

Recent Tenure and Promotion Policy Changes at WPI that Elevate Recognition of Teaching

June 2021

1. Creation of a Teaching Path to Tenure (approved January 2021)

Preamble:

The mission and distinctiveness of WPI depends on the essential contributions of teaching-intensive faculty who continuously innovate and improve upon our student-centered educational programs and practices. In part, WPI recognizes the long-term value of these faculty members through a category of tenured and tenure-track teaching-intensive Professors of Teaching, thus providing these faculty members with the highest level of academic freedom and institutional commitment. These positions are part of WPI's broader commitment to inclusive excellence and development and retention of faculty talent aligned with WPI's institutional mission.

Criteria:

Assistant, Associate, and Full Professors of Teaching are expected primarily to contribute to the *teaching mission*¹ of WPI. Therefore the tenure criteria for these faculty members are focused on the quality of their teaching, their broader contributions to WPI's overall teaching mission, and their demonstrated and potential contributions to a broader community of educators, practitioners, and/or scholars within or beyond WPI, especially when it clearly enhances the effectiveness of the candidate's teaching and/or furthers a general understanding of effective teaching practices. Consideration is also given to each candidate's level of active engagement with and service to WPI and/or the broader professional communities. The candidate's activities should demonstrate the capacity for continued excellent performance. Professors of Teaching are expected to contribute in three categories: teaching practice; continuing professional growth and currency; and service. These categories are defined below...

¹The WPI teaching mission is distinguished by inquiry-based learning, open-ended problem solving, and integrative and interdisciplinary thinking. A WPI education balances personal responsibility with cooperation, collaboration, and mutual respect, and encourages critical reflection, sound decision making, and personal growth. WPI prepares its graduate broadly to lead fulfilling lives as responsible professionals, informed community members, and ethical citizens.

For further policy details, please contact Chrys Demetry, cdemetry@wpi.edu.

2. Associate-to-Full Promotion Policy for Tenured Faculty that Recognizes Multiple Forms of Scholarship (approved spring 2017)

Excerpts have been selected to illustrate inclusion of broader forms of scholarship and explicit recognition of impact indicators beyond peer-reviewed publications and level of external funding. For further policy details and background, please contact Chrys Demetry, cdemetry@wpi.edu.

D.1.2. Definition of Scholarship To recognize the full range of scholarly contributions by faculty, WPI endorses an inclusive definition of scholarship. Scholarship exists in a continuum of diverse forms of knowledge and knowledgemaking practices. Scholarship may be pursued

through original research, making connections between disciplines, building bridges between theory and practice, communicating knowledge effectively to students and peers, or in reciprocal partnerships with broader communities. The common characteristics for any scholarly form to be considered scholarship are: it must be public, amenable to critical appraisal, and in a form that permits exchange and use by other members of the scholarly community. Candidates for promotion may make contributions to the scholarship of discovery, the scholarship of integration, the scholarship of application and practice, the scholarship of teaching and learning, or the scholarship of engagement. Contributions may be in one area or across multiple areas of the continuum of scholarship. Scholarly contributions to any area or areas are valued equally by WPI. The following descriptions of the continuum of scholarship indicate the scope of each domain, but they are not intended to be exclusive or exhaustive. The forms that scholarship take along this continuum will vary by discipline, department or academic division.

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. The scholarship of teaching and learning is the development and improvement of pedagogical practices that are shared with others. Effective teachers engage in scholarly teaching activity when they undertake assessment and evaluation to promote improvement in their own teaching and in student learning. Scholarly teaching activity becomes the scholarship of teaching and learning when faculty members make their teaching public, so that it can be reviewed, critiqued and built on by others, through publications, presentations or other forms of dissemination.

Scholarship of Engagement. The scholarship of engagement involves collaborative partnerships with communities (local, regional, state, national, or global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources. Examples of the scholarship of engagement might include, but are not limited to: community-based programs that enhance WPI's curriculum, teaching and learning; educational or public outreach programs; other partnerships with communities beyond the campus to address critical societal issues, prepare educated citizens, or contribute to the public good. Contributions in the scholarship of engagement are of benefit to the external community, visible and shared with stakeholders, and open to review and critique by community stakeholders and by peers.

D.1.4. Standards for Evaluation of the Promotion Dossier: Quality, Impact and Peer Review

EXCERPT

External impact beyond WPI should be assessed based on the relevant standards in the areas of the candidate's scholarly contributions. Thus, the starting point to assess external impact is the candidate's personal statement, which should identify the area or areas of their scholarly contributions across teaching, scholarship and service and indicate examples of external impact beyond WPI. While quantitative measures such as the number of refereed publications and citations or the level of external funding will remain important indicators of quality and impact for many scholars, WPI recognizes that the weight assigned to such measures varies widely between academic fields as well as along the continuum of scholarship. Thus, evidence of external impact beyond WPI might include: funding from multiple sources; peer-reviewed articles or presentations in well-regarded journals or conferences; books; reviews, citations or impact factors; downloadable curriculum; patents; films, broadcasts, software, or computer games; discussion of research in legal cases, policy reports, or the media; keynote addresses;

workshops for other institutions, regional, national or international societies; artistic exhibitions, performances or productions; K-12 outreach and educational programs; journal editorships; leadership of academic programs or centers; or impact on external communities through teaching, scholarship or service. These examples of external impact are illustrative and do not limit other ways that a candidate might demonstrate external impact.

3. Requiring a Teaching Portfolio to Document High Quality Teaching for Promotion and Tenure

A Rubric for Evaluating Teaching in Promotion Cases

ADVANCE Working Group 3 – Summer 2020

Statement of need: The promotion policy directs candidates to document high quality teaching by submitting a teaching portfolio. The policy suggests general elements of the portfolio, and more detailed guidance about portfolio contents is being prepared. However, the policy does not directly communicate metrics or indicators by which portfolios would demonstrate high quality teaching. The purpose of this proposed rubric is two-fold: 1) to help candidates show evidence of high quality teaching; and 2) to guide COAP members and the Provost to apply consistent and appropriately high standards for evaluation of teaching.

Rationale and use of rubric: The promotion policy for tenured faculty identifies six standards to evaluate quality across teaching, scholarship, and service: clear goals, adequate preparation, appropriate methods, significant results, effective presentation, and reflective critique (Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff, *Scholarship Assessed*, 1997). These standards are integrated in the holistic rubric below, which is adapted from an NSF-sponsored project at the University of Kansas.

The rubric describes indicators of highest quality in each of eight dimensions of teaching. *It is not expected that a successful candidate will achieve this high standard in all dimensions or that all of the examples of strong evidence will be met. Moreover, it must be understood that some faculty members, because of their particular teaching assignments, do not have the opportunity to contribute in some areas such as project-based learning and mentoring and advising.*

The indicators should be evident from multiple sources of information:



Category or Dimension	Strong Evidence or Indicators of High Quality
Course goals and content <i>What are students expected to learn? Is content aligned with the curriculum?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course goals or learning outcomes are well-articulated, appropriately challenging, and clearly connected to program or curricular goals • Content is appropriate in range and depth, related to current issues and developments in field • High quality materials, well aligned with course goals
Teaching methods and practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities are well-planned, integrated, reflect commitment to provide meaningful assignments and assessments

<p><i>How is in-class and out-of-class time used? What assessments and learning activities are used to help students learn?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructor uses effective, high impact, or innovative methods to foster student learning • In- and out-of-class activities provide opportunities for practice and feedback on important skills and concepts • Students show high levels of engagement
<p>Achievement of learning outcomes <i>What impact do courses have on learners? What evidence shows level of achievement?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessments and standards to evaluate student work are authentic, clear, and connected to program or curriculum expectations • Instructor supports learning and success for all students • Quality of learning fosters success in other contexts (e.g., subsequent courses or projects)
<p>Classroom climate and student perceptions <i>What are students' views of their learning experience? How has student feedback influenced instruction?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence that class climate is respectful, motivating, engaging • Student feedback on instructor accessibility and interaction skills is generally positive • Students perceive they are learning important knowledge or skills • Instructor is responsive to student feedback in short-term and long-term
<p>Reflection and commitment to professional growth in teaching <i>How has the instructor's teaching changed over time? What resources are used to support teaching development?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly adjusts teaching based on reflections on student learning • Seeks and makes use of peer review of teaching • Uses pedagogical resources to support teaching development (e.g., evidence-based teaching practices, high impact practices, professional development workshops)
<p>Project-based learning <i>To what extent has the instructor utilized WPI's signature pedagogy and improved in project advising?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engages in IQP and/or MQP advising, advising of projects in the humanities and arts, or projects embedded in undergraduate or graduate courses and programs (department-dependent) • Makes effort to utilize institutional knowledge and practices that support effective project-based learning • Makes use of student feedback about project advising • Shows development and improvement as a project advisor over time
<p>Mentoring and advising <i>How effectively has the faculty member worked individually with undergraduate or graduate students?</i></p>	<p>(as appropriate to department and discipline)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows strong commitment to success, wellness, and personal/professional development of undergraduate academic advisees (e.g., number of advisees, advising/mentoring methods, student testimonials) • Shows strong commitment to success, wellness, and personal/professional development of graduate students and research trainees (e.g., rates/time to degree completion, advising/mentoring methods, student testimonials)
<p>Commitment to diversity and inclusion <i>How has the candidate made efforts to support the success and inclusion of diverse students</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of curricula and teaching/mentoring strategies are intentionally designed to enhance diversity and inclusion • Advises disproportionately high number of under-represented students

<i>(e.g., across race, ethnicity, gender, class, ability)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engages in training/professional development to enhance intercultural competencies and skills and understanding of structural inequities for historically under-represented and marginalized groups
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*This rubric has been reused and adapted under Creative Commons Attribution-Non-commercial 4.0 International License from Follmer Greenhoot, A., Ward, D., & Bernstein, D. (2017). *Benchmarks for Teaching Effectiveness*. University of Kansas.