

## APAFT Committee Final Report 2023-2024

This comprehensive final report summarizes the 2023-24 Appointment, Promotion, Academic Freedom, and Tenure Committee (APAFT) committee work.

### Charges and Outcomes

The Executive Committee and Faculty Senate assigned APAFT ten charges. A Summary of the charges, committee work, and outcomes is described below:

1. Ensure that the language of new or updated documents are inclusive. As issues are identified, consult with EDI committee for guidance. (Ongoing)
  - All documents reviewed by APAFT during the year were screened for inclusive language, and no edits were determined to be needed as the committee deemed all language to be inclusive.
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.  
PPM9(Academic Freedom)  
9-9Dueprocess/General statement  
9-11Informal Procedures and Conciliatory Meeting  
9-14Disciplinary Actions  
9-15Reports and Records (9-7 and 9-8 were approved sp 23)
  - APAFT continued to build upon the work of previous APAFT committee members and chairs to complete final revisions to the section 9 PPMs, including revisions for accuracy, clarity, and consistency within the section. All PPMs were revised for logical flow, and redundancies were removed. In conjunction with legal counsel, revisions were approved by the committee and moved forward into curriculog, where they were approved by EC and Faculty Senate.
  - PPM 9-9 Due Process/General Statement: Revisions included clarification of the conciliatory process and wordsmithing.
  - PPM 9-10 Due Process/Definition of Terms: Revisions included updated and clarified definitions, clarification of the conciliatory process, additions of what constitutes bias, and who a responsible administrator is.
  - PPM 9-11 Informal Procedures and the Informal Conciliatory Process: The revisions of the conciliatory process were laid out with changes allowing a responsible

administrator to take corrective action as appropriate regarding a complaint. Clarification was made that this process is for WSU faculty, staff, and students and anything external will be routed to the appropriate administrator. An addition was made to state that any violation of PPM 3-32 will be handled by the Office of Equal Opportunity. Friendly language was included, specifically changing “accuser” to “complainant,”

- 9-12 Formal Hearing: Clarification added that if a faculty member files a complaint, the burden of proof is then on the provost or dean as the complainant. The default for hearings is now closed instead of open. Additions related to HB 438 included, specifically, that the President, in consultation with the board of trustees, has the final decision to dismiss a tenured faculty member.
  - 9-13 Rights in Formal Hearing: Changes reflect consistency with the law and clarification that no individual can be retaliated against.
  - 9-14 Standards of Behavior: Revisions outline the required standards of behavior that align with requirements set forth by the board of higher education. Interim leave with or without pay was clarified, and the process streamlined for a faculty member under review to be placed on leave. Clarification was made that non-punitive measures such as no contact directives, normal reassignment of duties, or acceptance of resignation are not disciplinary actions.
  - 9-15 Reports and Records: The document was simplified, clarified, and revised to be consistent with the law. Legal counsel will keep all records according to the WSU record retention schedule.
  - 9-17 Termination of Non-Tenured Faculty and Appeal of Tenure Denial Decision: Redundancies were removed, and references to PPM 8-10 were added. Clarification was made that this is in regard to the denial of *both* promotion and tenure.
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 documents.
- The committee has worked diligently with the colleges to ensure names and requirements in the PPM are consistent with college tenure and promotion documents. Many of the colleges have verified the language, and much progress has been made. Two colleges are outstanding and require more time to provide the needed information for APAFT to complete the charge.
4. 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.
- PPM 8-7: Many discussions were held regarding this change in conjunction with legal counsel and the Provost. Stakeholder comments were taken into consideration, and changes to the PPM to create a new position for senior instructors were finalized. Changes were voted through by APAFT, put into curriculum, and approved by EC and Faculty Senate. Provost Krovi addressed policy office concerns and changes related to HB 438; minor adjustments were made, clarifying the role of the senior instructor and pathway for evaluation. The Provost presented these to the Faculty Senate.

5. Add lines in for service to clarify the way prior service (other institutions) will apply to tenure University wide.
  - APAFT reviewed PPM 8 and concluded that service means years of service toward the probation period and service for tenure and promotion. The committee believes the wording in the PPM is clear. The recommendation from APAFT is that the individual rank and tenure committees can decide how to apply prior years of service. The PPM implicitly allows this, and the committee recommends that the PPM remain unchanged.
6. Review PPM 8- 11 for possible inconsistencies with PPM 6- 22 (Student Code of Conduct). Specifically, clarify that candidates undergoing review for Full Professor may not select 2 classes for evaluation, as all classes are already undergoing evaluation through the new system.
  - The PPM and charge ended up being satisfied by the requirements put forth in HB 438. The PPM was presented with the policies affected by HB 438 to the University at the beginning of April 2024. Evaluation of all courses and inclusion for review were clarified and added to the PPM by legal counsel to align with the requirements of the law.
7. Review PPM 8- 11 in regards to promotion to Full Professor. Recommended change is to make the process similar to tenure in that colleges develop separate guidelines that address the specific criteria of Teaching, Scholarship, Service (and Ethics) for promotion to full professor as there appears to be a gap with Ethics. Also review the current pathways for promotion to full professor. The recommendation is that a higher bar is needed. For example, a requirement of Excellent in at least one category and some form of an external review.
  - APAFT extensively reviewed this charge and PPM, and a summary was presented to the EC and Faculty Senate, stating that the pathways for promotion to full professor may be amended differently, including adding or changing channels, but any changes would result in substantive subsequent changes. Options to set a higher bar for promotion to professor were considered and discussed by APAFT, including requiring an excellent rating in service in channel A, but many faculty members do not have control over the service they are given the opportunity to provide. Colleges can develop separate guidelines that address the specific criteria of Teaching, Scholarship, Service (and Ethics) for promotion to full professor if approved by the Faculty Senate and Colleges. However, it creates the following problems that should be addressed:
    - Tenure is a college prerogative since departments have to work with tenured faculty members. While promotion to Full Professor doesn't change that fact, the balance of tenure being at the college level and the promotion being at the university level, and therefore uniform will be lost.
    - If colleges develop their own guidelines for promotion to Full Professor, they

- should do the same for promotion to Associate Professor. Creating an external review process is possible. The committee benchmarked ten National universities and found that five did not have an external review, and the other 5 had wording stating the external review “may” happen or that it is not required. The committee recommends no action at this time regarding making changes to “raise the bar.”
- A line in the PPM was added to address the "gap" in ethics. The addition ensures adherence to professional ethics is required for promotion as well as for tenure, as the PPM did not clearly specify that ethics was a requirement for promotion. This change was entered into curriculum and approved by EC and Faculty Senate.
8. In consultation with WSU Online, benchmark how USHE schools are handling digital tenure files.
- Oliver Snow completed benchmarking with all USHE schools. Digital tenure files are handled and stored as follows:
    - i. U of U: Interfolio
    - ii. UVU: Watermark
    - iii. USU: Interfolio
    - iv. SLCC: Digication, ePortfolio
    - v. SUU: Custom forms and templates
    - vi. Snow: Canvas, ePortfolio, MS Word and Paper
9. Based on WSU Online addressing the question of if there are issues with Rank and Tenure Files in Canvas, a survey of Faculty and Associated Administrative staff and/or Associate Deans will be administered to determine overall satisfaction with the current system of administering Digital Rank and Tenure Files.
- A Qualtrics Survey was created by APAFT and approved by the committee and legal counsel. It was then offered to faculty, associated administrative staff, and associate deans through email and WSU announcements. It was also posted on the faculty WSU social media site. A total of 238 respondents completed the survey as of 2/28/2024. 81.1% of faculty responded affirmatively that the Canvas platform currently meets promotion and tenure file needs. Satisfaction with different aspects of Canvas functionality, including the ability to organize and link files, accessibility, navigation, adding files and videos, providing access to outside reviewers, and security, was reported as a satisfaction score between 3.9-4.4 out of 5.
  - The themes reflecting concerns with Canvas satisfaction included the need for a better format and/or template, the removal of the duplicate requirement of the autobiographical form when the data is within the files, more training on HTML and functionality requested, storage space issues, privacy concerns regarding downloadable files, and dissatisfaction with not being able to access files during the review process.
  - Results and themes were outlined and presented to EC and Faculty Senate.

10. Review PPM 8- 13 for possible inconsistencies associated with PPM 8-12 and the possibility of candidates utilizing a print Rank and Tenure file. Review language in 8-13 for other possible inconsistencies based on the possibility of digital and print Rank and Tenure files.

- PPM revisions were made to include clarification that print or digital files may be used by faculty members. APAFT approved the proposal, it was entered into curriculum, then approved by EC and Faculty Senate.

### **Additional Committee Work**

- APAFT gave feedback and suggestions surrounding wording given to students completing student evaluations
- APAFT met with a concerned faculty member from Arts and Humanities, then discussed the concern as a committee and responded to the faculty member with suggestions to bring the concern to the dean as it is a concern currently being addressed by the dean.
- APAFT reviewed the GSBE tenure documents, offered suggestions for revisions, reviewed them again, and voted them to move forward. Since then, HB 438 has passed, and the documents will undergo another revision regarding post-tenure review, then come back to APAFT.
- A flow chart of the conciliatory process was created and presented informally to the EC and Faculty Senate to aid in the understanding of the new process

### **Committee Meetings and Attendance**

The APAFT committee met monthly from September 2024 to April 2025, holding a total of 8 meetings. The majority of committee members attended each meeting, with members notifying the chair when they could not attend. Specific attendance roles are included in meeting minutes.

### **Member Sub Committees and Outstanding Service**

Subcommittees were formed for each charge as follows:

- Subcommittee 1: All committee members
- Subcommittee 2: Paul Crow, Marjukka Ollialainen, Julie Rich, Stephanie Hollist
- Subcommittee 3: Diana Meiser, Kyle Feuz
- Subcommittee 4: Jim Turner, Kyle Feuz, Chris Eisenbarth
- Subcommittee 5: Jim Turner
- Subcommittee 6: Afshin Ghoreishi, Joe Horvart, Brandon Stevenson, Aminda O'Hare
- Subcommittee 7: Afshin Ghoreishi, Joe Horvart, Brandon, Aminda O'Hare
- Subcommittee 8: Jaylynn Gold and Oliver Snow
- Subcommittee 9: Jaylynn Gold, Azenett Garza Caballero, Rebekah Cumpsty, Diana Meiser
- Subcommittee 10: Jaylynn Gold, Azenett Garza Caballero, Rebekah Cumpsty, Megan VanDeventer, Diana Meiser

Outstanding and significant service recognition is as follows:

- The subcommittee consisting of Paul Crow, Marjukka Ollailainen, Julie Rich, and Stephanie Hollist for completing the 4-year process of updating the section 9 PPMs. Their diligence and hard work were appreciated.
- Marjukka Ollailainen for being a great liaison and helping me understand my role and always being supportive and helpful.
- Belinda McElheny for helping guide me through the functions and responsibilities of a chair, arranging the calendar meeting dates, taking minutes at each meeting, training me in curriculum, and keeping me on track in curriculum.
- Stephanie Hollist for attending meetings, scheduling extra meetings with me, and working diligently with the committee on all PPMs to ensure they meet all legal requirements.
- Afshin Ghoreishi for coming to every meeting prepared to contribute, consistently reviewing PPMs, and bringing back constructive feedback and points to consider. His knowledge and experience have been invaluable.

### **Suggested Charges for 2024-2025**

1. Ensure that the language of new or updated documents are inclusive. As issues are identified, consult with the EDI committee for guidance. (Ongoing)
2. Continue Charge 3 to review college-specific requirements in PPM 8-11 to ensure names and requirements are current and consistent with college tenure and promotion documents.
3. Review college tenure and promotion documents that are updated and revised during the year to reflect changes resulting from HB 438.

### **Suggestions for Committee Effectiveness**

- The only suggestion for improved committee effectiveness is to allow released time for the service so that the committee could meet more frequently and accomplish charges earlier in the year to allow time for the rest of the process by the end of the year.

Report submitted by:

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