

## AY 2015-16 Committee on Administrative and Financial Policy (FAP)

FAP Meeting # 10 - 11:00 a.m., Thursday, November 12, 2015, Conference Room-Financial Services; Boynton Hall 2<sup>nd</sup> FL

### In Attendance:

Professor David Spanagel (Chair)

Professor Hossein Hakim (FBC Chair and FAP Faculty Representative on RPC)

Professor Tahar El-Korchi (Secretary)

Professor Tanja Dominko; faculty appointee to Trustees' Budget and Finance committee (invited guest).

Jeffrey Solomon Executive Vice President/CFO

Kristopher Sullivan; Assistant Vice President Academic Affairs

Judi Trainor; Assistant Vice President Budget and Planning (invited guest)

1. Chair Spanagel began the meeting at 11:00 a.m.
2. The minutes for Meetings # 9 were discussed and approved.
3. Chair Spanagel opened the discussion by informing the committee that COG was aware of FAP's experience with our new administrative leadership. COG was seeking input from FAP on how to change its official description and charge so that it can fit better into a forward looking decision making process in the future. COG is looking for suggestions and recommendations to making possible changes to FAP's official "charge," its size, and the configuration of its membership, given the new era and climate of shared governance in which we now find ourselves.

### The Current Charge of FAP:

*FAP consists of three elected faculty members and, ex officio, the President or a representative designated by the President, and the Vice President for Business Affairs. This Committee informs the Faculty on administrative and financial policies affecting the Faculty and the academic affairs of the College. It ascertains the interests and views of the Faculty concerning such policies, and represents these interests and views to the Administration.*

Professor Hakim proposed that FAP should be empowered to study any topic that deals with financial and administrative matters that could be initiated by FAP, any faculty member or the administration. FAP would have the discretion to decide if the proposed topic fits within its purview. FAP would then conduct a study and issue a report that covers all views and perspectives on the topic. This will reduce the level of miscommunication, misunderstanding and narrowing the gap between faculty and administration. He continued by stating that our role in FAP is that of an advisory role and not in a policy making one.

Professor Hakim added that since President Leshin has invited FAP to be involved in the Annual Planning and Budget Process, that this should become an official FAP charge in the future and not dependent on possible future change in the administration. Professors Spanagel and El-Korchi agreed that this would be an important charge for FAP.

VP Solomon cautioned about the charge being too narrow and constraining for future administration if they may have a different view. However the current description and charge for FAP maybe too broad. FAP should advance general concerns of the faculty at large. FAP should address holistic, broader issues and not specific issues that can be delegated to various administrative offices or functions.

Chair Spanagel stated that FAP should address issues of concern from both faculty and administration and FAP is the common place for faculty and administration to meet and discuss issues from different perspectives. Professor El-Korchi added that the description and language in FAP's 'charge' should be strong enough to empower FAP to have a strong position even if it's still a faculty advisory committee.

Professor Spanagel stated that the size of the committee of five was too small and that having seven people in the room was a much better working group size. This will also maintain a core of faculty working on FAP issues during people's absence due to other commitments such as project advising and travel demands.

The entire FAP committee agreed that having five members on the committee was too small. **A number of models to increase the size and composition of the committee were suggested and discussed:**

- a. Increase the committee size to seven members; four elected faculty members; and two presidential appointees. The CFO would be an ex officio member as is currently stated in the FAP description.
- b. Increase the committee size to seven members; three elected faculty members; 1 faculty appointed by (COG or FAP); this faculty could be a faculty appointee to the Trustees' Budget and Finance committee or selected from the faculty at large to add skills that are lacking on the committee.
- c. The pros and cons of a larger committee structure was also discussed but was deemed too costly from a time resource allocation.
- d. A committee composed of equal number of faculty and administrators was also discussed. Professor Dominko stated that since this was a faculty advisory committee and not a policy making committee, it was deemed essential to have more voting faculty on the committee.
- e. VP Solomon stated that a committee of equal number of faculty and administrators would encourage consensus building. However, he also did understand that this is a faculty committee that makes recommendations to the administration.

- f. Chair Spanagel proposed that the structure for selecting FAP members should ensure that we achieve a level of diversity on the committee. It was suggested that COG could play a role to make the committee more inclusive and round out the committee with skill sets that can also include diversity.
4. Prof. Hakim raised several new concerns that he felt FAP should look into:
- a. some maintenance and safety issues in classrooms and offices around the campus, which constitute potential hazards to students, faculty, and staff. VP Solomon urged that the process of filing work orders be followed in all such cases, and he welcomed the chance to follow up on any particular situations that may require persistence or reminders to be addressed.
  - b. the long term financial outlook for WPI (including such factors as endowment investment performance, the prospects of our graduate program enrollments given current demographics and market outlooks, the institution's level of borrowing and its bond rating, and the potential impact of deferred maintenance issues). Prof. Dominko commented that the materials shared with the Trustees at their committee meetings provide some useful insight into these kinds of issues, and she urged FAP to try to help gather, organize, present, and translate this financial information in a manner that will address some of the concerns that faculty members have. VP Solomon noted that a traditional SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis was also part of the strategic planning conversations, and so the initiatives that came out of that process are also informed by and intended to address these kinds of longer term institutional outlook concerns.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:00noon.

Respectfully submitted,  
Tahar El-Korchi, FAP Secretary