

## Committee on Governance: Minutes

Meeting #16: Feb 2, 2021

Faculty Governance Branch Offices

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

1. The meeting was called to order at 1:26 pm after all the hoopla died down. The agenda was approved as unread.
2. The minute of meetings #15 were approved with minor regrets.
3. Update on CTAF and Global School Dean Search Committee Vacancies:
  - There is a vacancy on CTAF because Prof. Olson (MA) has had to step down after being appointed interim Head of the Mathematical Sciences Dept. Prof. Rahbar (CEE), as the next-place finisher in the most recent CTAF election, has agreed to serve the remainder of Prof. Olson's term, although he still disagrees with the Provost's decision to grant him tenure four years ago.
  - There is a vacancy on the Global School Dean Search Committee. Prof. Justo (IGS), who had continued to serve on the search committee after retiring at the end of last academic year, has retired again – this time from the search committee. Prof. Shockey (IGS), as the next-place finisher in the search committee election, has agreed to serve a three-year term or until a Dean is found, whichever comes first.
4. Update on Upcoming NECHE Visit: Prof. Dominko explained that in preparation for the visit, WPI is required to conduct a self-study with the broad categories of students, faculty, university organization, and governance. The draft report is being assembled by Dean Heinricher and Assoc. Dean Perlow, and the section of the report on governance has been drafted by Prof. Dominko (on Faculty Governance) and by Exec. Dir. Kyle Siegel (on the Board Governance). Prof. Dominko indicated that the faculty governance section includes a description of our ongoing efforts to raise the status of our TRT faculty (through a teaching path to tenure, secure contracts for those not placed on the tenure-track, and full governance participation for secure TRT), as well as a docudrama of the 2018-19 Bylaws controversy and how it was resolved. She will share her report with COG for its inputs and denials. Prof. Richman asked what NECHE stood for. Prof. Boudreau will contact Dean Heinricher for clarification.
5. Update on the Upcoming COACHE Survey: Prof. Boudreau explained that the COACHE survey will be open to the WPI faculty sometime before the end of February and that Dean Heinricher has asked for help in promoting faculty participation. Prof. Richman sent a text message to Prof. Albano begging him to ask what COACHE stood for. Prof. Albano texted back that he will contact Dean Heinricher for clarification.

The focus of the discussion was on ensuring that faculty governance would be involved in receiving the new results in a user-friendly format so that actions could be taken by appropriate

faculty committees. It might be possible, for example, to identify which questions are most relevant to which committee in advance, so that those results could be sent directly to the appropriate group. In any case, the committee agreed that the 2021 COACHE results, when they are distilled, should be reported to the faculty.

With respect to the 2021 COACHE questions directly related to faculty governance, it may be possible to analyze the responses as a way to evaluate our governance system or to use the results as a point of departure for further study. The results from 2017, which have not been widely disseminated, indicated that WPI's faculty governance and faculty leadership received scores in the top 30 percent of participating schools and among the highest in our self-selected peer group.

6. Rumors about a Faculty Load Model: Prof. Boudreau reported that to her knowledge, the model is being developed by the Deans with input from the Department Heads. Prof. Dominko has tried unsuccessfully on several occasions since the fall to receive updates about progress on the model. Concerns were raised by several committee members that a discussion about the load model is planned at the upcoming Academic Planning Committee meeting of the Board of Trustees on February 18, without first having been broadly discussed among the faculty and within faculty governance. A question was raised about why the Board would wade into this level of detail concerning faculty workload distribution that should be managed by the individual departments. Prof. Richman thought that the failure of our last (n+1) block model, which was developed without consensus from the faculty, demonstrated the need to establish such a consensus on any load model that might be proposed in the future, regardless of the value of n.

Provost Soboyejo explained that following the WPI Froward/Huron budget process, three groups were formed: Performance of Academic Programs (led by Dean Taylor); Loading (led by Dean King); and Budgeting and Incentives (led by Dean McNeill). In response to a concern about the apparent imperative to reduce spending on academic priorities, Provost Soboyejo explained that the purpose is not to cut costs, but rather to optimize performance and efficiencies, which will convert a dollar amount into something that creates improvements that will also create savings. The planned Board presentation will involve a description of these efforts.

7. The meeting adjourned at 2:47 pm.

Respectfully Submitted

Mark Richman  
Secretary, COG