

Committee on Governance: Minutes

Meeting #28: May 2, 2023

Faculty Governance Conference Room, SL 225

1:00pm – 2:30pm

Present: Len Albano (Chair, CEAE), Mark Claypool (CS), Althea Danielski (HUA), Tanja Dominko (BBT), George Heineman (CS), Art Heinricher (Special Assistant to the Provost), Stephen Kmietek (ChE), Suzanne LePage (CEAE), Mark Richman (Secretary of the Faculty, AE), Diane Strong (President's appointment, WBS), Karen Troy (BME)

1. Chair Albano called the meeting to order at 1:02 pm and welcomed the elected COG members for the 2023-2024 academic year, Professors Mark Claypool and Stephen Kmietek.
2. Minutes for Meetings #27 were discussed and approved with changes.
3. Election of COG Chair and Secretary for next year
Prof. Heineman (CS) was elected chair of COG for the 2023-2024 academic year. Prof. Dominko (BBT) was elected secretary of COG for the 2023-2024 academic year.
4. COG Appointments to Faculty Committees
COG will need to appoint new members to FAP, the Conflict Management Committee (CMC), the Educational Development Council (EDC) and the Fringe Benefits Committee.
5. Update from Joint Coordinating Council (JCC) Meeting
Chair Albano briefly discussed topics from a recent JCC meeting, including: updates to the guidelines for searches to fill academic administrative positions; the President's and Provost's Fellowships for Faculty Leadership Development; and membership of Faculty on Committees of the WPI Board of Trustees and Faculty Participation at Board of Trustees' meetings. Prof. Richman will discuss with Provost Soboyejo the topic of Faculty representation on Board of Trustees' committees.
6. Reorganization of the Faculty Handbook
Chair Albano and Secretary Heineman will present the motion from COG to adopt the reorganized Faculty Handbook at the upcoming May 9 WPI Faculty meeting. After four previous presentations (at the Feb. 2, Mar. 6, Mar. 30, and Apr. 18 faculty meetings) by COG, the motion will be brought for a vote at the May 9 meeting.
7. Sabbaticals for TRT faculty
COG discussed a proposal from the Committee on Teaching and Research Faculty (CTRF) to expand the eligibility for sabbatical leaves to include all secured teaching faculty members. The Faculty Handbook describes the purpose of sabbatical leaves as follows: "Leaves of absence, and particularly sabbatical leaves, are among the most important means by which a teacher's effectiveness may be enhanced, a scholar's usefulness enlarged, and an institution's academic program strengthened and developed."

The discussion centered on (a) how this change would benefit the teaching mission of the Institution, eliminate a current inequity, and promote greater diversity in the sabbatical program (b) how such sabbaticals would be managed; (c) the six years of service required for Faculty to be eligible; (d) the percentage of eligible faculty who might seek a sabbatical leave; (e) the resources that might be required for equitable eligibility; and (f) the effect the sabbatical leave would have on the years counted on a 3- or a 5-year contract.

A full faculty-wide discussion of the idea, perhaps in the form of a preliminary proposal, should involve the faculty, the appropriate faculty governance committees, the Provost, the Deans, and the Department Heads.

8. Meeting was adjourned at 2:30 pm

Respectfully submitted,

George Heineman
Secretary