

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

FAP Meeting #5 - 11:00 a.m., Thursday, September 24, 2015, Conference Room-Financial Services;  
Boynton Hall 3rd FL

In Attendance:

Professor David Spanagel (Chair)

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

Professor Tahar El-Korchi (Secretary)

Jeffrey Solomon Executive Vice President/CFO

Kristopher Sullivan; Assistant Vice President Academic Affairs

President Laurie Leshin (Guest)

Professor Mark Richman (Secretary of the Faculty)

Chair Spanagel began the meeting at 11:03 a.m.

Professor Hakim, Chair of FBC, presented a proposal to continue the two-tiered health care plan for employees at WPI as the year before. This program would benefit the large majority of the WPI community and would only incur a 2.75% increase in premiums. The FBC also received and discussed a proposal for a three-tiered health care plan that offers plan options for Individuals, Employee +1, and Family. This new plan would have a significant cost increase in premiums for a large majority of the WPI community. Based on the recommendation from the FBC, FAP approved a motion to recommend the TWO-TIERED health care plan to the administration for consideration.

President Leshin and Professor Richman joined the meeting at 11:15 a.m.

Chair Spanagel welcomed President Leshin and Professor Richman (Secretary of the Faculty) to the meeting. He opened the meeting by expressing FAP's hopes and aspirations of working with the administration in this new era of collaboration and openness especially as WPI embarks on the implementation phase of the strategic plan. He added by asking, that given the expanded role of FAP's members in the budget development process initiated last year, what changes can we look forward to the next time around, to improve transparency, timeliness of participation and input, and FAP member preparation and effectiveness for the sake of the quality of decision-making outcomes?

President Leshin thanked FAP for inviting her and professor Richman. She informed the committee that she is looking forward to working with FAP and would encourage FAP to identify a list of issues that are impactful and that they can tackle within the year. She realizes that some issues can take longer and would require a multiyear approach. Other issues can become dependent on implementation of the strategic plan and the new Annual Planning and Budget Process (APBP). She would like FAP to be involved in the APBP. She recognizes that we are in a transition year with the hiring of a new provost and the need to make a decision on faculty lines much earlier this year than the APBP for 2017.

Although the process is still evolving, President Leshin wanted to explore how to best involve faculty governance in the budget process. Whereas the three faculty members involved in last

year's budget process were all from FAP, the President was considering widening the breadth of faculty involvement by instead involving the Secretary of the Faculty, the Chair of FAP, and one of the two faculty members appointed to the Budget and Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees. Prof. Hakim noted that FAP was not involved in the process of approving new faculty positions for 2016-17. President Leshin indicated that this year was a transitional year and that faculty hires will be managed through the new Annual Planning and Budgeting Process, a process starting this year (for the FY2017 process).

Professor Richman and Chair Spanagel emphasized the importance of having the participating faculty members more actively involved throughout the Annual Planning and Budget Process (APBP) and prior to the budget parameters being presented during the Trustee's meeting in February (with final budget approved in the May). This could be accomplished by providing them with sufficient prior information so that they could give meaningful input, and by inviting them to voice faculty priorities during the budget discussions.

President Leshin agreed and recommended that a list of issues be developed by the group of participating faculty members, which in turn would be channeled through the provost's office and included in the APBP. She informed FAP that ultimately, the provost's office has the responsibility for addressing academic budgetary issues and that FAP should coordinate their efforts with the provost's office for effective communication and input.

Prof. Hakim asked whether FAP will have easy access to data in the future and will be allowed to ask for any data considered important for its studies. President Leshin was hopeful and encouraged that the addition of Kris Sullivan from the provost's office would be a big improvement in connecting FAP with potential sources of data that will help in their efforts to complete impactful studies. The decision about access to data will depend on the topics and issues that FAP formulates and decides to tackle collectively. There are many considerations for providing timely and accurate data for conducting specific studies. This includes availability and accessibility of the data, necessary resources to generate or create the data, and the sensitivity of the data. Access to data and information will depend on the list of issues that FAP identifies as impactful to address and tackle at the beginning of the year. FAP will work with the provost office and request the necessary data and information to complete its studies.

Professor Richman (Secretary of the Faculty) asked FAP to address the issue of better defining FAP's charge, to review (for possible revision) the description of FAP in the Faculty Handbook, and to evaluate the current composition of the FAP committee membership and to propose any changes needed to meet FAP's workload. Prof. Richman hoped that there might be a concise and general way to include in FAP's revised charge a statement about timely access to reasonable requests for institutional data. A concern, expressed by Chair Spanagel, regarding membership is that when a FAP member is off campus for a term to advise at a project center, then FAP committee work may overwhelm the two remaining elected faculty members.

Meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Tahar El-Korchi, FAP Secretary