

Committee on Governance: Meeting Minutes
Meeting #8: 7 October 2021
Faculty Governance Conference Room (SL 225)

Present: Nancy Burnham (PH); Tahar El-Korchi (Chair, CEE); George Heineman (CS); Mark Richman (Secretary of the Faculty, AE, departed at 1:00); Wole Soboyejo (Provost)

Via Zoom: Susan Roberts (CHE)

Absent: Len Albano (Secretary, CEE); Tanja Dominko (BBT)

Invited Guest: VPR Bogdan Vernescu (arrived at 1:00)

1. Prof. El-Korchi called the meeting to order at 12:13 pm.
2. The agenda was approved as distributed.
3. Provost Soboyejo thanked faculty governance for their participation in the recent NECHE visit.
4. The minutes of COG meeting #7 on September 30, 2021 were approved as distributed.
5. Preparations for the October Faculty Meeting:
Prof. Richman updated COG that the October faculty meeting that afternoon will be conducted entirely via Zoom. The meeting will include two related presentations and a discussion period following each presentation. As noted in previous COG meeting minutes, Assistant VP Andrew Palumbo will make the first presentation, addressing trends in WPI admissions, financial aid, and incoming class sizes. Then, Prof. Joseph Fehribach (Chair, Committee on Financial and Administrative Policy) will make a presentation on WPI's response to the larger-than-expected Class of 2025 in terms of the decision-making process and the allocation of resources. These presentations will be preceded by two COG motions on department name changes.
6. Nominations for Board of Trustees Student Affairs Committee:
Two names are needed for one appointment on the Student Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees. COG discussed various possibilities, who will be contacted by Chair El-Korchi in collaboration with the Deans.
7. Visit of VPR Vernescu:
VPR Vernescu described the **Conflict Management Committee**, which is also described in the Faculty Handbook. Most of the cases that come up originate from the annual conflict of interest disclosure. The committee discusses how financial interests such as IP and licensing are managed. They also discuss potential conflicts in managing students from other universities. Last year the committee met eight or nine times for eight cases (two of which had international aspects to them). COG appoints a faculty chair and faculty alternate to this committee; it's a one-year term with potential for renewal. As of October 1, we have a new Office of Research Integrity and Compliance headed by Gabe Johnson, which shows that WPI is serious about managing conflicts of interest.

Regarding the **Research Development Council**, the appointments by deans are for three-year terms with possibility of renewal: Dean A&S (2), Dean Eng (2), and Dean of Business (1). Now that we have the Global School, a modification to the Faculty Handbook is needed.

Regarding the **utilization of indirect costs**, the VPR receives 2% of indirect costs, the PI 10%, departments 4%, and the Dean of Graduate Studies 2%. The rest goes to the operating budget. COG members asked how the rates compare to other universities and suggested that the RDC might do some benchmarking with peer institutions.

COG members also asked if the RDC is involved in any **space and facilities** discussions and if new spaces and facilities laid the foundation for more successful grants? VPR Vernescu replied that when the LSBC was opened, our life sciences funding grew by a factor of ten. COG members suggested that WPI might now be large enough to have a dedicated permanent flex space for renovations or mini-flex spaces for research ebb and flow. VPR Vernescu stated that part of the current strategic plan is scaling up our research infrastructure, both facility and human, including award management support for large grants.

8. The meeting was adjourned at 1:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Burnham
Secretary *evocatus*, COG