

Committee on Governance: Meeting Minutes

Meeting #20: 31 January 2022

Faculty Governance Branch Offices

Present: Len Albano (Secretary, CEE); Nancy Burnham (PH); Tanja Dominko (BBT); Tahar El-Korchi (Chair, CEE); George Heineman (CS); Mark Richman (Secretary of the Faculty, AE); Susan Roberts (CHE); Wole Soboyejo (Provost)

1. Prof. El-Korchi called the meeting to order at 10:08 am.
2. The agenda was approved with a modification.
3. The minutes of COG meeting #19 on January 24, 2022 were approved with a modification.
4. Discussion of Feedback from January Faculty Meeting Concerning the Motions to Modify the COG Membership and Election Procedure and to Establish the Committee on Teaching and Research Faculty:

Prof. El-Korchi opened the discussion by reminding COG members that the plan is to bring the two motions for faculty votes at the February Faculty Meeting, and this Thursday, February 3, is the deadline for distributing items that require two weeks' notice. He then guided COG through a review of the feedback received at the January Faculty Meeting and the ideas discussed during COG meeting #19 to address the concerns that were raised.

The first motion modifies the membership of COG to guarantee representation by secured nontenure-track (NTT) faculty. It expands COG to six elected faculty members and requires that two of the six elected faculty members are NTT faculty. It also simplifies the election procedure for COG members by reducing the number of faculty names required on the final election ballot and codifies certain established practices. In response to the feedback, COG members approved the following revisions to this motion:

- Remove the proposed restriction that the remaining four elected members be tenured faculty members;
- Increase the number of names on the final election ballot to a minimum of six, which will be at least three times the number of openings in most elections; and
- Increase the number of names that may be selected on the nominating ballots from five to ten to expand the nomination process and promote diversity.

The Committee also discussed other items within the motion and agreed to maintain the option for the Chair to serve two successive terms, if elected, to maintain continuity and support strategic planning.

The second motion establishes the Committee on Teaching and Research Faculty (CTRF) as a formal *ad hoc* Committee of the Faculty with the charge to raise and address issues that are specific to teaching and research faculty. The point was made at the January Faculty Meeting that the membership of this new committee is limited to teaching faculty. COG members voted to maintain this element within the motion because research faculty members were not included in the expansion

of Faculty Governance that was approved in May 2020 and are not eligible to vote. It is expected that the elected members of CTRF will engage in discussions with research faculty to fulfill CTRF's charge, and the motion will be modified to include this important aspect of CTRF's operations.

Prof. El-Korchi and Prof. Richman will update the motions to incorporate today's discussion and decisions. The motions will be distributed to the faculty with two weeks' notice for voting at the February Faculty Meeting.

5. WPI Leadership Transition-Faculty Involvement:

COG members expressed concerns for stability in Academic Affairs and continuity of initiatives while WPI transitions to interim leadership and a search is conducted for the next president. With the February meeting of the Board of Trustees soon approaching, there was concern that the decision process for identifying and appointing an interim president may not give sufficient consideration to the impact on academic operations in the short term. In addition, COG members spoke to the importance of involving the faculty within the process for selecting the next president. Provost Soboyejo assured COG members that the Board of Trustees has serious intentions to consult with the faculty throughout the process, and he expects that Trustee David LaPre '74 (Chair of the Presidential Search) will be reaching out to Faculty Governance within the week. COG recommends that Faculty Governance be included in a substantive manner in both the interim and long-term decision processes.

6. WPI Leadership Transition-Other considerations (Executive Session):

COG approved a motion to move into Executive Session to continue discussion confidentially.

7. With the meeting time drawing to an end, COG agreed to vote electronically on an updated version of the joint motion from COG and the Committee on Financial and Administrative Policy (FAP) to revise the membership of FAP. The initial version of the motion was presented for discussion and feedback at the January Faculty Meeting.

[Note: The updated motion was approved electronically, and it will be distributed to the faculty with two weeks' notice for voting at the February Faculty Meeting.]

8. The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Leonard Albano
Secretary, COG