

Committee on Governance: Minutes
Meeting #4 (2019-20)
Tuesday, September 17, 2019, 3:00 pm – 4:30 pm
Faculty Governance Conference Room

Present: Kris Boudreau (HUA, Secretary of COG), Tanja Dominko (BBT, Secretary of the Faculty), Tahar El-Korchi (CEE via Zoom to Morocco), Glenn Gaudette (BME, Chair), Mark Richman (ME), Susan Roberts (ChE), Wole Soboyejo (Provost *ad interim*); guests Anita Tien and Emily McCarthy from Isaacson, Miller.

- 1) Prof. Gaudette called the meeting to order at 3:08; the agenda was approved with one amendment.
- 2) Visit from representatives of Isaacson, Miller: Prof. Gaudette introduced COG to Ms. McCarthy and Ms. Tien, describing COG's mission and process; COG members introduced themselves; and Ms. Tien and Ms. McCarthy introduced themselves and their search firm, explaining that they are on campus as the first step in a longer launch process and will return to WPI once a search committee has been ignited. Isaacson, Miller (IM) serves in an advisory capacity to the search committee, which in turn is advisory to the provost. At the end of the search process, the search committee will submit a list of acceptable finalists to the provost, with its preferences made clear. At the start of a search, IM's practice is to talk to many stakeholders. Because WPI is searching for an inaugural dean, the position will require harmonizing and building on various ongoing initiatives. When IM returns to campus in the coming weeks, it will be to gain an understanding of people's hopes for the role and their vision of success in 2-3 years.

Provost Soboyejo explained that IM's visit today is part of many meetings across campus to help shape the position description. He reminded COG members that the process of getting the Global School approved was a collaborative process that included much work from COG and that consequently he wanted COG members to weigh in on what they'd like to see from a new dean. COG members emphasized the importance of inclusivity, respect for the hard work that's gone on for many years in global initiatives at WPI, and hiring a champion who will value this prior work. They explained to the IM representatives the occasionally contentious process leading up to the establishment of the Global School and expressed the opinion that our new leader must work collaboratively to succeed in WPI's unusually collaborative environment. The discussion included the importance of delicately balancing a vision of what the new school might be (i.e., having clear and compelling ideas about what a new school could do, and an ability to set priorities, develop new programs, and make hard decisions) with the ability to lead, inspire, and pull different efforts together effectively to elevate the work of WPI's global initiatives. COG members are looking for not just an administrator but someone with ideas and an open mind who understands WPI's accomplishments and processes, appreciates a collaborative environment, and will empower the people who have invested decades of time and work. Bringing a new person into a well-established set of activities is delicate, and an awareness of that dynamic is important. Organizing a vision from stakeholders, shepherding the development of a new school, and guiding people to take the next step, are important.

Ms. Tien indicated that she has had experience working on at least one other inaugural dean search. Ms. Tien then noted, in general, the elements of a successful search: a committee of 8 or 9 people who reflect a range of opinions at the university but do not see their role as representing any one particular constituency, and candor with candidates about campus concerns that will be relevant to the person hired into the position. For its part, IM wants to "build a frame" of potential profiles that will be possible for the next dean so that the search committee views and invites to campus representatives

of different types of people who might effectively fill the role (for instance, time served in academia, government, and NGOs).

- 3) Minutes from meeting #3 were approved with amendments.
- 4) The meeting adjourned at 4:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kris Boudreau
Secretary, COG