

Minutes of FAP Meeting #18 AY2021-22

February 7, 2022

4:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Meeting Held Electronically via ZOOM

Members in Attendance: Joseph Fehribach (FAP Chair), Mike Horan (Executive Vice President/CFO), Joseph Sarkis (FBC Co-Chair), David Spanagel (FAP Secretary; RPC Representative), Kris Sullivan (Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs)

Guests: Veronica Brandstrader (Change Management & Training Manager), Patty Patria (Vice President for Information Technology/CIO)

Call to Order. Chair Fehribach called the 18th FAP meeting of the year to order at 4:04 PM.

1) **Workday Student update.** FAP members welcomed VP Patria and Training Manager Brandstrader for another in their periodic visits to check in with the committee on how they are dealing with the evolving challenges of adapting Workday business-designed systems to WPI's meet academic higher education institutional needs. Today's update began with a restatement of the original goals of migrating from WPI's customized Banner-based systems to Workday systems when that decision was first made (prior to VP Patria's arrival): top goals were to increase flexibility, responsiveness, and expand opportunities to automate manual processes.

WPI's ability to continue operating as well as it did through the pandemic was credited to the capabilities that Workday systems provided. On the other hand, while "time savings" were also promised in due course of these other goals, some FAP members pushed back on whether time savings really meant "work redirection onto other people." Whose time has been saved? And at what other human or other organizational costs (including distraction and productivity losses for people forced to acquire and maintain relevant systems expertise, as well as the overburdening of administrative staff members whose numbers were also diminished for some departments and programs during the pandemic)?

To address some of the more unreasonably demanding Workday Finance processes, VP Patria and AVP Sullivan each spoke about how the Academic Affairs and Talent and Inclusion divisions recently collaborated with IT to create a centralized Shared Services team which has reconfigured how the system handles hiring of TAs and RAs. Policies have also evolved over time to better enable

individuals to delegate their Workday data input and approval responsibilities to a designated administrative staff member.

Turning to the more recent efforts to fully launch Workday Student system capabilities, VP Patria and Training Manager Brandstrader outlined the new systems much expanded ability to generate Academic Progress Reports, now not only for audits of undergraduate Majors, but also for the first time being available for tracing progress towards completion of Graduate Degree programs and for undergraduate Minors. Audits for Graduate Certificate programs are not anticipated, due to the flexibility that would be required of the system to handle these.

One FAP member registered his satisfaction with how well the Workday Student system managed course waitlists in the fall of 2021, while another FAP member shared his ongoing concerns about the interplay between the eProjects platform and Workday Student, which has effectively introduced far more complexity into the process by which students are allowed (or prevented when they attempt) to enroll in an HUA inquiry seminar or practicum.

VP Patria noted that there are both an eProjects Advisory Committee and a Workday Governance Committee, each of which provide faculty and staff members a place to direct these kinds of critical input for further system refinement and/or policy improvement. She also noted that the Committee on Information Technology Policy (CITP) recently discussed adding an appointed faculty member to the Workday Governance Committee. Feedback of all kinds are always welcome at workday@wpi.edu. The Information Technology and Institutional Research divisions are also working together to include Workday questions in the Measuring Information Services Outcomes (MISO) survey to be administered to students and faculty in the next academic year. One FAP member urged surveys and other feedback opportunities be explicitly targeted to staff members as well, since they are the group whose needs and experiences of pandemic stress have been less prominently featured in community-wide discourse over these difficult past two years. He also recommended that anonymous evaluative instruments be decoupled from questionnaires designed to elicit specific troubleshooting concerns. Finally he commended and urged that Training Manager Brandstrader continue her practice of visiting departments periodically to check in, to refresh people's awareness of these resources, and to keep healthy lines of communication open at the ground-level of daily institutional experiences.

Training Manager Brandstrader wrapped up the presentation by outlining plans now underway to implement desirable modifications to Workday Student, such as: larger format student photos, the incorporation of historical data harvested from Banner, building a Commencement Management process for this Spring's graduation, the ability to import grades directly from Canvas to Workday, and the migration of the Faculty Annual Review process from Qualtrics to Workday in time for the next cycle of annual reporting. Several FAP members expressed their appreciation for the dedication and hard work that our Information Technology division staff has displayed throughout these extraordinarily challenging times of system transition amid unprecedented pandemic conditions.

- 2) **Approval of Minutes.** FAP's Meeting #17 minutes were approved unanimously as corrected.
- 3) **Adjournment.** The meeting was adjourned at 5:04 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

David Spanagel

FAP Secretary