

## Committee on Governance: Meeting Minutes

Meeting #9: 25 October 2021

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 12:02 pm. Prof. El-Korchi reminded COG that the weekly B-term meetings are scheduled for Mondays, 11:15am to 12:45pm. He also noted that the Faculty Governance Conference Room (SL 225) may not be available, and he will find another space to hold in-person meetings.

2. The agenda was approved as distributed.

3. The minutes of COG meeting #8 on October 7, 2021 were approved as distributed.

4. Preparations for the November Faculty Meeting:

Prof. Richman shared that he is not expecting much committee business for the November 4<sup>th</sup> meeting. He then outlined some options for a brief presentation and open discussion. One option is to invite the Co-Chairs of the COACHE Survey Steering Committee, Profs. Demetry and Dominko, to update the faculty on the work of their committee as part of WPI's commitment to take action on the survey results. A second option is to invite a faculty member who received tenure in the past two or three years to share their perspective on the state of affairs and key issues for tenure-track faculty. Last, the Committee on Information Technology Policy, which is a subcommittee of COG, has been reviewing and updating policies, and Prof. Cowlagi (CITP Chair) may be invited to give a summary to the faculty.

Prof. Richman asked COG for their thoughts on conducting an in-person or virtual meeting. Some members indicated that they have received feedback from colleagues preferring virtual meetings for their convenience and the fact that attendance on Zoom has been strong. Prof. Richman commented that he is weighing concerns for faculty well-being (fear of COVID and desire to reduce stress levels) versus the positive power of getting together in-person and promoting open discussions.

5. Nominations for Board of Trustees Student Affairs Committee:

Prof. El-Korchi informed COG that two names were forwarded for one position on the Student Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees, and Prof. Aaron Deskins (CHE) was selected. Provost Soboyejo noted that both of COG's choices were approved by the Deans and the Board, and President Leshin made the final selection.

6. Invitation to Faculty Governance Committees to Provide Updates to COG:

Prof. El-Korchi solicited input from COG on inviting representatives from Committees of the Faculty to brief COG on committee work that may have a significant impact on teaching or research. Suggestions from COG members included:

- CITP, as noted above.
- Committee on Financial and Administrative Policy (FAP) to provide follow-up on that FAP salary review presentation that was scheduled for the May 2020 Faculty Meeting but canceled due to lack of time. Prof. Dominko, who is also a member of FAP, volunteered to talk with the committee on whether a presentation can be put together.
- Committee on Academic Policy (CAP) and Committee on Graduate Studies & Research (CGSR) to discuss whether a Pass/Fail grading option should be pursued as a permanent policy in the interests of student well-being.
- Presentations to COG or within the monthly faculty meetings to new initiatives, such as the Lab for Education & Application Prototypes (LEAP), the renovated lab facilities at 15 Sagamore Road, and medical robotics, that may interest the involvement of other faculty members.

7. Faculty Evaluation of Administrators (continued discussion from COG meeting #5):

Prof. El-Korchi reported that Prof. Richman, Provost Soboyejo, and he attended a meeting of the Joint Coordinating Council (JCC) on Friday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>. At this meeting, President Leshin stated that she would like to see a pause on faculty evaluation of administrators because it is not a comprehensive review and it does not align with the other reviews that are conducted by the Administration and the Board of Trustees. Provost Soboyejo explained that the Administration is requesting a pause to provide time to define an evaluation process that would be collaboratively agreed upon by all parties, and he felt that this revision would require a three to six month pause.

COG members responded with concerns that this pause would cause the review process to fall further behind, given that the last evaluation occurred in Spring 2020. It was noted that these evaluations have been occurring for more than 25 years, and the evaluation instruments have been modified on multiple occasions to respond to feedback from the Administration and the administrators themselves. In COG meeting #5 on September 16<sup>th</sup>, considerable time was devoted to identifying the complete set of administrators for evaluation and organizing 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, COG planned to evaluate the administrators in Group 1 this fall, and those in Group 2 will be evaluated in Spring 2022. Of the administrators listed in Group 1, COG had previously agreed to not include Michael Horan, Executive VP and CFO in this year's evaluation process because he is new to the position. Additionally, COG expressed a willingness to not include the Office of Talent & Inclusion with the hope that the Administration will set-up a university-wide review.

With the available meeting time quickly drawing to a close, Prof. El-Korchi decided to poll COG members by sending a confidential "Yes" or "No" vote to Penny Rock, Faculty Governance Executive Assistant. A "Yes" vote is to evaluate administrators starting this fall in the rotation approved in COG meeting minutes #5. As noted above, the CFO and the Office of Talent & Inclusion will not be evaluated in this cycle.

Voting was done by email after the meeting, and the results were 6 “Yes” votes and 2 “No” votes.

8. The meeting was adjourned at 12:59pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Leonard Albano  
Secretary, COG