

COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC POLICY  
Minutes of Meeting #11, Academic Year 2016-2017  
January 20, 2017

Present: M. Humi (Chair), S. Boecker; J. Doyle; M. Elmes; J. Hanlan; D. Olinger; C. Pellegrini

Student members of CAP for C Term will be Collette Pellegrini and Sarah Boecker.

J. Doyle presented a summary of the business presented at the Committee Chairs Meeting which he attended as CAP's representative. The meeting consisted largely of a discussion of business to be presented at the next Faculty meeting.

Approximately one year ago, President Leshin announced the formation of a partnership with Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU). WPI faculty have been involved in this experiment. Now that WPI-SNHU are a year into their joint work, it seems a propitious time to hear about how the experiment is going, what WPI is learning, and what the role of the faculty has been. M. Humi will find out, from the Provost, CPE, and Dean Heinricher how the experiment/partnership has been structured and whom to contact for a briefing on this matter. If graduate education is involved, CAP will alert CGSR to this matter. CAP hopes to present the results to the Faculty.

The planned meeting with UOAC and COG has been delayed.

The matter of online versus paper course evaluations arose. Deah Heinricher's office has been experimenting with online course evaluations, with CAP's approval, for almost 2 years. CAP will form a subcommittee to work with Dean Heinricher to draw conclusions from this ongoing experimental evaluation. The goal of the subcommittee will be to decide on whether or not to transition to full online evaluation and abandon the paper course evaluation system. CAP will discuss this further at the next meeting, when Dean Heinricher can be present.

CAP discussed the matter of large class sizes which seem to have grown as WPI's enrollment has grown. One example that was cited in one particular discipline was that class sizes for a specific course had grown from typical enrollments of 35 students to enrollments of ca. 175 students. The opinion was expressed that this makes effective teaching difficult and makes individualized attention or help for students impractical. Student members were asked whether they had heard from their peers about large class sizes. The response was that, in first year classes, especially, complaints from students were common with the feeling expressed that freshmen in large courses feel "lost in crowds of students."

Respectfully submitted,

James Hanlan, Secretary