

**Committee on Governance**  
Meeting #2: September 11, 2023  
Faculty Governance Office  
Faculty Governance Conference Room, SL 225  
3:00 pm – 4:30 pm

**Members Present:** Mark Claypool (CS), Althea Danielski (HUA), George Heineman (Chair, CS), Stephen Kmiotek (ChE), Mark Richman (Secretary of the Faculty, AE), Diane Strong (President's appointment, WBS), Karen Troy (BME).

1. The agenda was approved as distributed.
2. The minutes from 8/28/23 meeting were approved.
3. The committee observed a moment of silence for 9/11. "Even the smallest act of service, the simplest act of kindness, is a way to honor those we lost, a way to reclaim that spirit of unity that followed 9/11."
4. As required in Bylaw Five, Section I of the Faculty Handbook, COG approved the following appointments by the Provost to Faculty Governance committees:
  - CAP & CAO: Arne Gericke, Dean of Undergraduate Studies ad interim
  - UOAC: Kent Rissmiller, Associate Dean, Global School
  - CASL: Sarah Stanlick, Assistant Professor (DIGS)

Because COG did not meet on Monday, Sept 4 (Labor Day), the approval was done by email during the week of Sept. 5 through Sept. 8.

5. COG appointed Geoff Pfeifer (DIGS, HUA) to serve a three-year term on the Educational Development Council (EDC). He was selected from a list of candidates who agreed to serve if appointed. The other current faculty members of the EDC are Marcel Blais (MA), Jeanine Dudle (CEAE), and Chrys Demetry (MME, Dir. Morgan Center). A student member will also be added.
6. COG discussed possible appointees to serve on FAP, with a plan to make an appointment as soon as possible.
6. COG determined a meeting time for B-term.
7. COG discussed a developing proposal from the Committee on Teaching and Research Faculty (CTRF) extending sabbatical leaves to all secured teaching faculty members. As described in Chapter Two, Section 8 of the Faculty Handbook, "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." Benefits of sabbatical leaves for secured teaching faculty could include enhanced faculty retention, improved teaching, increased rates of obtaining teaching-related grants, and it could serve as an important recruitment tool for high quality teaching faculty.

At the moment, the cost to the institution of extending sabbaticals is unclear. It could be estimated based on the number of secured teaching faculty members, an idea of what percent would take sabbatical leave in a given year, typical salary values, and the cost of having replacements teach the courses that would normally be taught by those secured teaching faculty members on sabbatical at any time. It was observed that sabbatical leaves may not line up with 3- or 5-year contracts, and that the costs of sabbatical leave to the University are different for half-year vs. full-year leave. CTRF is working on a proposal for this, which should include a model to estimate cost and an implementation plan, and will discuss it with Provost Soboyejo.

8. COG discussed a motion that COAP submitted in draft form at end of last year for consideration this year that describes a more elaborate process to promote Research Professors than is currently described in the Faculty Handbook (Chapter Four, Section 4.c). In most cases, Research Professors are funded by a [faculty] grant and are hired to do the work on the grant. The Faculty Handbook has information on how these individuals are appointed and reviewed (Chapter Two, Section 4d). The corresponding promotion criteria are described in Chapter Four, Section 2.c, but the promotion process described in Chapter Four, Section 4.c is very brief. Given that most of these appointments are short-term appointments on funds not provided by WPI, it's not clear whether an elaborate promotion process is needed. On the other hand, there are a few individuals on campus who have had these positions for many years. COG plans to learn more and consult with COAP to make a more informed decision about what processes, if any, are needed for promotion.

There are several other draft motions from COAP submitted to COG at the end of last year that COG will discuss at future meetings.

9. COG discussed a draft motion proposed by Prof. Rundensteiner, Prof. Shue, Prof. Ruiz, Prof. Smith, and Prof. Moncrief that seeks to clarify and modify the terms and terminology of multi-department faculty appointments. The current Faculty Handbook (Chapter Two, Section 7) identifies two types of such appointments: dual appointments (in which the salary is split between two departments with set percentages of salary allocated to the home and second departments) and collaborative (in which the salary is fully budgeted in home department). The draft motion includes replacing "dual" appointments with "joint" appointments that could occur in two or more "academic units," and that both departments and interdisciplinary programs would qualify as academic units between which such appointments may be split. By contrast, currently faculty members who contribute to interdisciplinary programs are not treated as dual appointees (e.g. a faculty member who might be part of the IMGD program who has a one-hundred percent appointment in their home department). This situation has presented challenges to some faculty members, department heads, and program directors because there are no clear rules in those cases about how faculty responsibilities such as teaching are split up.

A concern was raised that the proposal would limit the flexibility of department heads by having them commit the time of a designated faculty member in their department rather than allowing them to choose the faculty member who would teach a course in another department or program. A concern was also raised that that the proposal did not address any tenure-process implications. A more complete proposal would clarify who is on the DTC and would address differences in expectations for teaching, research, service, and tenure between academic units. A revised version of this motion might be guided by our existing processes for Joint Tenure Committees for

Interdisciplinary Candidates, as outlined in the Faculty Handbook (Chapter Three, Section 6). Some COG members also noted that it may not be advantageous to faculty members to be split between too many departments, especially while they are on the tenure-track.

10. The meeting was adjourned at 4:35

Respectfully,

Karen Troy  
COG *ad interim* Secretary