

## Committee on Governance: Minutes

Meeting #3: August 26, 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 1:20pm. The agenda was approved as distributed.
2. The minutes of meeting #2 were approved with one minor change.
3. Committee Elections: Prof. Boudreau provided the committee with an updated list of the committee membership vacancies to be filled in the fall 2020 elections. Members of COG will contact faculty members to identify those interested in having their names placed on the upcoming ballot. The goal is to send out ballots in early October provided the proposal to use electronic voting is approved at the October 1 faculty meeting.
4. Internal Searches to fill Open Academic Administrative Positions: Provost Soboyejo informed the committee that the searches for the Dean of Engineering and the Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies (UGS) will both be internal. The Assoc. Dean of UGS is a half-time position. The goal is to have both positions filled by the end of the academic year. Elections for (elected) members of the search committees will be held electronically pending the approval described above for committee elections.

Committee members were interested to know how decisions are made generally to conduct the searches internally versus externally, and how the decision was made for the Dean of Engineering, in particular. The consensus was that when a search is internal, the search committee has a special but perhaps overlooked responsibility to recruit applicants by actively encouraging their WPI colleagues to apply. When, for example, the internal search for the (then half-time) position of Dean of Graduate Studies was last conducted, such efforts on the part of the search committee resulted in attracting five qualified applicants.

5. Consideration of Tenure Track for Teaching Professors: Provost Soboyejo thanked COG, and Profs. Richman and Boudreau in particular, for placing this issue front and center on COG's agenda this fall. He expressed his appreciation for the progress made on the tenure criteria and the collaborative spirit in which the work had been carried out. The Provost has made public his support for establishing a tenure track for teaching professors and will continue to do so. The parts of the proposed criteria that describe expectations for both teaching and for continuing professional growth are consistent with the foundation of tenure. Provost Soboyejo has discussed the details with the Academic Planning Committee of the Board of Trustees, who are also in firm support of the proposal. Most importantly, the strong consensus among the Provost, COG and the Trustees is that establishing a tenure track for teaching professors will make clear WPI's institutional support for our teaching professors.
6. Proposal for a Department of Integrative and Global Studies (DIGS): The proposal is for this single department to reside in the Global School. The Provost provided a brief rationale for

establishing the department and welcomed questions from COG members. Further elaboration was requested to address the following concerns:

- The need for and the function of a single department within a single school;
- More clarity about the distinction between the roles of the department head and the Dean of the school, and a clearer articulation of the benefits that a department head will bring beyond those brought by a Dean when there is only one department;
- A clearer description of the academic programs within the department;
- A more complete description of the current and projected scholarly disciplines of focus within the department;
- Assurances that the new department would not further erode the sense that the IQP belongs to faculty in all departments and all schools;
- Additional data to evaluate the benefits of our current GPS offerings; a description of how the new department could enhance the GPS and improve the appeal of the GPS for our first-year students; and a plan to ensure that the GPS is integrated into other programs across the campus;
- Estimates of additional costs that would come from establishing a new department and the extent to which these costs can be balanced in the current climate.

In the limited time, Provost Soboyejo addressed some of these concerns briefly. The role of the Dean was to shape the vision of the Global School, enhance its external visibility and attract external funding. The department head, on the other hand, would build academic programs, and mentor faculty members as they grow professionally and build on their scholarship. The department structure would be more adaptable to our tenure process, but it could be flexible to blend with STEM activities across the campus.

Provost Soboyejo explained his view that global studies and understanding the different regions of the world and the connections between them is a broad, scholarly discipline on its own. The Provost agreed that care should be taken to preserve the IQP as a campus-wide collaboration among faculty and that the formation of the department should be an opportunity to strengthen the GPS.

Provost Soboyejo will forward the gist of this discussion to those working with him to write and update the proposal. COG's discussion of the proposal will continue as updates are incorporated.

7. The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mark Richman  
Secretary, COG