

## **Minutes of FAP Meeting #23 AY2019-20**

**27 April 2020**

**3:00 PM - 4:00 PM**

### **Meeting Held Electronically via ZOOM**

Members Attending: Nancy Burnham (Chair), Mike Radzicki (Secretary), Joseph Fehribach (FBC Chair), George Pins (RPC Representative), Jeff Solomon (Executive Vice President/CFO), Kris Sullivan (Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs)

Guests: Andy Aberdale (Board of Trustees), Rachel LeBlanc (WPI Forward – Steering Cmte), Amy Morton (WPI Forward – co-chair/Chief of Staff)

- The meeting was called by the chair to order at 15:04.
- Discussion of Logistics:
  - The minutes from meeting #22 were tabled to allow for additional time to review.
  - George will Chair meeting #24 because Nancy will be out of town.
- Discussion Provost Soboyejo's letter to the faculty regarding the Administrative Policy Group (APG):
  - The meeting began with a discussion of Provost Soboyo's letter to the faculty describing the scope and focus of the APG. Several faculty noted concerns regarding the new computer purchasing policy, citing issues regarding the ability to continue using pre-existing teaching tools (eg. iPads, MS Surfaces) and the ability to purchase critical research computing tools to support funded research grants. The CFO noted that there were forms and processes in place to request exceptions to the policies.
  - The discussion continued by noting that the APG documents empower the Provost to decide what is an academic policy and what is an administrative policy. While the faculty are comfortable with the judgements of the current administration, there is significant concern about how these policies may be viewed by future Provosts. It was noted that the administration feels it has made some concessions to the faculty regarding the APG and the Trustees urged the administration to get the APG in place by May. The CFO acknowledged that the administration recognizes that there are ongoing issues and they will continue to solicit faculty input.
- Update on President Leshin's upcoming Town Hall meeting of April 29.
  - The CFO shared with FAP that at the upcoming Town Hall meeting, the President would announce a voluntary early retirement incentive plan for employees more than 59.5 years old with 10 years of service. WPI has approximately 1200 employees and 193 are eligible (including 101 staff, 64 TTTs, 24 NTTs). The CFO detailed the terms of the early retirement plan and the President will share them with the community at the Town Hall. It was also noted that the administration was investigating voluntary furloughs for the summer (individuals volunteering to take time off in the summer with no pay). The Budget and Finance Committee (including faculty reps) is meeting this week to discuss. Finally, it was noted that it is becoming clear that the upcoming academic year is not going to be "business as usual" and the administration was consider numerous strategies to protect everyone's jobs.
- Discussion of WPI Forward.
  - Rachel LeBlanc, Project Lead, led a discussion on the progress of the WPI Forward process. Rachel reviewed the scope, focus and goals of each of the Project teams. The Project team representatives, including faculty and staff, noted that the teams were collegial, collaborative, productive and professional. Each of the WPI Forward Project

teams is currently submitting recommendations to the Steering Committee. On May 4, the Steering Committee will convene for a day-long "Trade-off" session to discuss the merits and challenges with each team's recommendations. The Steering Committee will then provide recommendations to the President.

- The CFO noted that the President will have the final word on the budget and it will be presented to the Trustees at the May BoT meeting. It was noted that this budget will be a Covid-19 budget and not a WPI Forward sustainable budget.
  - Rachel continued by answering questions about WPI Forward / budgeting process. Project team reports are due the week of April 27. Some projects and the academic portfolio evaluation are ongoing.
  - The CFO noted that the Institution distributed a memo detailing a temporary freeze on discretionary, non-essential spending across campus.
  - Finally, COS Morton reported that as of today, deposits for incoming first year students were strong, but a higher than usual summer "melt" was expected. She also noted that the graduate tuition situation was a bit more uncertain at present.
- Meeting adjourned at 4:12PM.

Respectfully submitted,

George Pins,

Secretary pro tem