

Summary of FAP Meeting #4s AY2018-19

21 September 2018, 3 p.m. – 4 p.m.

SL225

Members in Attendance: Nancy Burnham (Chair), Randy Paffenroth (Secretary), Kristopher Sullivan – Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs

Absent: George Pins (RPC representative), Jeffrey Solomon (Executive Vice President/CFO), Joseph Sarkis (FBC Chair)

- 1) **Approval of the Minutes from Meeting #4:** The minutes were approved electronically.
- 2) **Interim Provost Discussion:** Interim Provost Soboyejo attended the September 21 FAP meeting to discuss his vision for WPI during his time as interim provost.
 - a) The role of FAP in faculty governance was discussed as well as current FAP priorities (e.g., salaries, space, Workday)
 - b) It was noted that regular salary benchmarking for TT/T faculty is performed with regards to peer institutions.
 - c) At the last benchmarking WPI TT/T faculty salary was assessed as being just above the median while a previous benchmarking assessed the salaries at closer to the 65-th percentile.
 - i) Identifying any individual faculty to fall below the median was discussed, as was possible remediations.
 - ii) NTT and staff salary benchmarking has not been performed, but is under consideration now, including administrative assistants.
 - iii) Alternating periods of TT/T and NTT salary benchmarking was discussed as a possibility.
 - d) Graduate student tuition benchmarking was also discussed with graduate tuition reduction for RA students under fully loaded grants being noted as a priority.
 - e) WPI has high net cost among our peer group was discussed, and WPIs engineering education focus and projects-based learning were noted.
 - i) However, WPI's high net cost is a risk that needs to be managed.
 - f) Space (classroom, research, etc.) at WPI was discussed from a strategic perspective
 - i) Gateway, WPI's core campus, and a new building were discussed in the context of WPI's projected growth of 47 faculty (to 300) in the next five years.
 - ii) It was noted that in the 2000s WPI had a period of rapid growth that was imperfectly managed.
 - (1) The question was asked "Growth for what?", not to be anti-growth, but rather to focus the discussion on strategic thinking, such as niche opportunities in neuroscience and data science.
 - (2) It was noted that the current class is exceptionally large and will have impacts in later years on IQPs, MQPs, etc.
 - iii) The renovation possibilities of Kaven Hall, Olin Hall, and Stratton Hall were discussed in the context of a five-year plan.
 - (1) A five-year plan versus a three-year plan puts less pressure on the system and allows for stakeholders to provide data so that a rigorous analysis can be done.
 - (2) A new building was noted as a source of "swing space" for future renovations.
 - g) The ratio of credits taught by TT/T and NTT by noting that the faculty handbook says that TT/T should be a "significant majority" of the teaching at WPI, but that a 60% faction of TT/T teaching has fallen to just under 50%.

- i) Part of desired growth in TT/T faculty is meant to address this issue, but the full picture is not simple.
- ii) Nationwide 75% of credits are taught by adjuncts.
- iii) WPI has a mix of more theoretical and more practical courses, and some of the students in the more practical classes are well served by being taught by practitioners.
- iv) Approximately 5% of the TT/T faculty leave per year, and TT/T hiring is influenced by competition from other universities for qualified candidates.
- v) A sensitivity to institutional missions, such as academic quality, and balance of teaching and research versus a TT/T vs NTT ratio was discussed. The importance of pivoting the discussion to how to incentivize faculty to achieve the university mission was noted, including a pathway for faculty who want to be excellent at teaching.

Respectfully submitted,
Randy Paffenroth, FAP Secretary for 2018-19