Committee on Governance: Minutes
Meeting #5: October 02, 2023
Faculty Governance Office
Faculty Governance Conference Room, SL 225
3:00 pm – 4:30 pm
Zoom Link: **https://wpi.zoom.us/j/95482156236**

Members: Mark Claypool (CS), Althea Danielski (HUA), Tanja Dominko (Secretary, BBT), George Heineman (Chair, CS), Art Heinricher (Interim Provost), Stephen Kmiotek (ChE), Mark Richman (Secretary of the Faculty, AE), Diane Strong (President's appointment, WBS), Karen Troy (BME).

1. The agenda was approved.

2. The minutes for meeting #4 were approved as amended.

3. Update on the status of Joint Coordinating Council (JCC):
   In the spring of 2019, the Faculty, the Administration, and the Board of Trustees agreed to form the Joint Coordinating Council JCC as vehicle for monthly direct communications between two representatives of the faculty, the President, and the Provost, and a representative of the Board of Trustees – with the President serving as Chair. To date, however, the JCC has not effectively addressed several important faculty concerns. As a result, important issues remain unaddressed. Chair Heineman reviewed two items that faculty governance will propose for inclusion on the upcoming JCC meeting agendas.

   First, faculty objections to the current structure, function, and intended purpose of Administrative Policy Group (APG) remain to be addressed. These were first voiced in a formal statement issued by faculty governance when the APG – known at the time as the PCRIAP – was imposed in March 2019.

   APG Faculty Statement - April 2020.pdf

   Specifically, the APG has authority to draft "administrative" policies but fails to define what is meant by "Institutional Administrative Policies,". The Faculty are responsible for policies that cover educational policies that bear on conditions facilitating instruction, research, publication, and other scholarly or cultural activities of faculty members and students. Often, a policy or issue includes both administrative and educational components. However, all questions about whether a policy falls under the purview of our faculty governance process or the APG process are to be resolved first by the Administrative Policy Group (comprised of 12 administrators selected by the President and two faculty members) and then, if necessary, by the President. In this manner, the APG does not abide by the principles of shared governance, which have distinguished WPI and facilitated its strength.

   Second, the process for the nomination and appointment as well as the purpose of faculty representation on the committees of the Board of Trustees was changed in 2018 without

consultation with the faculty. Beginning in 2012, the WPI Board of Trustees had appointed faculty members to serve as full voting members of five Board of Trustees Committees according to the process currently described in the BYLAW EIGHT of the Faculty Handbook (approved in 2012 and ratified in 2023), in which COG would prepare a slate of nominees containing at least two names for each open position, with preference to faculty members with experience serving on faculty governance committees. The BoT Committee on Nominations and Governance would use this slate to make the final appointments, each for a three-year term.

In 2018, the Board changed the process for selection of faculty to serve in these roles and redefined their roles and responsibilities. In the new process approved by BoT in 2018, the Academic Deans work collectively to submit two names for consideration for each available slot for a faculty appointee to a BoT Committee, each for a two-year term (described in Board of Trustees (BoT) Faculty Appointments to BoT Committees). As an informal compromise between the process approved by faculty and the BoT in 2012 and the new BOT approved rules, twice between 2018 and 2022, the Deans have worked with faculty governance to forward their nominees to the Board.

This year, faculty governance (through the Chair of COG and the Secretary of the Faculty) was asked to work with the Academic Deans to select two nominees for the BoT Student Affairs Committee.

4. Preparations for the October 5 faculty meeting:
   Secretary of the Faculty Prof. Richman reported that the Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom and the Committee on Governance will present a report - Defending the Principle: Formalizing a Process to Resolve Allegations Academic Freedom Violations. The Committee on Information Technology Policy will present a draft motion to revise WPI's Mailing List Policy. Both items will be presented for discussion only.

5. Faculty Evaluation of Administrative Offices by Position and Function:
   The committee reviewed and compared survey questions that will be used in this year's evaluation instruments. The members agreed that general categories of questions should remain the same for all academic administrators (Leadership, Personnel and Resource Management, Communication, and Climate and Culture) but each category may include questions that better reflect specific responsibilities of each academic administrative position. These position-specific questions will be drafted jointly between COG and each administrator.

   Interim Provost Heinricher noted that WPI will be participating in the COACHE (Consortium on Academic Careers in Higher Education) Survey in Spring 2024 and that survey includes many questions related to senior academic leaders. The COACHE Survey has many questions we can use to benchmark our results against more than 100 other colleges and universities.

   The committee members also reviewed and updated the survey to evaluate the current status of WPI that will also be distributed to the faculty at the time of the evaluation of academic administrators. The preliminary plan is to send three evaluation surveys to the faculty in the fall and another three in the spring.

7. The meeting was adjourned at 4:36 pm.

Respectfully,
Tanja Dominko
COG Secretary