

Committee on Governance
Minutes Meeting #1 (2016-17)
Monday, August 29th, 2016, 12 Noon – 1:00 pm
Faculty Governance Conference Room (SL 225)

In Attendance: Leonard Albano, Provost Bruce Bursten, Tanja Dominko (Chair), Glenn Gaudette, Eleanor Loiacono, Mark Richman (Secretary of the Faculty), Elizabeth Ryder (Secretary), Suzanne Weekes, Chrys Demetry (invited guest), and Constance Clark, Chair CTAF (invited guest)

1. Agenda was approved as amended.
2. Announcements

Prof. Richman and Prof. Dominko met with Prof. Hansen, the Chair of the Committee on Appointments and Promotion (COAP), and discussed the next steps in the process of revising current Promotion procedures - the criteria and mechanisms for mentoring and professional development. The Task Force on Academic Promotion which was jointly appointed by COAP and COG submitted its report and recommendations to COAP and COG last fall. Both committees were charged with review of the Task Force recommendations. COAP formulated their set of recommendations last March and presented them to COG for discussion. COG will provide its opinion after the second COG meeting scheduled for September 2nd, 2016. COG recommendations will be shared with COAP at a joint meeting on September 7th, 2016. To engage broader Faculty community in this discussion, COAP and COG will announce two open faculty meetings for discussion of promotion criteria and procedures.

The first open faculty meeting will be held on **Wednesday, September 14, 2-4 PM** and the second one on **Tuesday, September 20, 3-5 PM**; both in **Olin Hall 107**.

3. Election of the Secretary for the academic year 2016-17

Prof. Ryder was nominated and elected unanimously.

4. Approval of COG meeting minutes #28 from 2015-16

Minutes were approved unanimously.

5. Motion to modify language about stopping the tenure clock in Part 2, Section 1.A of the Faculty Handbook (Invited: C. Demetry and C. Clark-CTAF)

Motion was approved unanimously. Prof. Dominko asked Prof. Richman, the Secretary of the Faculty, to include the motion in the agenda for the Faculty meeting on September 8th, 2016.

Profs. Clark and Demetry left the meeting.

6. COG Faculty Appointment to the Conflict Management Committee
The Conflict Management Committee deals with Conflicts of Interest. The Conflict of Interest policy is currently being revised by the Vice Provost for Research, Prof. Bogdan Vernescu. Each year, COG appoints a committee member to the Conflict Management Committee, who also acts as the Committee Chair. Prof. Gaudette was nominated and approved unanimously.
7. COG Faculty Appointment to the Judicial Appeals Board
The Judicial Appeals Board is responsible for appeals by students who are not satisfied by the decisions reached by the Campus Hearing Board. Prof. Dempski, who had agreed to serve if appointed, was nominated and approved unanimously.
8. COG agenda items for the academic year 2016-17.
COG began developing and prioritizing items to be included on its Agenda this academic year, COG will appoint one of its members as the point person for each agenda item. Each proposed agenda item was discussed briefly to determine its urgency and importance, and to set a goal for when COG will begin addressing the issue.
 - Election of three Faculty members for the Dean of Arts and Sciences Search Committee

As soon as the search for a new Dean of Arts and Sciences is announced, COG will conduct elections for faculty members to serve on the search committee (A term).

- COAP and COG recommendations regarding promotion:
 - COAP procedures were posted during the summer 2016 to clarify the current promotion process.
 - Develop COAP/COG motion for modifying COAP membership to allow for recusal (Prof. Gaudette and Prof. Richman) (A-term).
Prof. Gaudette and Richman have developed a draft of a motion for discussion that follows the recommendations of the Task Force. Draft will be discussed by COAP and COG in September.
 - Develop COG recommendations regarding promotion criteria, procedures and guidelines for mentoring and professional development (A-term).
 - Conduct a community-wide discussion about a) promotion criteria, and b) Mechanism for effective mentoring and professional development (A term).

Last year, COG did not have sufficient time to develop thoughtful positions regarding Task Force and COAP recommendations on changes to promotion criteria and the initiative to establish departmental committees for mentoring and professional development for continuing faculty. While COG intends to provide its feedback to COAP, the concerns, opinions, suggestions and recommendations that will arise at the upcoming open Faculty community meetings on Sept. 14th and 20th will need to be considered before formulating recommendations that will have broad Faculty support. COG is encouraging all the community members to share their concerns and suggestions regarding promotion with members of COG and COAP.

In preparation for the next COG meeting, Prof. Dominko stated that revising promotion criteria offers an opportunity to think about promotion in new and creative ways. WPI prides itself on its uniqueness and should not shy away from exploring innovative approaches to promotions.

- Several discussion points that will influence the COG position on current recommendations for promotion criteria were raised by the committee members: the need to be valued by WPI colleagues and beyond; the ability to articulate the importance and impact of one's accomplishments; the need to align the criteria with what we do, as good citizens of the University; finding ways to assign value to contributions such as establishing and running project centers and participating in strategic initiatives which are innovative and have great impact; clarity of expectations; and the need for consistent weighing and interpretation of promotion criteria. The Provost added that there must be a multidimensional bar that must be crossed for promotion, and the bar at WPI should include aspects that are unique to WPI, such as IQP advising and establishing project centers.
- Several ideas were presented in regard to mentoring a continuing faculty member, including departmental review committees and the annual review process. A faculty member's career path may benefit more from external than internal mentors, and Faculty with highly interdisciplinary interests may not be best served by a departmental committee chaired by their department Head, for example. Prescribing a narrow mechanism may not serve all faculty members adequately.

Prof. Dominko stated that the goal of promotion revisions should be to maximize the talent and energy of the academic community as a whole. Once a person has been admitted to the academic community via tenure, the expectations for promotion should reflect that the University is best served when each individual maximizes his/her potential.

In order to discuss promotion criteria and procedures further, COG will meet Friday, September 2 at 3-4 PM. Prof. Dominko provided several documents to aid in further discussions.

- Procedures for Faculty evaluation of administrators

If a normal rotation were followed, this year's evaluations would be for the Provost, the VP of Institutional Strategy, the Dean of Business, the Dean of Arts and Sciences, and the Dean of Engineering. The questions that were developed in the recent past for evaluating each of these positions may be modified. The new Dean of Engineering, Dr. Wole Soboyejo, will start at WPI on September 1st so he will not be evaluated this year. The Committee briefly discussed adding the Vice Provost for Research (VPR) to this year's list of evaluatees. Prof. Vernescu has been in the post less than one year, but for longer than one year if his ad interim service is counted. COG will consult with Prof. Vernescu

regarding appropriate timing of his review. The Dean of A&S is stepping down, so it is not clear whether reviewing her at this time would be beneficial.

The evaluation questions need to be developed and the reviews need to be carried out this fall so that President Leshin can use the results in her evaluation of administrators well before the Board of Trustees' meeting in May. The Committee will finalize the recommendation for positions to be reviewed and revise questions in consultation with holders of these positions in A term. Administration of questions to faculty should be started in early B term.

- Clarifying the expectations, roles and responsibilities of the Faculty in the implementation of the Strategic Plan

The discussion will include concerns of some faculty that there is a disconnect between the strategic plan expectations and the role of faculty in achieving these goals. Initiatives stemming from the strategic plan are already underway, and it is important to keep the faculty engaged and involved.

The Provost informed the committee that these concerns will be discussed at the Academic and Administrative Leadership Retreat on September 1st. Representatives from COG attending the retreat (Profs. Richman, Dominko) will report back to COG. The Provost and Kristen Tichenor, Vice President for Institutional Strategy, are in charge of implementing the Strategic Plan. The Provost expressed eagerness to participate in department meetings together with Kristin Tichenor to talk about the Strategic Plan and its implementation. During these visits, the Provost will also introduce Ms. Michelle Jones-Johnson, WPI's new Vice President for Talent Development and Chief Diversity Officer. Prof. Dominko suggested that implementation of the strategic plan will surely pose new demands on faculty time. These needs should be incorporated into strategies for TTT Faculty growth (B term).

- Defining and documenting the roles and responsibilities of academic Deans

The Provost will report back to COG on progress on this issue. He proposed going back to work that was begun several years ago by a COG subcommittee regarding incorporating Deans into the Faculty Handbook. While the role of Deans was carefully incorporated by the Faculty into the tenure process in 2012, the role of Deans in Faculty governance and many important procedures remains unclear. It was pointed out that it is important to have clear job descriptions and responsibilities before determining the role of the Deans in Faculty governance procedures.

- COG will continue reviewing tasks for the year at its next regular meeting.

9. Meeting was adjourned at 1:32 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Liz Ryder, Secretary COG