

## Committee on Governance: Meeting Minutes

Meeting #27: 29 March 2022

Faculty Governance Branch Offices

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

**Absent:** Wole Soboyejo (Provost)

1. Prof. El-Korchi called the meeting to order at 12:04 pm.
2. The agenda was approved as distributed.
3. The minutes of COG meeting #26 on March 22, 2022 were approved with modifications.

4. Preparations for the April Faculty Meeting:

The April 14<sup>th</sup> Faculty Meeting will include a joint proposal from the Committee on Tenure and Freedom (CTAF) and COG to extend the probationary period by one year for tenure-track faculty members who started on the tenure-track this academic year (COG meeting #26). Depending on progress still to be made by April 7, there may also be one or more joint motions from the Committee on Appointments and Promotions (COAP) and COG related to the promotion process for teaching professors and the promotion process and promotion criteria for professors of teaching, which could be discussed at the April 14 faculty meeting. In addition, as a possible discussion item if time allows, Prof. Richman is preparing the newly required annual report on faculty populations at WPI, which will identify the numbers of faculty in various categories and may serve as a good opportunity to clarify and suggest terminology used to identify different categories of faculty.

5. Update on Faculty Governance Elections:

Two election 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 Monday, March 28<sup>th</sup>. The deadline to respond is Monday, April 4<sup>th</sup> at noon.

Given the increased number of faculty members who are now eligible to vote and serve on Faculty Governance Committees, COG members discussed options to best promote the elections and the candidates. Ideas for doing so will be solicited from the faculty in a variety of ways, including possibly holding a separate open meeting. So far, those ideas include the possibility of establishing a *Canvas* site or message board with election information and optional candidate statements to create a better sense of community involvement in our elections. Care also is needed to avoid changes in the process that include introducing obstacles that cause some faculty members to shy away from volunteering to have their names appear on election ballots.

6. President's Search Update:

Prof. Richman reported that David LaPre (Trustee Chair of the presidential search committee) has asked the Faculty Governance Committee Chairs to collaborate with the Deans to identify a diverse set of eight faculty members from whom the Trustees will select four to serve on the Search Committee. As input to collaborating with the Deans to identify eight faculty members, Prof. Richman, Prof. El-Korchi, Prof. Spanagel (HUA; FRC Co-Chair), and Prof. Titova (PH; CAO Chair) have canvassed the Faculty Governance Committee Chairs to establish an initial list of faculty.

7. COAP's Initial Draft of Proposed Changes to Faculty Handbook:

COAP submitted a combined single draft of proposed changes to the *Faculty Handbook* related to its membership, promotion criteria, and promotion process for professors of teaching and teaching professors. The proposed changes are intended to clearly define the promotion criteria and procedures for promotion to (full) Professor of Teaching. They also include clarification about eligibility and time-in-rank requirements for promotion of tenured and tenure-track faculty members on either the professor or professor of teaching tracks. There are also clarifications of and modifications to COAP's membership. Another area of change is to correct an inadvertent gap in the language for the promotion from Assistant to Associate Teaching Professor by inserting a statement that clearly requires the submission of letters of support from professional associates for promotion to associate teaching professor.

The consensus among COG members was that presenting these changes to the faculty as a set of separate motions would be the best approach. As part of this process, the Committee must devote some time to ensure that the promotion criteria and procedures for tenured and tenure-track Professors of Teaching use language that is consistent with the expectations for these teaching-intensive faculty. Prof. Heineman volunteered to post a copy of COAP's proposed changes within a OneDrive folder so that COG members can add comments and suggestions. Prof. El-Korchi will invite the COAP Chair, Prof. Iannacchione (PH), to a COG meeting.

Prof. Richman noted that the proposed change to explicitly require letters of support from professional associates as part of the criteria for promotion to Associate Professor of Teaching is quite straightforward because it corrects an error and ensures consistency with the promotion criteria for the other faculty tracks. That motion can be prepared in time for discussion and vote at the April Faculty Meeting. The Committee approved this approach, and Prof. El-Korchi and Prof. Richman will confer with Prof. Iannacchione to prepare a formal motion to the faculty. COG will work with COAP to determine if other motions can be prepared in time for discussion at the April 14 Faculty Meeting.

On Thursday, March 31<sup>st</sup>, COG members electronically reviewed a copy of a joint COAP/COG motion to modify the *Faculty Handbook*, (PART TWO: Policies and Operating Procedures; Section 10: Promotion Procedures and Criteria for Nontenure-Track Faculty; Subsection B. Promotion to Associate Teaching Professor). The modification requires the submission of professional associate letters in applications for promotion to Associate Teaching Professor. A final version of the motion was distributed to the faculty on March 31<sup>st</sup> as a two-week notice item for the April 14<sup>th</sup> Faculty Meeting.

8. The meeting was adjourned at 1:06 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Leonard Albano  
Secretary, COG