

Committee on Governance: Meeting Minutes

Meeting #11: 8 November 2021

Campus Center, Morgan Conference Room

Present: Len Albano (Secretary, CEE); Nancy Burnham (PH); Tanja Dominko (BBT); Tahar El-Korchi (Chair, CEE); George Heineman (CS); Mark Richman (Secretary of the Faculty, AE)

Absent: Susan Roberts (CHE); Wole Soboyejo (Provost)

1. Prof. El-Korchi called the meeting to order at 11:20 am.
2. The agenda was approved as distributed.
3. The minutes of COG meeting #10 on November 1, 2021 were approved with modifications.
4. Preparations for the December Faculty Meeting:
Reflecting on last Thursday, November 4th, Prof. Richman felt that the correct decision was made to cancel the Faculty Meeting in support of the planned student march. He was appreciative of the input he received from COG and other faculty members earlier in the day. He noted that a number of faculty members met in Olin 107 for informal conversations and then walked over to the Quad at about 3:45pm where they were joined by additional faculty members for the student march.

Prof. Richman then asked whether the November Faculty Meeting should be rescheduled or canceled. Responses favored canceling the November Faculty Meeting because there were no motions or consent agenda items to consider for November and, considering the upcoming Thanksgiving Break, there is not much time between now and the December 2nd Faculty Meeting. The point was also made that an additional Faculty Meeting may be considered, if needed. Prof. Richman will move forward with defining the agenda for the December Faculty Meeting, and the agenda will include the open discussion items that were planned for November 4th.

5. COG Appointment to the Selection Committee for the Trustees' Award for Outstanding Teaching:
Prof. El-Korchi reported that COG must appoint a faculty member for a three-year term. Prof. Richman has served on the Selection Committee as COG's appointee for the past two years, but he cannot continue to serve because he is the Secretary of the Faculty. Faculty members currently on the Committee are Prof. Esther Boucher-Yip (HUA), Prof. Natalie Farny (BBT), Prof. Destin Heilman (CBC), and Prof. Sarah Wodin-Schwartz (ME). According to Part Two, Section 6.A of the Faculty Handbook, COG is to nominate a faculty member from a slate selected by CAP, CASL, and CGSR. Prof. El-Korchi will contact the chairs of these committees and ask each committee to identify two to three faculty members, including at least one teaching-track and at least one dual-mission faculty member, for COG's consideration.
6. Discussion on Student and Campus Wellbeing:

Prof. El-Korchi invited open discussion for new initiatives and new ideas that faculty governance can consider to improve student and campus wellbeing. COG would serve as the facilitator to involve the appropriate faculty committees. Areas of discussion included:

- Pass-fail option for student grades.
- Policies for academic progress and the implications for financial aid.
- Academic calendar.
- Tenure clock.

COG also looked at the four subcommittees that comprise the Mental Health and Wellbeing Task Force, led by Dean King and Matt Barry, Assistant Director, Student Development and Counseling Center. President Leshin recently announced that the work of the Task Force and its subcommittees will be completed by Thanksgiving, instead of the original target date of December 15. It was noted that three of the subcommittees – Academics, Leveraging Technology, and Wellness Programming – may be considering ideas that fall within the purview of CAO, CAP, CGSR, CITP, or CASL. It was felt that these subcommittees of the Task Force should be reaching out to the appropriate faculty governance committees to share information and to prepare the community for implementing any proposed action items. Profs. El-Korchi and Richman will collaborate on contacting the chairs of the subcommittees to encourage interaction with the appropriate faculty governance committees.

7. Communication with Faculty Governance Committees and Feedback on Accommodating All Voting Faculty:

As a follow-up to COG Meeting #10, Prof. El-Korchi reported that he is contacting the Committee Chairs to solicit feedback on accommodating all voting faculty within their respective committees.

Discussion then turned to preparing for elections to COG, which Prof. Richman will conduct early in the spring semester. The current election procedure requires initial voting on a nominating ballot, and then the ten faculty members receiving the largest number of nominations are placed on an electing ballot. In their roles as Secretary of the Faculty, Prof. Dominko and Prof. Richman have observed that the requirement to list ten names on the electing ballot is excessive. A suggested modification to the election procedure is to create an electing ballot with five names or two times the number of COG vacancies, whichever is larger. This change would require a revision to the Faculty Handbook, and it will receive more discussion at a future COG meeting.

COG will request the Provost to give accommodations in the form of course releases to the members of CTAF and COAP. These two important committees are facing increasing workloads with the growth of the faculty, and COG urges the Provost to consider the time commitment for these committee members to review materials and participate in deliberations for the tenure or promotion candidates. This request was made last academic year, but the Provost indicated that it was submitted too late for the budgeting process for AY 2021-22. COG will make the request now in anticipation of the budgeting process for AY 2022-23.

8. The meeting was adjourned at 12:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Leonard Albano
Secretary, COG