

Committee on Governance: Meeting Minutes

Meeting #6: September 23, 2021

Faculty Governance Conference Room (SL 225)

Present: Len Albano (Secretary, CEE); Tahar El-Korchi (Chair, CEE); George Heineman (CS); Mark Richman (Secretary of the Faculty, AE); Susan Roberts (CHE)

Absent: Tanja Dominko (BBT); Nancy Burnham (PH); Wole Soboyejo (Provost)

Invited Guest: Greg Snoddy (Assistant VP & Dean of Students)

1. Prof. El-Korchi called the meeting to order at 12:10 pm.
2. The agenda was approved as distributed.
3. Approval of the minutes of COG meeting #5 on September 16, 2021 was tabled until later in the meeting.
4. Preparations for the October Faculty Meeting:
Prof. Richman informed COG that the presentation on student well-being that was under consideration for the October Faculty Meeting will be the subject of a Special Faculty Meeting (see item 5, below). Consequently, the Faculty meeting on October 7th will include two motions requesting faculty approval, and a presentation by Assistant VP Andrew Palumbo on the Class of 2025, with sufficient time for faculty questions and discussion.
5. Special Faculty Meeting to Discuss Student Well-Being
Prof. Richman has been working with Prof. Scott Barton, the Chair of the Committee on Advising and Student Life (CASL) to organize a Special Faculty Meeting on Thursday, September 30 from 3:15 to 4:45 pm. The purpose of the meeting is to address student well-being and to discuss the actions that faculty may take to support students. Committee members agreed that faculty would benefit from having concrete suggestions to reduce student stress in the classroom, in project activities and any other academic activities. This support should include both undergraduate and graduate students.
6. The minutes of COG meeting #5 were approved with modifications.
7. Update on Schedule of Visitors to COG:
 - a. Assistant VP Andrew Palumbo is invited to the COG meeting on September 30, 2021.
 - b. Prof. Vernescu, Vice Provost for Research, is invited to the COG meeting on October 7, 2021.
8. NECHE Campus Visit and Meeting with Faculty and Faculty Governance:
The NECHE Evaluation Committee is scheduled to visit the campus during the week of October 4th, and Prof. El-Korchi reviewed the tentative schedule for meetings with faculty and faculty governance. A lunch meeting is scheduled with faculty governance chairs, and Prof. Richman may have this meeting coincide with the October committee chairs lunch, which will discuss the agenda items for

the upcoming faculty meeting. Visiting during the monthly committee chairs lunch would give the NECHE Evaluation Committee additional insight into faculty governance and faculty participation on the various committees.

9. Faculty Evaluation of Administrators:

Prof. El-Korchi distributed copies of surveys that were developed in the recent past. These survey forms will provide a template for finalizing the questions associated with specific administrators. Discussion will continue at a future COG meeting.

10. New Business: Increased Administrative Tasks for Faculty:

Prof. El-Korchi shared an email message in which a faculty member commented that administrative assistants are no longer available to assist faculty with administrative chores. As a result, these tasks have been shifted to the faculty in Workday, which adversely impacts teaching and research productivity. They asked whether other faculty members are also seeing this reduction in administrative support. Prof. Roberts responded that there has been an increased burden on research faculty in Chemical Engineering to manage grants in Workday. It was also noted that although the information is in Workday, it is not organized for ease of access to fit faculty tasks. As a related item, Prof. Heineman stated that the planned *ad hoc* group to help address faculty questions with Workday (see COG Meeting #5) will focus on academic issues and not financial matters.

11. Campus Hearing Board and the Role of Faculty:

AVP and Dean of Students Snoddy provided handouts on the composition and selection of the members of the WPI community who serve on the Campus Hearing Board (CHB). Six faculty members, six administrative members, six undergraduate students, and two graduate students provide a pool of members for hearing and deciding cases involving alleged violations of the Student Code of Conduct. The faculty members are elected for two-year terms, with three rotating off at the end of each academic year. In addition to the elected faculty members, a faculty member serves as Hearing Board Chair. The Chair is appointed by faculty governance and serves a three-year term. Members of the CHB participate in training sessions during A term.

Hearings involve the non-voting Chair and a panel of five voting members: 2 students + 2 faculty members + 1 administrative member, or 2 students + 1 faculty member + 2 administrative members. AVP Snoddy indicated that the composition of the panel for each hearing depends on the availability of individuals (hearings are an evening commitment), but he does try to balance the overall participation of faculty and administrative members during the academic year. AVP Snoddy was asked whether there has been an increase in hearings with the increased student enrollment, and he responded that the number of cases has been rather static for several years. He noted that hearings are only used in certain situations, and so the number of hearings does not reflect the total number of alleged violations of the Code of Conduct. He then referred committee members to the Academic Integrity Report that is published by the Dean of Students Office for data on academic dishonesty cases.

Prof. El-Korchi thanked AVP Snoddy for meeting with the committee. COG will discuss whether the Faculty Handbook should be updated to include information on the CHB and the role of the faculty.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Leonard Albano
Secretary, COG