

Committee on Governance: Meeting Minutes

Meeting #4: September 9, 2021

Faculty Governance Conference Room (SL 225)

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); Wole Soboyejo (Provost)

1. Prof. El-Korchi called the meeting to order at 12:08 pm.
2. The agenda was approved as distributed.
3. The minutes of COG meeting #3 on September 2, 2021 were approved with modifications.
4. Reflection on First Faculty Meeting and Preparations for the October Faculty Meeting:
Although an in-person meeting would have been preferred, COG members agreed that the decision to conduct a remote faculty meeting was the best course of action. Prof. Richman expressed appreciation for Kate Beverage, Director of Technology for Teaching Learning Services, and the support she provided for setting up and conducting the meeting.

It was noted that in recent years the first faculty meeting has not included a report from WPI Admissions on the incoming class. There is faculty concern this year because the incoming Class of 2025 is much larger than the budgeted first-year enrollment. Provost Soboyejo stated that increased resources have been made available for teaching and learning support to manage the demands for this year. He also agreed that the larger incoming class will affect resource needs in subsequent years. The committee felt it would be important for the faculty to understand the factors that may have contributed to the high yield and the implications for recruiting the Class of 2026. Andrew Palumbo, Assistant VP for Enrollment Management & Dean of Admissions & Financial Aid, will be invited to an upcoming COG meeting. Prof. Richman will also invite AVP Palumbo to make a presentation at a faculty meeting.

5. Update on Committee Appointments:
The TRT faculty member appointed by COG to serve on the Fringe Benefits Committee (FBC) is retiring from the committee. A TRT faculty member was identified to fill this position, and Prof. Dominko volunteered to contact them to ensure their willingness to serve.
6. Professional Development Opportunities for Faculty and Description of Search Committees for Academic Administrators:
Prof. Dominko provided copies of documents from COG's last year's discussions on proposed changes to the Faculty Handbook that would clarify the definitions of academic administrative positions, identify various opportunities for faculty to gain administrative experience, and establish transparent processes for faculty appointments. The documents are structured in three parts: Part One proposes guidelines for appointment of academic administrators, Part Two establishes guidelines for

the appointment of part-time academic administrative positions, and Part Three introduces President and Provost Fellowships as additional leadership opportunities for faculty development.

Prof. Dominko gave an overview of Part One. The proposal builds on the language in Part Two, Section 1.I of the Faculty Handbook to clarify the position of an Academic Administrator. This clarification is important because administrative appointments impact a faculty member's participation in faculty governance and other types of service. The proposal would also make clear that anticipated vacancies in existing or newly created academic administrative positions will be announced to the faculty in order to promote wider awareness of available opportunities and more internal applicants. Announcements of an open administrative position should clearly describe the responsibilities and the expected time commitment. The proposal defines a role for faculty governance in the creation of new academic administrative positions. It concludes with a discussion of interim appointments and the maximum length of an interim appointment.

Provost Soboyejo expressed his support for providing opportunities for faculty development through a transparent process, and he was also very open to the fellowship positions. COG members voiced concerns that there has not been transparency for certain appointments. The current process in the Faculty Handbook for the appointment of academic administrators, which was approved by the faculty in May 2007, was not followed. Discussion of the proposal will continue at the next COG meeting.

7. The meeting was adjourned at 1:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Leonard Albano
Secretary, COG