

Committee on Governance: Minutes
Meeting #19: March 17, 2020
Via Zoom from our Respective Bunkers

Present: Kris Boudreau (Secretary, HUA), Tanja Dominko (Secretary of the Faculty, BBT), Tahar El-Korchi (CEE), Glenn Gaudette (BME), Arne Gericke (CBC), Mark Richman (ME), Sue Roberts (ChE), and Wole Soboyejo (Provost).

1. Prof. Gaudette called the meeting to order at 12:10; the agenda was approved.
2. The minutes from meeting #18 were approved with changes.
3. COG took up items related to faculty governance operations during the campus shutdown.

Prof. Gaudette described the discussion at the March 16 Committee Chairs' meeting. Specifically, Committee Chairs and the Secretary of the Faculty discussed implementing procedures at the upcoming (March 19) faculty meeting for holding and taking votes during future faculty meetings during AY20 whenever face-to-face faculty meetings are prohibited due to emergency circumstances. In response, Prof. Gaudette presented two motions and a concern from the Committee on Academic Policy (CAP):

Motion 1: Allowing synchronous online faculty voting for faculty meetings until the start of AY21. After some discussion, COG voted to bring this motion to the faculty's virtual meeting on March 19.

Motion 2: Arrangements for allowing decision making when faculty meetings cannot be convened in a timely manner for any reason until the start of AY21. In such cases, COG, Secretary of the Faculty, and Faculty Governance committee chairs will have the power to vote on critical issues until the start of AY21. After some discussion, COG voted to bring this motion to the faculty's virtual meeting on March 19.

COG discussed a request from Prof. Heineman, Chair of CAP, regarding changing procedures for student overloading. Because CAP is not scheduled to meet in time to approve a motion before the March 19 faculty meeting, CAP recommends bringing a motion that will allow the Registrar to have IT adjust Banner to allow students to overload in D-term 2020 without faculty approval.

COG appreciated the desire to simplify procedures temporarily, but was concerned that this would suggest to students that they can overload just because courses are going online. COG recommends that advisors not be excluded from overload decisions even now, and that such decisions be handled like those for add/drops, which will still involve faculty input. This feedback will be sent to Prof. Heineman.

4. Brief Update - Motion to modify Faculty Handbook to include Deans in the review of Department Heads: After the last COG meeting, Prof. Gaudette asked the Deans to contribute a rationale for the modified review process from their perspective, and to modify

the draft of the motion to address concerns they had raised about: a) including the possibility of a department residing in two schools; and b) language addressing the faculty/administrative status of department heads. COG will act on the motion when the Deans provide the input requested.

5. COAP/COG motions to be presented at the March 19 faculty meeting (for discussion only): Based on previous input from COG, COAP has modified the motions --summarized below:

Motion 1: That review of sabbatical leave applications no longer be handled through COAP, but instead be reviewed by department heads (as is currently done) and the appropriate Dean prior to the request being sent to the Provost.

Motion 2: Clarify the wording in the Faculty Handbook related to years required for eligibility to take a sabbatical leave and remove mention of one-term sabbatical leaves of absence, which have not been available since 2006.

Motion 3: Change the review process for requests for unpaid leaves of absence to parallel the process for requests for sabbatical leaves of absence.

Motion 4: Modify the procedure for providing written feedback to faculty candidates who are denied promotion so that letter comes from the Dean and Provost, and to explicitly state that only those cases recommended for promotion be shared with the trustees for their approval.

With respect to Motion 1, COG discussed a procedure for handling negative sabbatical decisions. Currently there is no appeals policy, but the approval process includes a strong faculty voice through COAP's input. COG members would like to include some appeals process at some point.

With respect to Motion 4, COG agreed that because the Provost is responsible for making the final decision in each promotion comes, the letter sent to the candidate in the case of a negative decision should come from the Provost, only. Consequently, the motion was modified to eliminate the Dean as a signatory on the letter. COG also discussed the advantages and disadvantages of providing the candidate with COAP's written letter (sent to the Provost) in the case of a negative promotion decision. On this issue, COG believes that such a change should be part of a major change in policy to make the promotions process more transparent.

COG voted to advance all four motions for discussion at the March 19 faculty meeting.

6. Faculty Evaluation of Administrators: According to the ongoing yearly rotation of these evaluations, the following administrators are due to be evaluated in AY19-20: President; Provost; VPR; Dean of Undergraduate Studies; and Dean of Graduate Studies. For the past two years, we have also included a general survey on the overall state of the Institution. The COG discussion focused on the balance we need to strike between: a) our continuous efforts to modify, improve, and incorporate administrative input into the evaluation instrument; and b) the need, under our present circumstances, to come up with a modified short-term plan that

will allow us to conduct these evaluations in a simplified but effective way. Because the current format of the evaluation surveys as well as the process used to convey the results have been significantly modified (for each administrator and for the Institution) in the last two years, COG considered using the existing format and process to evaluate the President, the Provost, and the overall Institution before the end of AY 2020 – while holding off on further modifications and conducting any other evaluations until next year.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:50pm.

Dutifully submitted,

Kris Boudreau
Secretary, COG