

## Minutes of FAP Meeting #8 AY2019-20

November 18, 2019

3:00 PM – 4:00 PM

SL 225

Members in Attendance: Joe Fehribach (FBC Chair), George Pins (RPC Representative), Mike Radzicki (Secretary), Kris Sullivan (Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs)

Ex Officio: Tanja Dominko (Secretary of the Faculty)

Absent: Nancy Burnham (Chair), Jeff Solomon (Executive Vice President/CFO)

Guest: Casey Wall (Assistant Assistant Dean of Students and Director of Residential Services)

- 1) **Call to Order.** Acting Chair Fehribach called the eighth FAP meeting of the year to order at 3:03 PM.
- 2) **Approval of Minutes.** The minutes of the November 11<sup>th</sup> FAP meeting were read and minor corrections were offered. Professor Pins moved and VP Sullivan seconded a motion to approve the minutes as corrected. The motion passed unanimously.
- 3) **Graduate Student Housing.** Acting Chair Fehribach welcomed Assistant Dean Wall to the meeting. Assistant Dean Wall provided FAP with a handout summarizing housing data for WPI. Of note is that WPI currently houses 63% of its undergraduate population and 13% of its full-time graduate student population. The discussion then turned to the question of why WPI doesn't offer housing to graduate student couples, including those with children. A lack of a university-based housing option seems to put WPI at a competitive disadvantage when recruiting good graduate students, particularly good Ph.D. students. Assistant Dean Wall explained that:
  - a) hardly any institutions of WPI's size offer housing to graduate students.
  - b) graduate student housing is an expensive endeavor for both the university and the students.
  - c) the configuration of WPI's housing stock is not conducive to families/couples. (e.g., dormitory rather than apartment settings; old homes with lead paint).
  - d) WPI's current policy is to offer transitional (ten month) housing to first year graduate students who are new to Worcester. Once these students become familiar with the area they then take advantage of the general Worcester County housing market. The ten month time period provides two months of down time during which maintenance can be performed on the buildings.

The committee members then asked whether it was possible for WPI to strike deals with universities in the Worcester Consortium to house WPI graduate students. Assistant Dean Wall indicated that this idea has been floated in the past but that area colleges and universities are often experiencing the same problem, have no underutilized facilities that are conducive for couples/families, or simply do not want the additional “hassle” of housing another university’s students. The committee members also asked whether or not WPI at least provides information to new graduate students about the area housing market. Assistant Dean Wall indicated that the university hosts a web page that lists all of the currently available housing in the area and encourages the students to take advantage of this resource.

Finally, the question of whether or not graduate student housing is part of any WPI strategy going forward was raised. Members noted that, in addition to M.S. and Ph.D. students, post docs and visiting scholars could utilize properly configured graduate student housing. Assistant Dean Wall indicated that WPI is aware of the issue but that any graduate student housing strategy would have to be part of a larger capital plan. The new “North Hall” dorm that will occupy part of the Salisbury Estates parcel is the only (undergraduate) student housing project that is currently under consideration.

- 4) **Adjournment.** Acting Chair Fehribach thanked Assistant Dean Wall for her participation in the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 3:58 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael J. Radzicki

Secretary