

**COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC POLICY,
Minutes of Meeting #6 on October 6, 2017**

Present: M. Humi (Chair), A. Heinricher, B. Eddy, M. Elmes, D. Olinger, N. Rahbar, G. Salazar, M. Brooks, M. M. Liberacki Guest: S. Miles

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 am by Chair Humi.

Minutes of CAP Meetings #3, #4, #5 on September 15, 22, 29 were approved.

CAP motion on online student evaluations:

With a majority vote via e-mail on October 2, 2017, CAP approved a motion to move to a fully online process by which students give feedback in WPI courses. M.Humi will send the motion to the Secretary of the Faculty for inclusion in the October 2017 faculty meeting.

The question of adding a specific start date in the CAP motion for fully online student evaluations was discussed. It was agreed that the CAP chair would accept a friendly amendment on the faculty floor. The friendly amendment will ask to implement the fully online process only after the Task Force for Improvement of Student Course Reports presents its recommendations to the Faculty.

CAP discussed the issue of gender bias, particularly as it relates to student evaluations. M. Humi expressed his viewpoint on the issue, raising the possibility that lower teaching evaluations for women faculty might also reflect amount of seniority. B. Eddy has sent CAP members a literature review on gender bias which, among other findings, shows that there is consistent bias in student evaluations for women and other underrepresented groups. This bias is particularly strong for women teaching in technical areas. She feels that CAP should honestly address the existence of this bias when presenting the above motion to the faculty. She also discussed how women faculty at WPI feel the need to provide extra information (such as recommendation letters and enhanced teaching portfolios) that supports their teaching record because they are concerned about gender bias.

Other CAP members thought that gender bias in student evaluations is an important issue, and that the Task Force for Improvement of Student Course Reports will be able to address the issue. A. Heinricher informed CAP that when the current student evaluation form was approved by the Faculty, evaluation data was to be studied to identify any bias (large vs. small classes, for example). Gender bias was not considered, however, and this study has not been done. Data from the online pilot program for student evaluations has also not been studied for gender bias.

CAP voted that it should make a strong public statement that “the Task Force for Improvement of Student Course Reports should carefully consider bias in student evaluations for women and other underrepresented groups in their report to CAP and CGSR “.

CGSR Sub-Committee on Role of Graduate Students in Undergraduate Teaching: CAP appointed M. Humi to serve as CAP representative on this sub-committee.

Task Force for Improvement of Student Course Reports:

CAP appointed J. Rulfs to serve as one CAP representative on this sub-committee.

Special Topic (ST) course designation: N. Rahbar and S. Miles reported that CAO continues to work on this issue.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 am by Chair Humi.

Respectfully submitted,
David Olinger, CAP Secretary