

Committee on Governance: Minutes

Meeting #1: August 29, 2022

Faculty Governance Conference Room, SL 225

3:00pm – 4:30pm

Present: Len Albano (Chair, CEAE), Althea Danielski (HUA), Tanja Dominko (BBT), Art Heinricher (Interim Provost), Suzanne LePage (CEAE), Mark Richman (Secretary of the Faculty, AE).

Absent: George Heineman (CS)

1. Agenda was approved as distributed.
2. Update on first Faculty Meeting, September 1, 2022:

Prof. Richman reviewed the agenda for the first faculty meeting of the year that was distributed on Thursday, August 25th, 2022. As we have done in the past, we will devote our first meeting primarily to approving undergraduate and graduate student graduation lists (August 2022 graduation date) and welcoming our new faculty colleagues to the WPI Campus. As special recognition, Prof. Richman will introduce 16 of our current colleagues in the second cohort who transitioned to the new faculty track for Professor of Teaching (Assistant, Associate, Full), who will in turn reintroduce themselves to our community. In addition, we will welcome 37 new colleagues who will be joining us as dual mission faculty, secured non-tenure track faculty, research faculty, and post-doctoral associates. Provost Heinricher agreed that following last year's routine and in the interest of time, he would introduce the department heads who would introduce the new faculty members in their departments, who will in turn introduce themselves. The agenda also includes reports by the Interim President, Prof. Wole Soboyejo and the Interim Provost, Prof. Art Heinricher. President Soboyejo will hold a reception for all faculty after the meeting at the President's house.
3. COG committee appointments:

COG unanimously voted to appoint the following faculty members to:

 - a. Conflict Management Committee (CMC): Suzanne Scarlata (CBC) as CMC Chair and Mingjiang Tao (CEAE) as an alternate to the CMC for this academic year.
 - b. Research Development Council (RDC): Yuxiang (Shawn) Liu (MME) for a three-year term.
 - c. Committee on Financial and Administrative Policy (FAP): Tanja Dominko as COG representative for this academic year.
 - d. Campus Hearing Board (CHB): Joel Brattin as the faculty chair for a three-year term.

The committee will reach out to faculty to identify a colleague who will be willing and able to serve as the next COG TTT appointee to the Fringe Benefits Committee (FBC) for a three-year term.
4. Update on President's appointment to COG:

The most recent language in the faculty handbook requires that the President make their appointment to COG in collaboration with COG to balance committee representation. Currently, COG members include four Arts Sciences faculty and four Engineering faculty, with even split between male and female members within each. To balance the committee further, Committee members asked that the President consider faculty in the Business school and the Global school when considering his appointment. The committee also discussed the need to identify a faculty colleague who will be able to devote the necessary time to not only attending committee meetings but also to devoting effort to the committee's work outside of meeting times. The committee hopes that, as a collaborative appointment between the President and the COG, the new appointee can be approved at its next meeting on September 12, 2022.

5. Reorganization of the Faculty Handbook:

Secretary of the faculty Prof. Richman reviewed the project undertaking reorganization of the Faculty Handbook. While the recently posted version of the Faculty Handbook is current and contains updates approved by the faculty up to and including faculty votes at the May 2022 meeting, the Handbook could benefit from a comprehensive reorganization. Over time, changes have been made and sections have been added that have led to fragmentation of content and made the Handbook somewhat cumbersome to use.

The ongoing reorganization includes:

1. Combining and consolidating all relevant policies and procedures pertaining to particular topics (for example: Tenure, Promotion, Appointments, Governance, etc.) into new comprehensive sections of the Handbook devoted to each topic.
2. Editorial adjustments to achieve continuity of the language and eliminate inconsistencies in terminology (non-substantive).
3. Adjustments that reflect inference (non-substantive).

Although these reorganizational changes would need faculty approval, they would not include changes in the substance of the faculty handbook policies.

Finally, the project might also include the following:

4. Proposed adjustments and changes in substance that would require additional faculty approval (beyond reorganization) before they are implemented.

The committee thanked Prof. Richman for undertaking this effort and discussed best ways to assure that: a) such a reorganization does not result in portions of the Faculty Handbook being unintentionally removed, b) there is a process to address any such omission if and when identified in the future, and c) best ways to present the newly reorganized faculty handbook for faculty and trustee approval, where needed.

6. The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm.

Respectfully,

Tanja Dominko
Secretary pro tem