

## Committee on Governance: Minutes

Meeting #10: November 21, 2022

Faculty Governance Conference Room, SL 225

3:00pm – 4:30pm

**Present:** Len Albano (Chair, CEAE), Althea Danielski (HUA), Tanja Dominko (BBT), George Heineman (CS), Art Heinricher (Interim Provost), Suzanne LePage (CEAE), Mark Richman (Secretary of the Faculty, AE), Diane Strong (President's appointment, WBS), Karen Troy (BME).

1. Chair Albano called the meeting to order at 3:04. The agenda was approved as distributed.
2. The minutes for COG Meeting #9 were approved with revisions.
3. Debrief of November Faculty Meeting
4. COG recommended moving the December Faculty meeting to Monday December 19<sup>th</sup> to accommodate more faculty members. Committee members noted that faculty may have flexibility on that date because the grading deadline is 5PM on Wednesday December 21<sup>st</sup>. Professor Richman will email the faculty about the new meeting scheduled at 10AM on December 21<sup>st</sup>, with doors opening by 9:45 AM.
5. Reorganization of Faculty Handbook
6. The Promotion sections of the reorganized Faculty handbook is complete in draft form. The primary content details in reorganized fashion the eligibility conditions, criteria, and process for promotion for all categories of faculty. The processes for promotion are unified where possible while appropriate differences are maintained as well. The revisions emphasize and clarify the current processes COAP follows in these cases. It was noted that COAP is not responsible for promotions to Senior Instructor or to Assistant Teaching Professor; recommendations for these promotions are made by the Department Head and/or Program Director and the appropriate Dean.

7.

8. Some effort will be made to emphasize in the draft that Teaching Professors are secured nontenure-track teaching faculty members, whereas Professors of Teaching are tenured and tenure-track faculty members.

9.

10. Discussion on recently distributed APG policies

11. The primary change in the new indemnification policy (as distributed by APG) is to extend the policy to cover **nonexempt** employees (where before it only applied to Faculty, Professional Staff and all other **exempt** employees). COG was concerned that the word “reasonable” was inserted, which changes the policy to now read “WPI shall indemnify all of its Faculty, Professional Staff and all other Employees ... against any and all **reasonable liabilities, losses, costs and** expenses...” This seems like a scale-back of indemnification against “all expenses” as described in the current language. Furthermore, it is unclear who would decide whether a specific expense was “reasonable”, using what supporting evidence.

12. There was also some confusion and discussion regarding the circumstance where someone could be “adjudicated in any proceeding not to have acted in good faith...” Although this wording was not a proposed change to the policy, the interpretation could vary. It would be helpful to have specific examples for when the indemnification policy would and would not be applicable. Finally, the question was raised about why the sentence structure of the policy couldn’t be simplified so that it was more easily understood by nonlawyers.

13.

14. COG discussed the “Animals on Campus Policy” distributed by APG, which carefully defines the terms “Assistance Animal”, “Therapy Animal” and “Pet”.

15. Discussion of Sexual Misconduct Policy

COG received several documents from the Office of the General Counsel (OGC) and Title IX Office in response to our inquiries regarding the interim Sexual Misconduct Policy and Title IX policy as compared to the Sexual Misconduct Policy approved by the WPI faculty in 2018. OGC provided a comparison of what Title IX requires and what WPI’s Title IX policy contains, but the questions regarding the differences between the 2018 Sexual Misconduct Policy and the Interim Sexual Misconduct and Title IX policy

were still not fully answer.

16. COG suggested it might be useful to have our own non-Title IX Sexual Misconduct Policy that would remain in place regardless of changes to Title IX Sexual Misconduct Policies as defined at the federal level. COG discussed the merits of keeping our existing 2018 Sexual Misconduct Policy for all non-Title IX situations. In particular, what are the state constraints that our 2018 policy doesn't already address (and thus would need to change)?

17. Meeting adjourned at 4:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

George Heineman  
Secretary