

Committee on Governance: Meeting Minutes

Meeting #5: September 16, 2021

Faculty Governance Conference Room (SL 225)

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

Absent: Nancy Burnham (PH)

1. Prof. El-Korchi called the meeting to order at 12:10 pm.
2. Prof. Roberts, serving as President Leshin's appointment, was welcomed to COG.
3. The agenda was approved as distributed.
4. The minutes of COG meeting #4 on September 9, 2021 were approved with modifications.
5. Preparations for the October Faculty Meeting:
Prof. Richman reported that there will be two motions requesting faculty approval to change the names of two departments: Mechanical Engineering, and Civil & Environmental Engineering. These motions were approved by COG in Meeting #3. Prof. Richman is considering two presentations. One presentation would address student mental health concerns, and the support that faculty can give in the classroom and project advising. For the second presentation, Andrew Palumbo, Assistant VP for Enrollment Management & Dean of Admissions & Financial Aid, would give an update on the Class of 2025.

Prof. Heineman also requested time to announce the formation of an *ad hoc* group to help address faculty questions on the use of Workday.

6. Update on Schedule of Visitors to COG:
 - a. Greg Snoddy, Assistant VP and Dean of Students, is invited to the COG meeting on September 23, 2021.
 - b. Assistant VP Andrew Palumbo is invited to the COG meeting on September 30, 2021.
 - c. Prof. Vernescu, Vice Provost for Research, was also invited to the September 30th meeting, but Prof. El-Korchi will reschedule this visit for a later date.
7. NECHE Campus Visit and Meeting with Faculty and Faculty Governance:
The NECHE Evaluation Committee is scheduled to visit the campus during the week of October 4th, and Prof. Heinricher, Dean of Undergraduate Studies, provided a tentative schedule for meetings with faculty and faculty governance. The schedule includes a lunch meeting with faculty governance chairs, a lunch meeting with the Undergraduate Outcomes Assessment Committee (UOAC) and Institutional Research, an open meeting with faculty, and a lunch meeting with TRT faculty. Profs. Richman and El-Korchi will also be invited to the welcome dinner for the NECHE visitors. Dean Heinricher will share the final schedule more widely.

Prof. Richman commented that WPI's faculty governance system was identified as a strength during the 2012 NEASC Visit. Prof. Dominko noted that she collaborated with Prof. Richman, as the most recent Secretaries of the Faculty, to contribute sections on faculty governance to Standards Three and Nine of the 2021 WPI Self-Study Report. Their work describes faculty governance's committee structure and outlines its significant accomplishments over the past several years, including changes in COAP's process for reviewing and promoting Associate Professors, the introduction of a teaching path to tenure, and the extension of voting rights and academic freedom to all full-time faculty.

8. Update on Committee Appointments:

Prof. Laura Roberts (IGS) has agreed to serve as COG's appointment to the Fringe Benefits Committee (FBC).

9. Process and Timeline for Evaluation of Administrators:

Given that the evaluation of administrators last occurred in Spring 2020, COG took some time to revisit this process and establish a plan going forward. The Committee identified twelve administrators and organized them into two groups of six for evaluation in alternating years. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Dean of Graduate Studies, Vice Provost for Research, Chief Financial Officer, the Office of Talent & Inclusion, and the Chief Information Officer were placed in Group 1. The President, Provost, and the Deans of Arts & Sciences, Engineering, The Business School, and The Global School were placed in Group 2. In order to get back on a regular schedule, the list of administrators in Group 1 will be evaluated this fall '21, and those in Group 2 will be evaluated in the spring '22. After this academic year, the two-year rotation will return with the evaluation of Group 1 in Spring 2023 and Group 2 in Spring 2024.

COG plans to continue with the survey questions that were developed in the recent past. These survey forms organized the questions for each administrator under the broader headings of Resource Management, Personnel Management, Communication, Climate and Culture, and Leadership. To prepare for this fall's evaluations, individual members of COG volunteered to finalize the questions associated with the specific administrators. A new questionnaire is needed for evaluating the Office of Talent & Inclusion and the Chief Information Officer. The Committee set a mid-November deadline for having the surveys ready to distribute to the faculty.

10. Update from Provost Soboyejo on Resources Available to Accommodate Large First-Year Class:

Information available to the Provost indicated that there are 1417 first-year students, versus a budgeted class size of 1350 students. While Workday shows nearly 1500 first-year students in A term, this list includes all new transfer students (about 70 or so as indicated by the Registrar). The typical "Summer melt" was not as large as anticipated.

Provost Soboyejo reported that the Administration has allocated supplemental funds of \$947,000 available to meet the immediate teaching needs for the larger first-year class, and these additional funds will propagate forward for the next four years. The Provost worked with the Deans of the four schools and Department Heads to put forward a funding request for additional adjuncts, TAs, and PLAs. The Deans will receive the additional funds and oversee the distribution among the departments in their respective schools.

The Provost also stated that the Administration has started to plan for additional faculty hiring in next year's budget. Eighteen faculty searches have been allocated for this year, and the Provost expressed the view that these searches may be used to recruit additional faculty members, which will be included in the budget for AY 2022-23.

11. The meeting was adjourned at 1:35pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Leonard Albano
Secretary, COG