as perceived by the Head and Dean

*Complaints of discrimination, as defined in the policy on Equal Access, Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action (III.C.2) are to be addressed in accordance with that policy’s procedures.

On each campus, the Provost (PWL) or the VCAA (regional campuses), in collaboration with the faculty, will issue guidelines interpreting the application of these grounds for requests for reconsideration. Please note that procedural concerns about promotion or tenure may still be raised under the grievance policy.

D. Upon receipt of the written request for reconsideration, if the request meets one of the criteria outlined above, the Vice-Provost/VCAA will request from the chair of the campus faculty senate the appointment of a three-person panel of tenured faculty members to review the request. The members of the panel must be mutually agreeable to the chairperson and the Vice-Provost/Chancellor and may not be involved in any capacity in the Tenure or promotion review process for the candidate. Appointments must be made within 10 business days of receiving the candidate’s request.

E. The panel is tasked with determining only whether reasonable and adequate grounds support the candidate’s allegations that the negative decision was improperly based. The panel is not invited to make a determination on the merits of the candidate’s suitability for Tenure or promotion. The panel will consider the candidate’s request and all evidence relating to it, including evidence provided by the academic unit, in an informal manner. Within 20 business days following the appointment of the panel, it must provide a written report of its findings to the Provost/Chancellor. If the panel finds that there is adequate and reasonable support for the candidate’s allegations or concerns, it may include recommendations for addressing the issue in its report.
F. The Provost/Chancellor will consider the report and applicable recommendations from the panel and determine the appropriate action to take. Within ten business days of receiving the panel’s report, the Provost/Chancellor will notify the candidate in writing of the outcome of the review.

HISTORY AND UPDATES

[Date TBD]: Procedures established as separate document in support of the policy on Academic Tenure and Promotion (XXX). The requirements of this document supersede those in the policy on Academic Freedom, Responsibilities, and Tenure, and Procedures for Termination for Cause (Executive Memorandum No. B-48).