

Committee on Governance: Minutes
Meeting #23: March 18, 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)

1. The meeting was unmuted to order at 2:02 pm. The agenda was approved as distributed. Kids were screaming in the background.
2. The minutes of meeting #22 were approved as upended.
3. Progress toward secure appointments for TRT faculty (continued): Discussion continued from meeting #22 focusing now on the implementation of secure appointments. Although the appointments apply only to nontenure-track teaching faculty members, the entire WPI faculty has interest in these appointments for the guarantees they provide the nontenure-track teaching faculty for equity, inclusion, and security to act without reprisals in all they do for the university and its governance.

COG reviewed an initial draft implementation plan that had been provided by the Provost and University Counsel on March 12 when they met with members of the TRT Council and Prof. Boudreau and Prof. Richman. The purpose of the plan is to give a rough indication of the *numbers* of current nontenure-track teaching who would receive one-, three-, or five-year appointments beginning July 1, 2021. One factor in formulating the plan was to make sure that the initial appointment lengths are staggered so that the number of appointment renewals are distributed fairly evenly over future years.

COG was concerned that the draft implementation plan provided to the committee for its review does not include nearly all those who would be eligible for July 1, 2021 appointments. In addition, it places many faculty members on one-year appointments as though next year will be their first year of service at WPI; it treats everyone who would receive a three-year appointment as though they were in the first year of their first (of two) such appointments; and it places very few faculty members on five-year appointments.

COG members agreed that any proposed implementation plan to be disseminated by the committee to the faculty for its consideration will include everyone eligible, and that the guidelines for determining the length of appointments to be issued should be transparent and consistent with time in service at WPI as of June 30, 2021.

4. Motion related to extensions of the tenure clock due to COVID: In April 2020, the faculty voted to extend the probationary periods by one year for all tenure-track faculty members who had been at WPI since fall 2019, with the choice provided to opt out of the extension. Given the additional year of disruption since then, COG is now generally in favor of extending the probationary periods of those faculty members by an additional year, with a choice provided to opt out of either or both of the one-year extensions and with details concerning the deadlines for communicating those choices yet to be determined. The consensus among COG members

was that an additional year's extension was warranted, and that it would provide a significant reduction in stress for our tenure-track colleagues. COG will forward its recommendation to and continue to collaborate with CTAF on these issues.

5. Elevated Risk Review Process: Prof. Boudreau distributed a revised version of the proposed Elevated Risk Review Process that she had received from VPR Vernescu, who had met with COG on March 9 to discuss the first draft. The purpose of the process is to unify the procedure by which WPI decides whether or not to accept foreign gifts and grants from a list of "Countries of Concern" (see minutes of COG meeting #21). The current draft eliminates faculty travel reimbursements and the hosting of visiting researchers and scholars from the scope of the policy.

Concerns were raised that the process constitutes a policy that affects the academic work of the faculty and, as such, should be approved by the faculty. In addition, the policy should not discourage faculty members from exploring funding opportunities by being overly restrictive. Finally, given the low number of such gifts that we deal with each year, the process as proposed (involving the formation of a new International Coordinating Committee of four faculty members and four administrators, and a Senior Risk Group consisting of the General Counsel, the Provost, and the Vice President for Advancement) is perhaps more elaborate than needed. Would a more streamlined process through the existing Conflict Management Committee work just as well for gifts involving the faculty and needing faculty input?

The meeting adjourned at 3:17 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Richman
Secretary, COG