

Committee on Governance: Minutes
Meeting #2: September 12, 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).

1. Agenda was approved as distributed.
2. Minutes from COG meeting #1 approved with minor changes. Thanks to Professor Dominko for recording minutes from first meeting.
3. Look ahead to October Faculty Meeting (Mark Richman): At the final May 10, 2022 WPI Faculty meeting, Professor Strauss (DIGS) included a draft resolution calling on WPI to divest from fossil fuels. Professor Richman recommended that Professor Strauss connect with and continue discussions with FAP. Professor Richman is also in discussion with CTAF regarding possible items for presentation. Finally, there may be introductions for new WPI faculty members who were unable to attend the first WPI Faculty meeting.
4. Teaching track to tenure progress (40% versus 45): In the spring of 2021, WPI formally established a teaching track to tenure and an institutional goal to place fully 40 percent of its teaching faculty on the tenure track by fall 2023. Today there are 30 teaching faculty who have been placed on the teaching track, and Provost Heinricher said he will work with the deans to nominate the third cohort of 15 additional teaching faculty for the 2023-24 academic year. Two questions remain: (1) Will WPI have reached its 40% institutional goal? If not, will a fourth cohort be identified or what other steps can be taken to reach the goal? (2) Should WPI seek external candidates to be hired directly into the teaching track to tenure through a competitive, advertised position?

COG believes it may be reasonable to allow exceptional external candidates to be considered, especially in efforts to increase diversity in the WPI faculty body, while still honoring and respecting faculty who are here.

Provost Heinricher reported that the candidates on the teaching track to tenure are receiving quite a variety of feedback from their Department Tenure Committees (DTCs) concerning tenure criteria. COG advises Department Heads and DTCs to review the institutional guidelines as detailed in the WPI Faculty Handbook and as formulated after extensive input from the entire WPI community.

Provost Heinricher intends to give nominees in the third cohort more time than in the past to decide whether to accept their nominations.

5. Reorganization of Faculty Handbook (Mark Richman): The WPI Faculty Handbook (most recently dated May 27, 2021) has grown in size through dozens of edits, additions and appendices. During the summer, Professor Richman envisioned a reorganized, reformatted faculty handbook that would be more readable, more useable, and easier to change. The four themes in the handbook most in need of reorganization involve: Governance; Academic Appointments; Promotion; and Tenure.

As a first example, Professor Richman shared a document that consolidates all content related to the tenure process together with an annotated PDF containing the original WPI Faculty Handbook with all tenure process content highlighted. COG was asked to review to ensure that (a) nothing was lost; (b) nothing substantive was added without having been identified; (c) any word changes for narrative purposes are inconsequential.

So that such a process can go forward without encountering unneeded complications, Professor Richman suggests various levels of changes:

- (a) **Non-substantive changes**: (1) pure reorganization; (2) necessary editorial changes; (3) helpful clarifications; (4) helpful inferences
- (b) **Substantive changes to address omissions**: These changes would reflect accepted current practice
- (c) **Real changes that would be brought to faculty for discussion**

In this manner, the Handbook would be reorganized and then COG would seek consensus approval from the standing committees (such as CTAF, COAP, CAP, CAO and others) before seeking final approval from the WPI faculty. Prof. Richman believed that it would be difficult to seek approval of individual sections as they are revised, rather than final approval on the entire Handbook because individual sections will invariably omit pieces that would be included in sections not yet seen by the faculty.

6. The meeting was adjourned at 4:34 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

George Heineman
Secretary