

Minutes of FAP Meeting #18 AY2020-21

January 11, 2021

4:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Meeting Held Electronically via ZOOM

Members in Attendance: Joseph Fehribach (FAP Chair), Mike Radzicki (FBC Chair), Jeff Solomon (Executive Vice President/CFO), David Spanagel (FAP Secretary), Kris Sullivan (Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs)

Absent: George Pins (RPC Representative)

Call to Order. Chair Fehribach called the 18th FAP meeting of the year to order at 4:03 PM.

- 1) **A FAP/Canvas Issue.** Chair Fehribach informed the committee how, in response to a query from a former FAP member, he intends to designate former FAP committee members as “observers” of the committee’s Canvas site (who can thus have continuing access to the FAP materials that they helped to generate, but not ongoing editing or posting privileges). There were no objections to this plan.
- 2) **Brief Recap of December 2020 Faculty Committee Chairs’ Discussion.** Profs. Fehribach and Radzicki attended the monthly Committee Chairs meeting where concerns were voiced about the level of consultation between the Coronavirus Emergency Response Team (CERT) and faculty governance leaders regarding the decision process that went into revising the Spring Academic Calendar. They wanted FAP to be aware of those communications and shared governance concerns.

CFO Solomon recalled that CERT had reviewed many different considerations and developed the final decision after several iterations of discussion. He assured FAP that both Provost Wole Soboyejo and Prof. Reeta Rao were fully engaged in the CERT deliberations, as representatives of faculty interests, and it was his understanding that Wole and Reeta engaged faculty leadership in developing the calendar recommendations. He also noted that the situation may continue to require flexibility; though no new actions were yet recommended, FAP should know that December’s decisions about Spring term calendar dates and procedures did come up again for fresh reconsideration at the first CERT meeting in January 2021, since rising Covid-19 incidence levels in our region demand ongoing vigilance.

- 3) **Financial/Enrollment Update.** CFO Solomon reported briefly that Spring term bills went out and initial collections are running ahead of last year at this time. No unusual levels of requests for leaves

or withdrawals have yet been received. He had no new news to share regarding recruitment of next year's entering class.

- 4) **Fringe Benefits Committee (FBC) Update.** FBC Chair Radzicki reported that FBC had not met since the end of B term, but plans to schedule a regular biweekly meeting time going forward that works for most FBC members, so they have the ability to meet as needed (or cancel a meeting date if no business requires their attention). In addition to monitoring employee experiences of the health care and other benefits policies, Prof. Radzicki indicated that some FBC members are interested in serving more actively as ambassadors/educators to the WPI community regarding those policies.
- 5) **Approval of Minutes.** Minutes from both the December 2, 2020 and the December 9, 2020 meetings, which had been previously reviewed with suggested minor edits proposed by the respective meetings' guests, were unanimously approved as amended.
- 6) **Other Topics the Committee Wishes to Discuss.** Prof. Spanagel asked about FAP's anticipated topics of focus for C term. CFO Solomon noted that work is starting on the FY22 budget, and that he should have an outline ready to share with FAP as he prepares for the February 2021 Budget and Finance Trustee Committee meeting. Key items yet to be decided include: how to think about the salary pool for the coming year, how soon and by how much WPI can afford to restore a portion of the retirement match above its 8% level, and how ambitiously we can expect to renew faculty hiring and strategic growth plans. Prof. Radzicki asked about the status of WPI Forward initiatives. CFO Solomon indicated that work on some of those projects is still in process.
- 7) **Adjournment.** The meeting was adjourned at 4:38 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

David Spanagel

FAP Secretary