

Committee on Governance: Meeting Minutes

Meeting #26: 22 March 2022

Faculty Governance Branch Offices

Present: Len Albano (Secretary, CEAE); Nancy Burnham (PH); Tahar El-Korchi (Chair, CEAE); George Heineman (CS); Mark Richman (Secretary of the Faculty, AE); Susan Roberts (CHE); Wole Soboyejo (Provost)

Absent: Tanja Dominko (BBT)

1. Prof. El-Korchi called the meeting to order at 12:05 pm.
2. The agenda was approved as distributed.
3. The minutes of COG meeting #25 on March 15, 2022 were approved with modifications.

4. Motion to Extend Probationary Periods for Tenure-Track Faculty Members:

Given this year's COVID-related disruptions to teaching, scholarship, and other faculty activities, the Committee on Tenure and Freedom (CTAF) submitted a draft motion to extend the probationary period for one year for tenure-track faculty who started at WPI this academic year. Similar to the motions approved by the faculty in April 2020 and April 2021, this proposal gives the new tenure-track faculty the option to opt out of the extension. The deadline for opting out would be twenty-five months before the scheduled date for submitting the tenure materials. The consensus among COG members was that this extension is warranted, and the motion was approved. As part of the discussion, the question was raised as to whether CTAF considered an additional one-year extension for all probationary tenure-track faculty members because they all have been continuing to deal with hardships associated with COVID-19 this year. Prof. El-Korchi agreed to follow-up on this question with the CTAF Chair, Prof. Mathews (BBT).

On Wednesday, March 23rd, the Committee received a modified version of CTAF's motion. Minor modifications were made to the language to ensure that it includes teaching faculty who were placed on the tenure-track at the start of this academic year. COG members discussed the revised motion electronically and are in favor.

5. Update on Faculty Governance Elections:

Two nominating ballots for COG, one for the Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom (CTAF), and one for the Committee on Appointments and Promotions (COAP) were distributed to the faculty as a Qualtrics survey link on Thursday, March 10th. The deadline to respond was Friday, March 18th at 8am. Prof. Richman has been systematically contacting the top nominees to identify those who are willing to serve. In recognition of their heavy workload, the Provost's office will fund course releases in A-term and B-term for the faculty representatives on CTAF and COAP.

The Committee discussed a question from Dean Heinricher on the criteria for determining whether faculty members with 50% administrative appointments are eligible to serve on Faculty Governance Committees. Specifically, the nominating ballots included Department Heads but not an Associate

Dean, who has a 50% administrative appointment. Prof. El-Korchi indicated that the composition of the nominating ballots reflects the difference between members of the administration (which include Deans) and faculty members with administrative responsibilities (which include Department Heads). It was agreed that faculty eligibility should be made transparent and clarified in the *Faculty Handbook*. This is a future issue for COG to address.

6. Sexual Misconduct Policy Update:

In COG Meeting #13, the consensus of the Committee was to postpone the process for gaining faculty approval of the revised Sexual Misconduct Policy to next academic year. Provost Soboyejo conveyed this request to President Leshin and the members of the Administrative Policy Group (APG), and it was agreed to extend the approval process into A and B-terms this fall.

7. President's Search Update:

As part of the process for identifying faculty representatives on the Search Committee and the three six-member advisory groups, Dean McNeill is setting up a meeting with the Chairs of the Faculty Governance Committees and all the Deans. Provost Soboyejo indicated that the intent is for the Committee Chairs to bring the voice of elected faculty members into the search process.

8. The meeting was adjourned at 12:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Leonard Albano
Secretary, COG