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