

Committee on Governance: Minutes

Meeting #7: October 24, 2022

Faculty Governance Conference Room, SL 225

3:00pm – 4:30pm

Present: Len Albano (Chair, CEAE), 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).

Guests: Raghu Cowlagi (AE), Gillian Smith (IMGD)

1. Chair Albano called the meeting to order at 3:02 pm. The agenda was approved as distributed
2. The minutes for COG Meeting #6 were discussed and a revised minutes will be distributed later for electronic review.
3. Updates on CTAF/COG Proposal and other topics for Faculty Meeting (Mark Richman)
In order to balance the need to maintain reasonable workloads on each committee member with the need to keep the committee as manageable as possible, COG agrees with CTAF in recommending a committee containing 9 members rather than more.
4. The President's appointment to COG is determined through a collaborative process with the President and COG, with the goal of ensuring community-wide balance of COG members. As a result of this process, Prof. Strong (WBS) has agreed to be the President's appointment for the 2022-2023 academic year and COG members welcomed her to the committee.
5. Update on Search Process for CIO.
On July 18, 2022, CFO Michael Horan announced that Sia Najafi (Exec. Dir., Academic and Research Computing) had accepted the Interim CIO position and that a search for the next CIO would begin immediately. In September, three faculty members were contacted by CFO Horan to meet with an outside consultant group. The consultants were hired by WPI to reduce the pool of well over 100 applicants to a short list that would be invited to campus for final interviews.

These three faculty members are Prof. Cowlagi (AE; CITP Chair, 2021-2022), Prof.

Smith (IMGD; CITP Chair, 2022-2023), and Prof. Heineman (CS; CITP member, 2020-2021 and current COG member). The faculty advisory team was asked to meet with the final candidates to assess their strengths and weaknesses without ranking them.

Several advisory teams will meet with the finalists – IT direct reports; direct reports to the CFO; the management council; and the select group of three faculty members – with some input from the Board of Trustees.

The final hiring decision will be made by CFO Horan as informed by feedback from the advisory teams. The goal is to make a hiring decision by mid-November with a start date after the holidays.

COG invited CFO Horan and the members of the faculty advisory team to today's meeting to provide an update on the CIO search. CFO Horan was unable to attend. The faculty advisory team commented:

- a. Given the importance of the position, the timeline feels rushed.
- b. The situation would improve with a clearly defined search process, such as used across the campus for other important positions. There is no search committee.
- c. It was noted that there does not appear to be any designated diversity advocate.
- d. Interview meetings are scheduled on specific dates and the faculty advisory team was invited to attend the designated time slots without being consulted in advance. Consequently, for one interview during A/B term break, only one faculty member was able to meet during the entire hour slot

The faculty advisory team feels they are participants in this process but do not feel engaged in the process in a meaningful way.

A concern was raised about the closed nature of the search given the connection between the CIO's responsibilities and the teaching and research activities of the faculty. The confidential nature of the process, which precludes open presentations by the finalists to the community and opportunities for the whole community to weigh in, stands in contrast to the manner in which we fill such high-profile positions as Provost, Deans, and Vice Provost for Research.

6. Reorganization of Faculty Handbook (Mark Richman)

Changes were made to the Tenure Section of the reorganized handbook based on committee feedback. The committee discussed an item for which the language in the Faculty Handbook differs from current practice. Specifically, the Handbook refers to two conditions for the granting of tenure: faculty who undergo a formal review conducted by CTAF, and those who do not undergo CTAF review. In practice, however, when a faculty member is hired at WPI with tenure, CTAF conducts a review using an accelerated process to provide feedback to the Provost.

This reorganization effort is expected to yield a number of tasks to be addressed in the

future, but the primary goal is to simply reorganize the content of the handbook without making any significant substantive changes.

7. Discussion on Sexual Misconduct Policy

The goal is to send a specific list of questions to university counsel regarding general questions on the differences between the Interim Title IX & Sexual Misconduct Policy and the 2018 Sexual Harassment Policy approved by the faculty. We will also enumerate specific detailed questions on the interim policies as they arise.

8. Meeting adjourned at 4:37 pm

Respectfully submitted,

George Heineman

Secretary