

Minutes FAP Meeting #4 AY2016-17
September 15th, 2016; 11 a.m. – Noon
Conference Room-Financial Services; Boynton Hall

In attendance: Tanja Dominko (Secretary, Chair *pro tem*), Fabienne Miller, George Pins, Jeffrey Solomon - Executive Vice President/CFO, Kristopher Sullivan - Assistant Vice President Academic Affairs, Mark Richman - Secretary of the Faculty (Guest)

Absent: Tahar El-Korchi (Chair)

1. Meeting was called to order at 11:05 am
2. Agenda was accepted as distributed
3. Minutes from Meeting #3, September 8th, 2016 were approved as amended
4. Review the Phased retirement policy for inclusion in the Faculty Handbook

The Phased retirement policy was approved by the Board of Trustees in 2007. The policy describes a benefit that is available exclusively to tenured faculty and is currently available on the Human Resources web site – **Appendix I** (<https://web.wpi.edu/offices/hr/phased-retirement.html>). The committee agreed that the policy should be included in the Faculty handbook along with other policies that selectively apply to Faculty. Michele Jones-Johnson, VP of Talent Development and Chief Diversity Officer was comfortable with the proposed action.

Prof. Richman informed the committee that in his consultation with the Provost, he indicated his willingness to discuss the substance and improvements to the policy, such as evaluating whether phased retirement should remain a privilege (not guaranteed) or become a right (entitlement). In addition, it may be appropriate to streamline the application/approval process and evaluate whether the process progresses through appropriate administrative approvals. In collaboration with the Provost and the Secretary of the Faculty, the committee may begin revising the policy later in the year.

In the meantime, the committee supported the recommendation that the policy be included in the Faculty Handbook as is. Prof. Richman will be making this recommendation to the Faculty as an informational item on the next Faculty meeting agenda.

5. Develop guidelines for competitive start-up packages by discipline

There is a wealth of information available on the web for candidates negotiating start-up packages across disciplines. In fact, some institutions themselves offer guidelines for candidates when thinking about elements of their start up packages that will lead to a successful academic career and should be considered – both tangible and

nontangible elements. Cash investment should primarily be used for common elements.

Common elements of start-up packages include salary, resources for new staff (TAs, RAs, Postdoctoral fellows, Technicians), summer compensation, unrestricted professional development funds (travel, conferences and meetings, publications, etc.), materials, reagents and supplies.

To maximize the use of cash in capital budget, however, institutional offers could be developed that maximized the availability of collective institutional resources, both departmental and cross-departmental, that significantly contribute to one's productivity and ability to carry out high-quality work. Savings in capital investment need to be used to develop comprehensive maintenance and upkeep of already existing equipment, such as maintenance contracts, upgrades, etc.

With new office/lab space becoming an increasingly more limiting variable when attracting candidates, we need to maximize the use of already equipped lab space. This could be achieved by offering shared lab space with already established investigators or offering already equipped lab space from Faculty that are transitioning into primarily teaching and other non-research endeavors. Offering candidates equipped space would significantly reduce required capital expenses.

WPI would be wise to develop offers that will cater to and encourage candidates to embed into increasingly more collaborative and interdisciplinary research, instead of structuring offers that reinforce individual isolation.

It was proposed that WPI develop a comprehensive (non-cash) offer packet that will include benefits not conventionally highlighted in startup packages:

1. Presenting information about the collective community of Faculty in a particular "cluster area" – this ensures candidates that there is a critical mass of faculty with disciplinary and cross-disciplinary, cross-departmental interest and expertise, opportunities for mentoring, inclusion in multi-investigator proposals, access to broader community of graduate students and postdoctoral scholars, access to expertise and equipment.
2. Core equipment and resources – computational – hardware, software, connectivity; core services (instrumentation, imaging, vivarium, histology...), IACUC and IRB, access to UMass equipment and expertise; machine shop; 3D printing; Instructional technology; biomanufacturing BETC and BPL;
3. Other benefits: course release, postponement of tenure clock and parental benefits, Morgan teaching and learning center mentoring, free parking, free use of the Recreation Center/Pool, library, free admission to home athletic events, ...

Prof. Miller informed the committee that Foisie Business School already has a well-developed process for structuring startup packages that is informed by benchmarking with competing regional institutions for negotiating compensation – the main component of a start-up package in the Business School.

Mr. Sullivan is inventorying both space and equipment across campus and developing a comprehensive database that will be used to inform our broader thinking about structuring competitive startup offers. No further recommendations can be made by the committee at this time.

6. Adjourned at 12 noon.

Tanja Dominko
Secretary

Appendix I

Phased Retirement Plan for Tenured Faculty

Executive Summary

Effective July 1, 2007, WPI has adopted a Phased Retirement Plan (PRP) to facilitate the voluntary retirement of tenured faculty. While faculty are not constrained to retire at any age, arrangements for retirement are naturally a part of a faculty member's personal and professional planning. A clear, uniform and fiscally responsible policy is to the overall advantage of both the faculty and the university. It helps faculty and their respective departments plan for retirement in an orderly way.

The PRP provides certain tenured faculty an opportunity to begin to retire over a defined period of time. Certain tenured faculty who would not otherwise be planning to retire in the near future, but for whom there is a defined, mutual interest between WPI and that individual for retirement in the near future, may qualify to participate in the PRP. Mutual interest may include, but not be limited to, the faculty member's desire for more free time, the need of a department to hire faculty with different qualifications, or the consideration of the financial needs of the University.

The PRP allows certain faculty members to partially retire, or retire in planned stages, while continuing to receive certain benefits and to provide services to the University in their area of expertise. Final decisions regarding phased retirement participation rest with the president of the university.

Phased Retirement – Definition

- a. Phased retirement is an employment arrangement that allows the participant to phase into full retirement by reducing the workload time and effort over an agreed time period. Phased retirement is considered a method of retirement in which the retiree forfeits a portion of his or her full-time position. The purpose of the PRP is to encourage staffing flexibility, consistent with overall University and individual department needs, and to provide faculty an opportunity to devote increased time to personal interests by partially retiring, or retiring in planned stages, while continuing to receive certain benefits and to provide services to the University.

Eligibility

- a. Full-time tenured faculty members who are at least 59 1/2 years of age and have worked at WPI for at least ten years are eligible to participate in the PRP.
- b. PRP agreements are for the mutual benefit of the employee and the University. Applications may be denied due to the needs of WPI for the services of the eligible faculty member.

Phased Retirement Program

- a. Length of Agreement – The term of the PRP will be clearly defined in the Phased Retirement Program Agreement, but will in no case extend beyond three (3) years. At the end of the three year period, or sooner as the case may be, the participant will retire from WPI. Once the agreement is executed, the agreement is irrevocable. The participant will no longer have tenure. However, certain rights and privileges associated with tenure, such as academic freedom and faculty voting rights, will continue to be available.
- b. Time and Effort Requirements – The FTE assignment (e.g., agreement as to the specifics of course loads, advising and other responsibilities to be determined) must be reduced by at least 25% but not more than 50%.
- c. Salary Continuation - Participants may use the PRP for up to three consecutive years, and must continue working at least 50% effort. Salary is pro-rated based on the scheduled FTE.
- d. Benefits Continuation - Participants will continue to receive health insurance benefits under their current plan status (e.g., individual, family) at a level equivalent to that available to other full-time faculty and staff. Health insurance benefits for all PRP participants will continue up to age 65. For those whose period of phased retirement exceeds age 65, health insurance benefits will continue through the term of the agreement. The university's contribution to the participant's health insurance benefit will be equal to that for full time faculty. Other salary-based benefits such as contributions to TIAA-CREF/Fidelity and disability coverage will be prorated in accordance with the salary under the PRP agreement.

Application/Approval Process

- a. The faculty member wishing to participate in the PRP will discuss possible elements of an agreement with the department head/supervisor. On the basis of this discussion, the faculty member may proceed to submit a written proposal to the department head or supervisor. The proposal should specify the desired effective date, and any other specific details.
- b. Department Head/Supervisor meets with interested faculty member to discuss the presence of mutual interest at least six months in advance of the date upon which partial retirement is to be initiated.
- c. The department head/supervisor will evaluate the proposal, meeting with the applicant as necessary, and then forward his or her recommendation to the Senior Vice President and Provost.
- d. The Senior Vice President and Provost will review the proposal and the department head/supervisor's recommendation, and will submit the proposal and his/her own recommendation to the President.
- e. The President will accept the recommendation, declare a lack of mutual interest, or suggest how the Senior Vice President and Provost and the applicant might negotiate an acceptable agreement.
- f. Final decisions to approve negotiated agreements will be made on behalf of WPI by its President.

Development of the Formal Agreement/Contract

Upon approval, a formal agreement/contract will be drawn up that will contain the provisions of the agreement, to be reviewed by WPI's legal counsel and signed by both the President and the participant.