COMMITTEE NAME: University Committee on Faculty Tenure

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Laura McCabe (Chair), Shawnee Vickery (Co-Chair), Dan Bronstein (fall 2014), Suzanne Wagner (fall 2014), Amanda Holmstrom (fall 2014), M. Teresa Tatro, Charles Petty, Henry Barry, Tobin Craig, John Reifenberg, Kendra Cheruvelil, Michael Dease, Barbara Atshaves, Rebecca Lehto, John Aerni-Flessner (fall 2014), Jakana Thomas, Steven Arnoczky, Susan Kendall, Claire McCarthy (fall 2014), Greg Jackson (fall 2014), Afrand Kamali, Dan Keathley (spring 2015), John McClendon (spring 2015), Stephen Lacy (spring 2015), Estrella Torrez (spring 2015), Amin Soltani (spring 2015)

Committee Function:
The University Committee on Faculty Tenure (UCFT) (based on section 4.7 of the Bylaws for Academic Governance)

- Shall advise the Provost on the formal and procedural rules for the award and revocation of tenure and on policies relating to tenure, and shall make recommendations to the Faculty Senate on such rules and on policies.
- Shall hear and act on all cases for exceptions to the rules of tenure and its decisions on the matters shall be binding on the administration and on the faculty member.
- In addition, the role of the UCFT on the interpretation of the rules of tenure is determined by Principle Seven of the Operating Principles of the Tenure System (see Faculty Handbook).

SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES AND ACTIONS:
1) The committee reviewed the Annual Appointment, Reappointment, Tenure and Promotion memorandum. The committee provided feedback to the Provost to clarify the letter.
2) The committee updated MSU’s Faculty Handbook document: Interpretation of Incompetence (1999 last modified).
   a. Previous changes by UCFT (Spring 2014) went to General Counsel who made suggestions that were further reviewed by UCFT (Fall 2014). UCFT made additional clarification changes (in discussion with Kristine Zayko, Deputy General Counsel) and obtained input from faculty (overall positive responses). UCFT approved the changes and they were incorporated into the handbook January 2015; this was possible to do without Board approval since this part of the handbook represents a definition and not a policy.
   b. While the committee wanted to change the term “incompetence” to “failure to perform” in the above document, this term is used in two other university policies that are currently under revision. It is thought that the
new terminology, “failure to perform,” can be incorporated into all documents upon the full approval of the two policies.

3) The committee worked on updating MSU’s document: Dismissal of Tenured Faculty for Cause Policy (2006). Document were reviewed by Kristine Zayko (Fall 2014) and sent out to faculty for review. There were several important points brought up by faculty and a conversation about how the Discipline and Dismissal policies could come together as one policy. The UCFT recommended that the Provost assemble a working group with representatives from the UCFT, UCFA and the Faculty Grievance Office to review and evaluate these policies in a broader context. Volunteers were obtained from each committee and the first group meeting was on May 1, 2015.

4) The committee reviewed the development of the CMSE department. We met with the core Deans and faculty involved in the creation of the Department of Computational Mathematics, Science and Engineering (CMSE). The committee was enthusiastic about the department but felt there were potential issues that could affect faculty tenure and promotion in a new, interdisciplinary and dual-college department. UCFT recommended that
   a. Faculty need to be given clear expectations in offer letters and letters of memoranda of understanding between units. This was thought to be critical given that 1) faculty time will be split (70:30) between at least 2 departments and colleges, 2) the department is new and will require significant service and leadership and 3) faculty need to be independent and effective team players.
   b. Teaching loads should be reduced in year 1. Classes will be new and require extensive effort and faculty may be recruited from the private sector where they do not teach. Reducing the teaching load during year 1 will allow new faculty to focus on their research and setting the foundation for their future promotion.
   c. Early-career faculty service should be limited.
   d. Research expectations must be clear. Faculty need to understand if they should focus on smaller single PI grants versus larger collaborative grants (individual versus team focus).
   e. Information on RPT from other similar departments should be sought out to proactively address challenges.
   f. The start of this department provides an excellent opportunity to recruit a diverse faculty including women and minorities.

5) The UCFT voted to approve the amendment to the Law School tenure process. The committee met with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs for the Law School who presented an amendment to adopt a collapsed approach to permit an associate professor to apply for tenure and promotion to full professor simultaneously. Nationally, it is a common practice of law schools to grant tenure along with promotion to full professor status. This would provide an option for concurrent tenure and promotion at the election of the applicant, with the understanding that more work is needed to gain advanced status. The law school faculty believes this approach will assist with the recruitment and retention of its
most talented faculty and will position the university to be in alignment with common practice amongst peers.

6) The committee discussed and made suggestions to the provost regarding inclusion of faculty in the Provost-level RPT review. The proposal was then adjusted to select individuals from among University Distinguished Professors, named professors, and those who have received the Beal Outstanding Faculty Award. The incorporation of named professors and Beal award winners creates a larger and more diverse pool to select from. Specifics about this are found at: https://provost.msu.edu/archive/2015/The-reappointment,-promotion,-and-tenure-process-Additional-faculty-consultation.html

7) The committee discussed application of the Implementation Practices policy. This policy has 5 points that provide automatic extension of the tenure clock, one of which is reasons related to the birth or adoption of a child. The request for an automatic one-year extension related to the birth or adoption of a child must be submitted within two years of the birth/adoption but no later than the due date for submission to the department/school of the dossier for the next reappointment/promotion/tenure review.

INTERPRETATION 1: UCFT interpreted this to mean the child could be born prior to hire at MSU. UCFT felt that an email each fall should be sent to pre-tenure faculty alerting them to the tenure clock extension policy, the Implementation Practices policy. In addition, the committee asked for this email to be sent to Deans, Directors, and Chairpersons to increase awareness of this interpretation.

INTERPRETATION 2: If a faculty member chooses to waive the extension and go up for reappointment at his/her normal time, the faculty member is bound to the outcome of that review; the faculty member will not be allowed to go up again for reappointment if the outcome was unsuccessful.

8) The UCFT committee reviewed 5 personnel matters in the fall and 2 personnel matters in the spring.

9) There will be continued discussion of improvement for form D.