

Committee on Governance: Minutes

Meeting #12: Dec. 1, 2020
Faculty Governance Branch Offices

Present: Len Albano (CEE); Kris Boudreau (Chair, HUA); Tanja Dominko (Secretary of the Faculty, BBT); Tahar El-Korchi (CEE); Glenn Gaudette (BME); Arne Gericke (CBC); Mark Richman (Secretary, AE); and Wole Soboyejo (Provost)

1. The meeting was called to order at 1:16 pm. The agenda was approved as amended.
2. The minutes of meeting #10 were approved with minor changes.
3. COG Appointees to Deans' Search Committees: The elections for the faculty members on the search committees for the Dean of Engineering and the Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies have been completed. As required, Prof. Dominko and Prof. Boudreau will meet on Dec. 2 with President Leshin and Provost Soboyejo to collaborate on the remaining COG, Provost, and Presidential search committee membership appointments (as described in detail in the minutes of COG meeting #11).
4. Revised Motions Concerning the Tenure Path for Teaching Faculty: Prof. Richman and Prof. Boudreau provided a summary of the revisions that have been incorporated into the motions based on community feedback since the November 5 faculty meeting:
 - *Titles:* The titles of (Assistant, Associate, and Full) Professor of Teaching for the new TTT teaching faculty have been incorporated into all three motions.
 - *Motion to adopt tenure criteria for Assistant, Associate, and Full Professors of Teaching:* A short preamble has been added to the tenure criteria to state the essential role played by our teaching faculty in carrying out WPI's mission. In addition, both professional growth and currency have been more clearly defined.
 - *Motion to revise Part One, Appendix D (The Roles Played by Tenured, Tenure-Track, and Non-Tenure Track Faculty in Carrying Out WPI's Mission) in the Faculty Handbook:* The revised Appendix has been modified to include in general terms the basis for establishing our institutional goals for appropriate faculty balances, and includes additional language describing the collaboration that should take place in revisiting, affirming, or revising the goals as appropriate. The rationale has been revised to include the full range of factors that have been considered in establishing the proposed goals.
 - *Motion to add "Guidance for Documenting and Assessing Activities Toward Tenure for Professors of Teaching" to the Faculty Handbook:* While there are no substantive changes, several of the items in this document have been rearranged so that the candidate's teaching activities are separated from features describing teaching quality and impact.

After a lengthy discussion about both the details and the fundamental and interconnecting ideas behind the proposal, the strong consensus of COG is that as a group the three motions hold together well, balance nicely the constructive input received from the community over the past two years, and would advance the University substantially. The current intention is to provide an additional month so that President Leshin and the Board can fully consider and endorse the

proposal before the motions are brought to the faculty for final votes at the January 14 faculty meeting.

5. Concerns about the Process for Approving Interim Educational Policies During the COVID Period: In response to the COVID-19 crisis, WPI has had to make and continues to make interim decisions affecting important educational matters. In anticipation of the need to act quickly, our faculty governance committees and the faculty itself demonstrated a willingness to meet remotely (both at regularly scheduled faculty meetings and at additional special meetings) to discuss important matters and to approve needed actions. In addition, last spring and again early this fall the faculty approved an expedited process that could be used to consider time-sensitive issues whenever needed.

Nevertheless, interim policies affecting such educational matters as our academic calendar for C- and D-terms are still being set without faculty approval. Provost Soboyejo will work in the next few days to get more faculty input on this impending decision. However, concerns were raised that the time had already passed for substantive and perhaps creative faculty input on this particular academic matter. More generally, COG members had concerns that the mechanisms the faculty have in place to influence and approve educational policies, even on an interim basis, continue to be overlooked.

6. The meeting adjourned at 2:54 pm.

Respectfully Submitted

Mark Richman
Secretary, COG