

Committee on Governance: Minutes
Meeting #21: February 28, 2019
Faculty Governance Conference Room (SL 225)

Present: Len Albano (CEE), Kris Boudreau (Secretary of COG, HUA), Tanja Dominko (Secretary of the Faculty, BBT), Mark Richman (Best Supporting Actor in a Chair's Role, ME), Susan Roberts (ChE), and Wole Soboyejo (Provost).

1. Prof. Richman called the meeting to order at 10:10; the agenda was approved with modifications.
2. The minutes from meeting #20 were approved with modifications.
3. Sidewalk check-in regarding questions for faculty evaluation of administrators: COG Skycaps (Albano for Tichenor; Dominko for King; Boudreau for Flavin) summarized progress toward distributing evaluations to the faculty. COG is working with each administrator to revise evaluation questions and to include brief current job descriptions with the surveys. COG is also trying to provide each administrator with a chance to speak directly to the faculty about their work before the surveys are distributed. Since VP Tichenor presented at the February faculty meeting, two of the three remaining administrators (Dean King and Dean Rissmiller) are on the schedule for the March meeting. (VP Flavin will be traveling at that time.) COG has not received job descriptions from VP Flavin, Dean King, or Dean Rissmiller. Provost Soboyejo will write a one-paragraph description for the Deans of Arts & Sciences and Interdisciplinary & Global Studies. Boudreau will contact VP Flavin for an updated job description and will send him the questions from his previous review. Dean King has reviewed the proposed questions for her position and has added one question. SoF Dominko will follow up with Dean Rissmiller. Profs. Dominko and Richman emphasized the urgency of completing this work soon, so that the surveys can be sent out soon after the March 14 faculty meeting.
4. Debrief of conversations at Board of Trustees' plenary session: SoF Dominko reviewed the purpose of her presentation (to describe the faculty governance structure and explain why different kinds of tasks take different amounts of time before they are resolved by the faculty). Provost Soboyejo noted that her presentation provided clarification about the processes and the value of faculty governance and suggested that our next step should be to demonstrate how faculty governance is helping to drive the institution forward. To illustrate that faculty governance is a partner with the administration, the Provost urged COG to leave something tangible behind at every BoT meeting. The Provost assured COG that he and the President will continue to convey to the Board that governance is partnering with the administration in our shared goals. SoF Dominko reported that the Board voted to commit to getting to 300 TTT faculty over the next 5 years. Offices and labs for the additional 50 TTT faculty are included in WPI's space plan.

5. Faculty governance elections: Ballots for COG, CTAF, and COAP went out this morning and are due back March 11. The next election will be for standing committees. COG then addressed a concern about increasingly overburdened faculty (given all the new initiatives, projects, task forces, centers, increased advising loads, faculty governance committees, etc.) and how we can ensure a strong pool of interested faculty to participate in governance. The Provost suggested bringing this up at a Department Heads' meeting.

6. Discussion of Global School proposal: The Provost explained that he has been circulating the proposal among stakeholders, including IGSD, GIDIAG, INSTeD, the STEM Education Center, Dean King, Emily Douglas (Head, SSPS), and the people in the Innovation & Entrepreneurship Center. He noted that earlier references to Innovation and Business and STEM education have been eliminated from the proposal because they fall beyond the core mission of the Global School. New elements include graduate programs in fields related to policy or development, since these are the areas in which faculty are most interested. The current document includes these inputs. One piece of the proposed school is not as clear as it should be: the opportunity for many different cross-cutting global initiatives to come together. Prof. Richman reported on a discussion with Prof. Krueger about placing the Global Interdisciplinary Initiatives within the Global School. In response to SoF Dominko's questions about the Global School's leadership positions, the Provost noted that the only new positions at first would be the Dean and Assistant to the Dean. When growth warrants hiring a Director of Finance & Operations, this would also be an external appointment. All the other leadership positions (directors, department head, hub caps) would be hired internally. The Provost promised to revise the proposal and send it to COG. In response to Prof. Richman's question about adding revenue forecasts, the Provost explained his reluctance to quantify revenues.

7. IT concerns: SoF Dominko summarized three serious concerns that have been raised recently about WPI's IT Division: unusually high staff turnover in the past few months; low staff morale; and a perceived lack of trust in grievance channels for IT personnel. These matters have and will continue to have a negative impact on the efficiency of IT's daily operations, in general, and WPI's Enterprise Transformation, in particular. SoF Dominko has reported these concerns to President Leshin. The Provost described his intent to interact with the IT staff involved on the academic side of IT to address the situation as it most directly affects the faculty.

6. The meeting adjourned at 11:47 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kris Boudreau
Secretary, COG