

Committee on Academic Policy
Meeting #2, Academic Year 2016-2017

September 14, 2016

Present: M. Humi, Chair; J. Beck, J. Doyle; M. Elmes; A. Heinricher; D. Olinger; M. Brooks

Minutes of Meeting #1 were approved.

CAP discussed the preliminary draft of a proposed motion to involve CAP in the appointment, review, and assessment of all non-TTT teaching at WPI. One concern was that the proposed motion was too operationally focused and took CAP away from its primary responsibilities related to undergraduate policymaking. Another concern was whether this issue might more appropriately fall under the jurisdiction of COAP. The committee discussed that currently Department Heads and the Dean of Undergraduate Studies can identify both TT and non-TTT faculty (including part-time) who are consistently receiving poor scores on student evaluations. The committee explored what perceived problems with the quality of non-TTT teaching were driving the motion and how non-TTT faculty might be better supported in their teaching activities. CAP discussed whether the issue should be broadened to include ways of improving WPI's system for assessing undergraduate teaching more generally, including how post-tenure faculty across departments at WPI are assessed. The discussion ended with a shared desire to improve the way WPI assesses teaching across all WPI faculty.

Dean Heinricher made a motion to extend the online teaching evaluation experiment to A'16. Data from C'16 and D'16 indicated a small decrease (from 65% to 55%) in the response rate and the overall assessment between online evaluations and in-class evaluations. There was discussion about the future of online evaluation of courses. The motion to extend the online teaching evaluation experiment to A'16 was approved with the window opening 2 weeks before the end of A term and ending the day before the last day of A term.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Elmes