

Committee on Governance: Meeting Minutes

Meeting #12: 15 November 2021

Campus Center, Morgan Conference Room

Present: Len Albano (Secretary, CEE); Nancy Burnham (PH); Tanja Dominko (BBT); Tahar El-Korchi (Chair, CEE); Mark Richman (Secretary of the Faculty, AE); Susan Roberts (CHE); Wole Soboyejo (Provost)

Absent: George Heineman (CS)

1. Prof. El-Korchi called the meeting to order at 11:23 am.
2. The agenda was approved as distributed.
3. The minutes of COG meeting #11 on November 8, 2021 were approved with modifications.
4. Preparations for the December Faculty Meeting:
Prof. Richman reported that the agenda for the Faculty Meeting on December 2nd will include the open discussion items that were planned for the November meeting, if time allows. He also commented that the agenda would be modified to accommodate any time-sensitive motions that may be submitted by a faculty governance committee to improve student and campus wellbeing. November 18th is the deadline for distributing materials that require two weeks' notice. The meeting materials will be distributed on Thanksgiving Day, November 25th.
5. Proposal for Administrative Searches (continued from COG meeting #10):
Prof. Dominko distributed a revised version of the proposed changes to Section 1.I of the Faculty Handbook which addresses searches to fill academic administrative positions. As follow-up from COG meeting #10, Prof. Dominko revised the document to clarify the titles associated with full-time and part-time academic administrative positions and the size and composition of the associated search committees. In this latest version, a full-time academic administrator has a 75-100% time commitment and carries the titles of Provost, Vice Provost, or Academic Deans. Associate Deans and Associate Vice Provosts refer to part-time administrative positions with a 25-75% time commitment. Assistant Deans, Assistant Vice Provosts, or Faculty Fellows are part-time positions with 25% or less time commitment. In addition, a full-time position is to be filled from either inside or outside WPI with a nine-member search committee, and a part-time position is to be filled from within WPI with either a five-member or three-member search committee, depending on the time commitment for the position.

Initial discussion focused on distinguishing the two types of part-time appointments and how they are used to further activities in WPI's academic administration. It was agreed that part-time positions with a time commitment of 25% or less give professional development opportunities that are typically project specific, and these positions can be addressed by establishing a separate Faculty Fellows program, which would be addressed in another proposal. Provost Soboyejo indicated that he will help to provide job descriptions for entry-level administrative positions that require 25% to 50% time

commitment to clarify the relationship between the expected responsibilities and the time commitment.

A second discussion item was the issue of balancing transparency in advertising opportunities for part-time academic administrative positions with the flexibility for the Provost or a Dean to appoint an individual with certain complementary skills. Provost Soboyejo expressed a desire to support the proposal to promote transparency and inclusion, but he would like to see input from the Deans on the search processes. Prof. El-Korchi asked Prof. Dominko to share the proposal in its current form with the Deans and ask for their feedback.

6. Update on Communication between Faculty Governance Committee Chairs and Dean King Concerning the Faculty Activities Model:

Prof. El-Korchi and Prof. Richman joined Faculty Governance Committee Chairs in a recent meeting in which Dean King shared information on the research that she has conducted for developing a faculty activities model. Provost Soboyejo also attended. Prof. Richman reported that Dean King did not have a proposal for a faculty activities model, and as follow-up to the meeting, the Committee Chairs have sent a letter to Dean King and Provost Soboyejo expressing their view that Faculty Governance should have input to the model and the model should be approved by the faculty. The issue is to agree on a process that ensures transparency and has faculty acceptance because the results should reflect the faculty's values. It is recognized that the implementation of the faculty activities model will occur at the department level. Provost Soboyejo promised to communicate with the Deans the importance of transparency in the process, as defined by the community.

7. COG Election Procedure:

Prof. Richman distributed a draft motion to simplify the election ballot for COG. As discussed in the minutes for COG meeting #10, the requirement to list ten names on the final COG election ballot is excessive. This motion would change Part One, Bylaw One, Section I of the Faculty Handbook to reduce the number of faculty members appearing on the final COG election ballot to five names or two times the number of COG vacancies, whichever is larger. The draft motion also proposes modifying the language on the election of COG members to refer to "department" instead of "discipline." COG members accepted these changes, and the discussion shifted to exchanging ideas on the membership of COG. For example, should the Chair of COG be a tenured member of the faculty, similar to the Secretary of the Faculty? Should any modifications be considered for including full-time, non-tenure-track (NTT) teaching faculty on COG? Given the breadth of issues that COG addresses and the fact that the Chair may need to take controversial positions on behalf of the faculty, it was agreed that the Chair of COG should be a tenured faculty member for the record of experience and the security that a tenured position provides. On the matter of including full-time NTT faculty, the composition of the faculty was suggested as a model. With implementation of last year's motions on a teaching path to tenure and secure contracts for full-time NTT faculty, it is expected that about 80% of the WPI faculty will be tenured or tenure-track and 20% full-time NTT. Prof. Richman will update the draft motion to incorporate the discussion from today's meeting. In addition, Prof. El-Korchi and Prof. Richman will reach out to the TRT Council to discuss NTT representation on COG.

8. The meeting was adjourned at 12:52pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Leonard Albano
Secretary, COG