

Financial and Administrative Policy Minutes
27th Meeting, AY 2022-23
Monday, May 1, 2023, 9:00 am
Meeting held remotely; Zoom meeting ID: 997 1982 8892

Members: David Spanagel (HUA, Chair), Hal Walker (CEAE), Rob Dempski (CBC, Chair of FBC), Joe Sarkis (BUS, FAP appointee to RPC), Tanja Dominko (BBT, COG Appointee), Kris Sullivan (Associate VP of Academic Affairs)

Guest: Emily Perlow (Associate Dean of Students)

1. The meeting was called to order at 9:00 am
2. The revised agenda was approved
3. Approval of the Minutes of the 26th meeting were postponed to the next meeting
4. Proposal that FAP establish a continuing ad hoc faculty Compensation Committee

Prof. Dominko presented a draft proposal to establish a continuing ad hoc compensation committee. She noted that a number of universities have such committees. Prof. Dominko compiled a list of examples from a variety of universities, representing both small and large universities, and both public and private. While the specific charge of such committees varies somewhat, it was clear that such committees are common. Like the Staff Compensation Survey underway at WPI, members of FAP were supportive of similar efforts with respect to faculty salary. Members of FAP were supportive of establishing a Compensation Committee.

A member of FAP noted that faculty did not have much, if any, input into the process for establishing raises for faculty last year. Salaries in general, and faculty salaries in particular, are a major part of the budget. Therefore, there should be faculty input in these decisions.

Members of FAP discussed whether the activities a compensation committee should keep specific faculty salaries confidential. It was noted that there is a lot of faculty salary information available online, especially for public universities. A member of FAP noted that, at the same time, activities related to faculty governance have generally tried to maintain confidentiality in their proceedings. The point was also made that Talent and Inclusion should be represented on such a committee.

Members of FAP noted the activities of a compensation committee should be coordinated with the Fringe Benefits Committee (FBC) as salary and benefits are related. One member of FAP expressed that a compensation committee should represent different types of faculty and should be as small as practically possible. It was expressed that the size of the FBC (12+ members) might be too large and 7-9 members might be a better size so that the committee can be nimble and respond better to issues on a short timeline. A member of FAP also noted that some

continuity in membership would be beneficial, noting that it takes a while for members to get up to speed on the activities of the FBC.

A member of FAP felt that a compensation committee is very important and suggested it should actually be part of faculty governance as a permanent standing committee.

Prof. Dominko will take this feedback and develop a more detailed proposal for the next meeting.

5. Adjunct compensation at WPI

Hal Walker and Kris Sullivan presented some “talking points” for discussion related to adjunct compensation nationally, and at WPI more specifically. This discussion was motivated in response to a few issues related to adjunct compensation at WPI that have come to FAPs attention during this academic year, such as variations in off-campus project advisor pay scales depending on if they advise during the summer or academic year. A member of FAP also noted that it is likely that there are cases in which adjunct faculty at WPI also teach at other institutions to try to piece together a “full-time” schedule.

FAP discussed the value of developing a survey to gain more insight into issues related to adjunct faculty compensation at WPI. In addition to surveying adjunct faculty, members of FAP also saw value in getting the opinions of Deans and Department Heads.

FAP will continue this discussion, and determine next steps, at the next meeting.

6. FBC update on the financial challenges the Quorum faces

Associate Dean of Students Emily Perlow updated FAP on the financial status of the Quorum. It was opened in 2018 and is currently operating at a loss of close to \$25k per year. The FBC is currently looking at a number of alternative scenarios, including (1) continue operating at a loss, (2) closing the Quorum, (3) extending hours and offering lunch, (4) recruit a third-party vendor to operate the Quorum, (5) open the Quorum to student traffic and accept meal plans, (6) keep the Quorum open for faculty and staff with some limited self-service items and mobile check out, and (7) employ a “faculty club” or “coffee club” model and charge regular dues or membership fees.

A member of FAP noted one issue was that a significant number of faculty are housed in Gateway or work remotely at times and so the Quorum is not convenient. A number of members of FAP were supportive of trying to keep it open, pending losses could be mitigated, and noted that it provides a welcome space for informal interactions. A number of FAP members supported the idea of also offering lunch.

7. The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 am.

Respectfully,
Hal Walker

FAP Secretary