

Minutes of FAP Meeting #2 AY2021-22

September 13, 2021

4:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Meeting held On Zoom

In Attendance: Joseph Fehribach, MA (FAP Chair), David Spanagel, HUA, Kris Sullivan (Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs), Joe Sarkis, BUS, and Tanja Dominko, BBT (COG appointee)

Agenda

1. Call to Order

Chair Fehribach called the meeting to order at 4:02 PM.

2. President's appointment to FAP

The President's office confirmed Kris Sullivan's continued appointment to the committee.

3. FAP appointments to FBC

Prof. Albrecht agreed to continue serving on FBC as a FAP appointee for a term ending in 2024. **Chair Fehribach** will reach out to additional faculty in order to fill the second FAP appointment to the committee.

4. Provost's letters to faculty specifying their compensation

The committee discussed the upcoming issuance of letters to faculty that will specify their salary for a calendar year starting with the October, 2021 paycheck issued at the end of the month. The salaries will be based on the evaluation that was conducted in February-March 2021 and increases will follow Board of Trustees approved guidelines approved at their May 2021 meeting. 2.5% of the salary pool will be distributed for base and merit increase and .5% for equity adjustments. Faculty recommended for tenure and or promotion have received their tenure/promotion increases on July 1, 2021. The members noted that this delay in the effective date of salary adjustments stretches the period of no salary increases to a total of 15 months; the last salary adjustments were implemented on July 1, 2019 for the 2019-2020 academic year.

Kris Sullivan explained that the decision to move the effective date for salary increases to October 31 was made in order to allow the institution to more accurately project the incoming revenue. Since final freshmen enrollment numbers should be available by the end of August, the committee asked that the salary letters be issued at the end of August each year, assuming this practice remains permanent.

Mike Horan (unable to attend) provided the following detail ahead of the meeting:

Faculty should receive a message in their Workday accounts over the next couple of weeks that will tell them what their raise was and their new salary going forward. HR is in the final stages of getting all the pay adjustments into the system so that they take effect on October 1st. The President confirmed that this change to October is a permanent change, given that we don't really know what the year looks like until drop/add passes.

Since the Board of Trustees approves provisions for salary increases (among others) at their May meeting without knowing the actual tuition revenue, the committee members recommended that the Board consider sharing not only downside risks of revenue fluctuations, namely upside risks allowing larger increases than approved when revenue exceeds projections.

The committee discussed a possible change in timing of yearly evaluations from February-March to April-May that would allow for evaluation based on the performance during the academic year. Currently we evaluate faculty on a calendar year, which is out of cycle with salary increases.

5. Annual Report

The Annual report was approved.

6. Minutes

The minutes of FAP's 1st meeting (2021-2022) were amended and approved.

7. Class of 2025 – further updates

CFO Mike Horan **Mike Horan** (unable to attend) provided the following detail ahead of the meeting:

WPI approved a \$947,888 supplemental request, which was based on feedback from the Deans and Department heads to address the larger than expected incoming class.

In terms of an allocation methodology, the proposal included support for:

- Instruction:
 - o Adjuncts and overloads for FT faculty
 - o Additional TA tuition and stipends
 - o Additional PLAs and GLAs (peer and graduate learning assistants)
- Academic Advising (Insight program and ARC)
- Consumables and supplies that scale with larger numbers of students

Where these will land in any given year will vary, as the demands on different areas of the division will change over the four years the students are here. Academic Affairs will work with the deans to identify the most appropriate allocation each year and deploy accordingly.

Our current incoming class numbers for Freshmen are holding at 1417, an increase of 82 students over what we budgeted. These students will generate approximately \$3.3 million in additional revenue for the year. We are still working on the graduate #'s there are some mixed signals that we are trying to understand (the # of grad students is up, but the number of credit hours is down). That said, the offsets to that additional revenue are primarily the \$948k that we have allocated back to Academic Affairs to cover the cost of these new students. The rest of these funds (at least for now) will be used to cover the cost of all the Covid testing and additional protocols that we have put into effect. He will present at our next meeting exactly what those protocols are costing us on a weekly basis.

8. Report of the Retirement Plan Committee

Prof. Spanagel reported that the Retirement Plan Committee convened for its most recent quarterly meeting on August 31, 2021. WPI's newly hired retirement plan investment advisors (Fiducient Advisors) walked the committee through Fiducient's Plan Diagnostic Report (which presented the firm's initial impressions and assessments of the WPI retirement plan investment portfolio options). They noted approvingly that WPI employees are deferring, on average, about 18% of annual income toward retirement. This number includes both the employee's own contributions plus the Institute's retirement match contribution. They cited 15% as a recommended minimum benchmark against which to compare this 18% level of combined retirement savings that we are currently showing.

The RPC will have some longer-term conversations with the investment advisors that will help them to advise WPI in future about any potential streamlining of the plan's options, or to recommend specific substitutions of funds in our portfolio, to reduce volatility or potential lack of diversification in any individual employee's retirement portfolio of investments. They also proposed specific actions that they will initiate to try to renegotiate lower plan fees with our two retirement plan vendors (TIAA-CREF and Fidelity Investments).

9. Other Business

FAP has solicited community input into topics to be discussed by the committee this academic year. FAP's Canvas site will serve as a repository for all recommendations. Please access either https://wpi.instructure.com/courses/8827/discussion_topics or <https://canvas.wpi.edu/enroll/3MJLA8> to provide your recommendations.

10. The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 pm.

Secretary
Tanja Dominko