

APT COMMITTEE REPORT: 2020-21 (Compiled by Yonn Dierwechter)

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A. SUMMARY MATRIX: TOTAL CASES REVIEWED

Promotion Cases	Number	Further Action	Ongoing Work
Mandatory Appointment Cases: Assistant to Associate, with tenure	8 cases	Completed.	As needed.
Non-Mandatory Appointment Cases: Associate to Full	7 cases	Completed.	As needed.
Non-Mandatory (Early) Appointment Cases: Assistant to Associate	1 case	Completed.	As needed.
Non-Mandatory Appointment Cases:	3 cases	Completed.	These are now reviewed as Associate Professor of Teaching to Professor of Teaching
Non-Mandatory Appointment Cases:	1 case	Completed.	These are now reviewed as Assistant Professor of Associate to Professor of Teaching
Appealed cases	1 case	Completed	As needed
Appointment cases	0 appointment cases	n/a.	As needed.
TOTAL CASES	21 APT cases reviewed for 2020-21 promotion cycle.		

B. ISSUES AND WORK COMPLETED

The committee met eight times during the 2021-21 academic year, entirely by Zoom.

APT charge

Aside from the review, discussion, and voting on the cases list above, the committee spend considerable time this past year working to clarify the “central charge” of APT. Unlike EC and other areas of faculty governance, several members noted that APT has not fundamentally changed its structure or voting membership since the campus was first established thirty years ago.

At present the purpose or role of the APT is stipulated in various places, but most notably:

- I. UW Faculty Code, 24.54c.
- II. UWT Faculty Assembly,
- III. Appendix A of the UWT Handbook
- IV. past statements issued by APT to the campus, especially in 2004 and 2010.

APT committee members revisited these statements at length as part of their overall effort to forge an improved campus-wide understanding of the purpose and remit of this level of tenure and promotion review. The main reason for this focus was because several members of APT noted that “diverse interpretations” of this role remain extant across different units and this has led to ambiguities among faculty in how individual members from different schools interpret their governance responsibilities. Specifically, it has led to differences in view on the purpose of APT’s vote on TP6.

i. UW Faculty Code 24.54c

Invoking [UW Faculty Code language](#) for voting clarification does not resolve the ambiguity..

UW Faculty Code guidance for UWT’s APT committee is antiquated because it refers to an “advisory group” that reports to a “dean” rather than to UWT’s Chancellor, which is what APT does—and has done for decades:

The dean shall be advised by a committee or council of the college or school. This advisory group, elected by the faculty of the college or school, shall consider each case presented to it and submit its recommendations with reasons therefor to the dean. If the recommendation of the committee or council is not favorable, or if it conflicts with the faculty vote, then the council or committee recommendation with reasons therefor shall be provided to the candidate. For purposes of confidentiality, specific attributions shall be

omitted and vote counts may be omitted from this report. In a departmentalized school or college, when a candidate for promotion is under consideration, any member of the committee or council who is also a member of the candidate's department may be excused.

ii. Faculty Assembly Charge

For many APT members, the code language in 24.54c does not detail sufficiently how APT should “consider each case presented.” For some APT members, but not all, a bit more clarity is provided by the “[Faculty Assembly Charge](#)” for APT, which notes that the role of APT is to coordinate discussion of appointment, promotion, and tenure “procedures and expectations.”

“The Faculty Committee on Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure shall advise the Chancellor on promotion and tenure cases under review, and on appointments in cases where consultation is needed. The Committee coordinates discussion of appointment, promotion, and tenure procedures and expectations across academic units and with administration. The Committee shall recommend policies related to appointment, tenure and promotion to the Executive Council, which may bring them to the Faculty Assembly for a vote or may adopt them as provided in Article II Section 2 of the UW Tacoma bylaws.”

That said, for some APT members even this charge fails to clarify sufficiently the central purpose of APT’s vote, which is reported on TP6 and thus constitutes an important recommendation, albeit only “advisory,” to the Chancellor’s Office and to the Provost. For some APT members, “coordinating discussion” does not necessarily imply that APT considers both procedures *and* expectations in its *own* vote on specific files.

III. Appendix A of the UWT Handbook

APT has formally amended [Appendix A of the UWT Handbook](#) twice over the past several years (2012, 2017). However no significant changes or modifications have been made to APT’s own charge during these revisions. Appendix A refers to the advice the EVCAA “seeks” from APT, emphasizing “procedures” *and* that a candidate’s record is “similar in quality to that of current tenured faculty” across the campus:

“Upon receiving the recommendation from the program director, the EVCAA will seek the advice of the Faculty Council on Appointment, Promotion and Tenure to make sure that current procedures have been followed and to ensure that the candidate’s teaching, scholarship, and service are similar in quality to that of current tenured faculty at the University of Washington Tacoma (as detailed in 24-54 C of the Faculty Code). The EVCAA will forward his/her recommendation with concurrence from the Chancellor to the Provost who makes the decision on behalf of the President. “

For many (though not all) APT members—past and present--this Handbook language does suggest a bit more clearly that APT should consider procedures and content in a manner that is different from the voting faculty within schools (as recorded on TP4). In particular, APT members should review files to judge whether they are “similar in quality to that of current tenured faculty at the University of Washington Tacoma.”

IV. Past statements issued by APT

This last sentence is similar to APT's own [past statements to the campus](#) on its specific charge:

In 2004, **APT** (then called P & T) emphasized "parity" and "comparing candidates across campus":

"We review files for: a. content using UWS code (e.g., substantial success in scholarship or teaching, etc.) and the local program's interpretation of that code b. content /related to comparing candidates across campus c. process.....

What does our vote mean that makes it different ...? (Answer: we are supposed to be monitoring and commenting on the consistency of cases from all the academic programs, to make sure there is parity)."

In 2010, P&T emphasized its role in "process" and "content review":

"The committee feels that both process and content are important, and that content review falls within the purview of the P&T committee."

Consultation with the Secretary of the Faculty

APT consulted with Mike Townsend, Secretary of the Faculty, on February 9 posing several questions about the "charge" or purpose of APT, but also touched upon a range of other important issues, including voting rights and the possibility of major reforms to APT going forward.

A summary of this discussion is pasted below:

1. Problems with UWT's promotion flow chart?

- Mike Townsend (MT) says, yes, "it's out of compliance with the code" but for now we're to leave as is (tri-campus group will eventually address)?
- It is out of compliance because officially Tacoma is now a campus with schools. This is the result of an EO a few years back which "created" our schools. According to the code, the APT-like review happens at the school level by the EFC, which is charged with providing the Dean of the School with a recommendation.

2. Keep APT as is and not move this level of review to school EFCs?

- I heard MT make this suggestion as a practical matter since the Tri-campus review, which should address this, is underway.

- The answer as to which cases the committee should vote on was not clear to me. I still do not see why large schools are sending their promotion cases to this committee and did not get the sense that this was required. In fact, we are an anomaly here in Tacoma, and I don't think we need to keep the current procedures for all schools.

3. Purpose: Process vs content... and voting purpose?

- EFCs look at both process/procedures and substance (emphasis waxes and wanes depending on EFC composition). “Why would EFCs ignore substantive disputes”?
- MF says that in undepartmentalized schools at UWT, he doesn't know if members of the EFC *also* vote on the case at the faculty level. In the law school, members of the EFC do not vote at the faculty level, and only vote at the EFC level. Moreover, all members of the EFC vote, it is not based on position hierarchy (ie, an Asst Prof may vote on a Full Prof case).
- Regarding “process” versus “substance”, MF did not know what actual practice was, but as Yonn says above, it varies across campus and across time. He was going to follow up to see if it were possible for a School's faculty to limit the things the EFC (ie, APT) is charged with recommending on. MF was clear that he thought “process” should not be given up. I thought he was less clear about “substance”. For instance he discussed the challenge of EFC in Arts and Sciences, where they have 900 faculty. That is a very demanding committee to join, and many in A&S refuse to be on it.
- I also heard him say it would be difficult if not impossible to limit what the EFC does in terms of “recommendations” given the rules and who has jurisdiction over what. But maybe others have a clearer sense of what he said
- It seems like the committee should vote on both procedure and substance.
- Mike and VP Cheryl Cameron's position was: Not being an “expert is not a sufficient reason to abdicate” voting and providing advice
- I heard MT say this as reflecting on how some people might reason. It might be what he thinks, I'm not sure.

6. Who votes on APT?

- EFCs should not deny its members the right to vote; need to change our “rules” re: not letting some members vote; “When code want hierarchy to apply it says so”
- I believe he said you could have rules around the composition of EFCs, but once someone is on the EFC (APT), everyone should vote on all cases. So I think, if I understood, we could limit APT to full professors. Or to tenure-track professors. Etc.
- Abstain? MF strongly encouraged members to vote and not abstain

7. Should we consider some new configuration of APT membership? Should it be representative of schools or representative of ranks? (e.g., 2 fulls, 2 associates, 2 teaching professors, etc.) (i do not think assistants should be able to serve though)
 - This was not discussed yesterday was it? My vote would be to put this aside until we a) figure out what APT's role is, and b) get some sense about whether it is likely to change with the Tri Campus committee. Here is my overall sense: given how small most of our schools are, it is hard to see this role being turned over to Schools. Perhaps as Yonn said, we now begin a conversation with faculty leaders about the role they think some second-faculty review should take. Do we need a second body of faculty to review cases? If so, who are we advising, and what are we advising on? How do we make sure the work load of the group remains manageable, particularly if the reviews are to be of a substantive nature?
 - no, not discussed, but Yonn asked for where we're headed. I don't think we can answer what we are advising on until we have clear directions from Mike/provost, etc. on if, in fact, we can "limit" what APTs/EFCs "do" (i.e., giving 'advice' on procedures and/or on substance). It doesn't seem clear if providing a dean with "recommendations with reasons" (FC 24-54-C) can be limited to a recommendation to promote or not based solely on procedures. We run into a TP6 problem in cases in which the reviews before us were 'negative'; but if we found no procedural irregularities, then we would be 'forced' to vote in support of promotion/tenure
8. Could a unit vote a teaching assistant professor on their EFC, but restrict their ability to vote on promotions?
 - MF "My initial response to that would be no." Miceal F Vaughan (primary "code cop") agreed with this view.
9. Could a unit restrict or require a certain type of review? Say, forbid the EFC from considering substance, as opposed to procedure, in promotion cases?
 - Miceal F Vaughan's response : "On (2), I would say No. The EFC's review has to be complete in order to advise the dean, who is NOT limited to procedural review of the department faculty's recommendation."
10. A unit should not vote on postponement in promotion cases, would the same apply to the EFC?
 - On (3), it seems to me the letter of the Code is less clear about this with regard to the EFC's deliberations. One would presume the 'postponement' may well be among those recommendations that would fall under the 'not favorable' category in 25-54.C. And indeed any recommendation on a promotion (other than one involving tenure) other than approval would, presumably, constitute a postponement of promotion since any 'denial' would only mean that they were not recommending promotion at this time: i.e., nothing would prevent a faculty member and their unit to forward a recommendation the following year, or one after that.

11. What is the purpose of APT/EFC....above and beyond the recommendation made by the faculty themselves?

- I know the purpose of APT (or EFC on Seattle) is to provide a recommendation to the Dean. In your understanding of the code or just the functioning of universities, what is the purpose of this group providing this recommendation? What is the value added above the departmental faculty's recommendation? Is it (as I have understood it) to provide independent eyes, and make sure the candidate is treated fairly? If so, my related question is about undepartmentalized schools. Here the EFC is not independent of the voting faculty, but comes from the voting faculty, probably with the same set of information, etc (If they candidate is for some reason not fairly treated by the faculty, won't the same be true of the EFC?). So what is the purpose of this review and recommendation (say at the law school), above and beyond the recommendation made by the faculty themselves?
- MT's response: " The unit EFC would have a different set of information than the faculty—namely, the summary of the faculty discussion and recommendation, and the candidate's response or documentation of the opportunity for response to the faculty summary report (see Part 2: Recommendations and Candidate's Opportunity for Response - Academic Personnel (washington.edu) . In addition, the EFC can consider any possible procedural issues, including, for example, those that might have occurred during the faculty consideration itself; in this regard, I have been aware of potential issues during the faculty discussion. Finally, it is not clear to me, as is the case for the unit faculty, that the EFC can't consider postponement. Having said that, the FCFA did have a lengthy discussion about the use of EFC's in promotion cases in undepartmentalized units. But I don't recall that people were really suggesting removing a "last faculty look" at things, but rather considering something like a separate promotion council for the undepartmentalized schools, or even the UW as a whole." --Mike

Meeting with EC and Tri-Campus Leadership

After its own internal deliberations and the meeting with Mike Townsend, APT members met with both EC and Tri-Campus Leadership on March 9, 2021 . At this meeting, a PowerPoint presentation based on all the information collected was presented and discussed. EC leadership then asked APT to present this PowerPoint to the EC and to the faculty as whole at the Spring FA Meeting.

The presentation is copied below and is also available on the FA website as a "live" video:

May 21, 2021

APT's future: Concerns, questions, opportunities for the UWT faculty

Yonn Dierwechter, Chair 2020-21; Katie Baird, Denise Drevdahl,
Debasis Dawn, Marian Harris, Greg Rose, Jose Rios

Marian Harris, Incoming Chair, 2021-2022

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Volume

Charge

Transparency-
Confidentiality

APT charge

- > **Code:** “The dean* shall be advised by a committee or council of the college or school. This advisory group...shall consider each case presented to it and submit its recommendations with reasons therefor to the dean*.”
- > **FA Charge:** APT “shall advise the Chancellor” and “...coordinate discussion of appointment, promotion, and tenure *procedures and expectations* across academic units and with administration.”



Recommendation is a vote on TP6

TP6 Form: Appointment, Promotion and Tenure (APT) Committee Recommendation

Date of Vote:

Candidate:

The above candidate is being reviewed for:

- Tenure and promotion to Associate Professor
- Promotion to Professor
- Promotion to Associate Teaching Professor
- Promotion to Teaching Professor

Eligible Voting Faculty Recommendation:

Number of faculty eligible to vote: <small>*An APT Committee member who is in the same School as the candidate must recuse themselves from discussion of and vote on the candidate's file.</small>	
Number of affirmative votes:	
Number of negative votes:	
Number of abstentions:	
Number of faculty absent:	

By the above vote, the APT Committee recommends:

[Click to Select Vote Recommendation](#)

‘Procedure,’ or both ‘process and content’?

- > Are we a “procedural” body?**
- > Do we deal with “process and content”?**
- > Across UW, this level typically does address “both process and content.”**
- > Bothell’s APT addresses both process and content.**
- > Specifically.....**



What does APT vote consider?

In 2004, “parity” and “comparing candidates across campus”:

- *“We review files for: a. content using UWS code (e.g., substantial success in scholarship or teaching, etc.) and the local program’s interpretation of that code b. content /related to comparing candidates across campus c. process.....***
- *“What does our vote mean that makes it different ...? (Answer: we are supposed to be monitoring and commenting on the consistency of cases from all the academic programs, to make sure there is parity).” ***

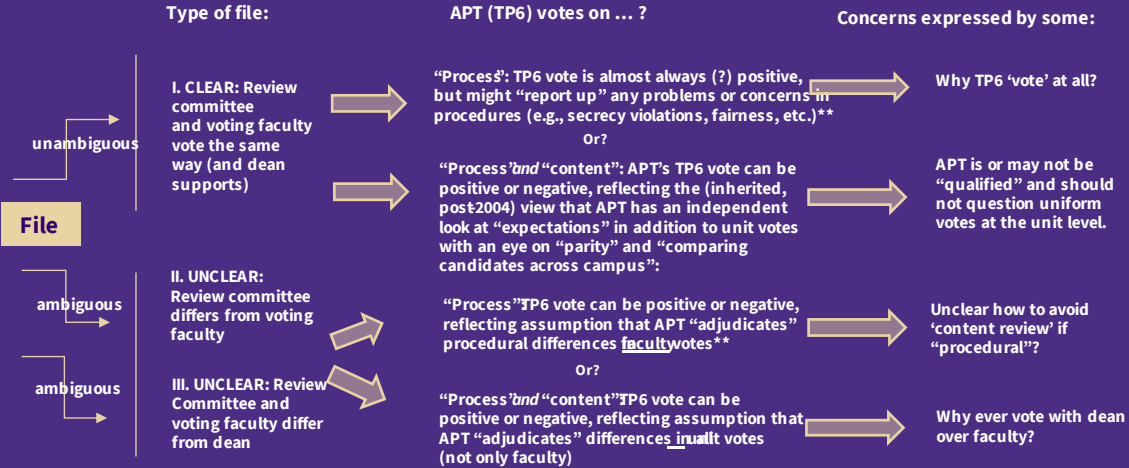
In 2010, “process” and “content review”:

- *“The committee feels that both process and content are important, and that content review falls within the purview of the P&T committee.”***

**Source: <https://tinyurl.com/yjkl7blo>

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Voting ambiguities...and *expressed* concerns



Questions

1. What should be the “charge” the APT on our campus?
2. How do we manage the growing workload (the “volume” concern)?
3. Should we change APT’s composition and representation?
4. Should we change who can serve on APT (ranks) and what their voting rights are?
5. How can we improve transparency to candidates on APT decisions without breaching confidentiality?
6. How can APT engage others from this point forward?



Meeting with Provost's Office

APT then worked with EC leadership to engage the Provost and Vice-Provost on the theme of promotion and tenure. This was done in lieu of the annual "workshop" that APT normally hosts for faculty. Although originally scheduled to occur *before* the FA Spring Meeting in late May, the Provost's meeting was pushed to June 9. APT asked EC representatives and the faculty as whole to submit questions ahead of time. This list is copied below:

1. Faculty across UWT seem to have developed different views on *the role and purpose of the APT committee* on this campus over the years. What is the Provost's view of this committee's role at UWT? What is the core purpose of "APT's "vote"? Is it simply to referee "process," as many faculty members believe and/or want? Is it to adjudicate clear differences in votes among the faculty and/or the deans? Or is it to provide an independent review that considers a wider perspective on both process and substance with criteria such as "commensurability" and "comparable standards" between schools?
2. What are the Chancellor and Vice Chancellor using to make their own promotion determinations? I think there are some faculty here who believe (or wish) that the only people looking at *substance* are the external reviewers and maybe their own faculty...and that all the way up the rest of the chain, it's just about procedures and process. This doesn't explain some of our promotion decisions in past years.
3. What standards does the Provost's Office use to judge *scholarship* for promotion?
4. I don't have a question but more of a request. Could the Provost please address the central importance of *scholarship and research*? We have some folks here who really believe that scholarship is just not that important. I'd to see the Provost address this directly.
5. What does the Provost's Office expect from *reviews at each of the various stages*? Could the Provost provide an overview of the ideal process from the Provost's perspective? How is it supposed to work?
6. We are seeing an uptick in the use of "*abstention*" votes, particularly for the senior faculty votes in schools. How does the Provost Office interpret the use of "abstention" votes?
7. With respect to promotion committees for associate teaching professors to full teaching professors. There are *disagreements about the need for external reviewers being of higher rank than the candidate*. Please explain the need for external reviewers to be of higher rank than the candidate for promotion or promotion and tenure. A related question: what is the role of the external reviewers in the promotion and tenure process?(see question 4)
8. Does the Provost think it's possible or desirable for us to have a "*split process*" in *Tacoma*; i.e., SIAS, Milgard, SET use their own councils in lieu of APT if desired; the rest of the smaller schools stay with APT. What we should do, if anything, to "fix" our process and bring closer to being code compliant?
9. Some of our unit's tenured professors are very uncomfortable with *Teaching professors reviewing Tenure track professors*. Can the Provost address the question of Teaching professors reviewing Tenure track professors?

10. With the new change in faculty code, review committees have to be formed with those that are higher in rank. Many of the tenured professors (at the Professor rank) are unwilling to do the work and it is very hard to find willing faculty. Since they seem to be fewer in number, it is hard to allocate between all those that are going up for mandatory and non-mandatory promotion.
11. In many PT cases, reviews at the various levels, including your own, are inconsistent. Faculty are thus getting *mixed messages* about their performance and what it takes to be promoted. How can all of us do a better job being *more consistent and coherent* in our communication and decision making around what it takes to be promoted?
12. UWT is treated more like a school than an independent campus in the UW system. That means that many important decisions are made in Seattle. Yet Seattle leadership and its decision-making considerations and processes remain opaque to us here. How might you improve the *flow of communication between the campuses*? In particular, between Seattle and UWT faculty? Could you for instance, commit to a quarterly meeting with faculty?

At the Zoom meeting on June 9, which was attended by 121 people but unfortunately was not recorded for posterity, the Provost and Vice-Provost answered each question in turn and in considerable detail. The most important insight gained from APT's perspective was the Provost's view that APT should remain as it is, and that it should be considered a "very important" and "independent" body exercising "quality control" in the review process, which is similar to the language in Appendix A as stated above. The Provost also emphasized that faculty should not use "abstention" votes unless there is a clear conflict of interest because abstains are counted as no votes in the tally.

EC stipulated changes to APT voting and agenda for 2021-22

Although many potential changes to APT might be explored going forward (see below), APT presented EC with two important changes for the 2021-22 academic year. These changes were adopted by a majority vote at a special EC meeting held on June 11. The wording on the two Catalyst votes and the recorded results are pasted verbatim below:

Please vote "yes" "no" or "abstain" on whether EC should revise the APT Guidelines (attached to your vote email) to the delete the following language: Effective the 2019-2020 promotion cycle, Associate Professors serving on the APT committee shall recuse themselves from a vote on candidates going up for promotion to Full Professor.

Yes	9	64.29%
No	4	28.57%
Abstain	1	7.14%

Please vote “yes” “no” or “abstain” on whether EC should revise the APT Guidelines (attached to your vote email) to add the following language:

APT deliberation should take place with the understanding that the committee will undertake a procedural and substantive review of all candidate files for the academic year 2021-2022 with the understanding that the charge is to be reviewed and clarified by EC during that same year.

Yes	13	92.86%
No	1	7.14%
Abstain	0	0.00%

C. AGENDA ITEMS FOR 2021-22

1. **APT Voting Rights.**

The most important practical change made to APT going forward is that Associate Professors serving on the APT committee will no longer recuse themselves from a vote on candidates going up for promotion to Full Professor. This change in voting rights was made upon the recommendation of Mike Townsend after extensive discussion by APT members and with EC leadership and EC members.

However, it also seems as if **APT should ask EC to restore voting rights to ALL APT members on ALL APT cases, including cases from their own units.** At present and for many years, an APT member does not vote on a case from her/his/their own school. APT should focus on this immediately. As part of this, language of the TP6 form will need to be changed; it stipulates that

“An APT Committee member who is in the same School as the candidate must recuse themselves from discussion of a vote on the candidate’s file.”

Based on conversation with Mike Townsend, this seems no longer applicable or desirable as an agreed upon APT procedure. If this is changed, then it should be amended in the Guidance to Deans and Faculty Councils document developed by APT 3 years ago and adopted by EC as an important additional communication tool.

2. DEI work.

Because of the core focus on clarifying APT’s core charge, ongoing work on DEI did not progress as much as it should have.

3. Better language on and guidance for APT’s Campus-wide Charge**

Per EC’s directive discussed above please note:

“APT deliberation should take place with the understanding that the committee will undertake a procedural and substantive review of all candidate files for the academic year 2021-2022 with the understanding that the charge is to be reviewed and clarified by EC during that same year.”

**This could be in the Handbook and/or in the [Guidance to Deans and Faculty Councils](#) document.

4. Better language on Abstention Votes **

APT should provide better guidance on the appropriate use and non-use of abstention votes at all levels of review. This could be either in the Handbook or in the [Guidance to Deans and Faculty councils](#) document.

**This could be in the Handbook and/or in the Guidance to Deans and Faculty Councils document developed by APT 3 years ago and adopted by EC as an important additional communication tool.

5. Engaging Faculty Councils over APT charge and Education of Faculty

APT should consider how it might best engage in new ways with Faculty Councils as it seeks to clarify APT’s charge and responsibilities.

6. APT internal discussion of School expectations for promotion by rank

APT should make sure it affords time for all members to discuss expectations for promotion in their schools by each rank at the start of the academic year and before specific cases are received. This will help all members understand specific school tenure and promotion guidelines and expectations.