



**Administrative Policy Group
Official Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 9, 2022
3:00 – 4:00 p.m.
Co-Chairs: Michael Horan & Wole Soboyejo**

Attendees:

APG Members Present: Mike Horan (Co-Chair); Wole Soboyejo (Co-Chair); Eric Beattie; David Bunis; Philip Clay; Raghvendra Cowlagi; Maureen Deiana; Joseph Fehribach; Dana Harmon; Amy Morton

APG Members Not Present: Lauren Turner

Guests: Matthew Thaler (Deputy General Counsel); Amy Fabiano (Associate General Counsel); Erin Silva (Office of the General Counsel); John Stewart (Title IX Coordinator)

Minutes:

1. Approval of December 8, 2021 Meeting Minutes

It was determined that there was a technical glitch with the email distribution list used to send out the meeting materials. Therefore, Mr. Horan suggested the APG delay approval of the December 8, 2021 minutes until the next meeting, to permit members time to review the minutes. All members agreed.

2. Title IX & Sexual Misconduct Policy

Mr. Horan then called upon Ms. Fabiano and Mr. Stewart (Title IX Coordinator) for presentation of the interim Title IX & Sexual Misconduct Policy.

Ms. Fabiano provided background on the Title IX & Sexual Misconduct Policy and reminded the members that they discussed this Policy at the September 29, 2021 meeting of the APG. Specifically, the Policy was approved as interim by President Leshin in August 2021 after Ms. Fabiano, John Stewart (Title IX Coordinator), Mark Richman (Secretary of the Faculty) and Kris Boudreau (Faculty) extensively collaborated during the 2020-2021 Academic Year and summer 2021 to better organize the policy and to clarify the content of the policy itself.

Due to feedback from the APG during the September 29, 2021 APG meeting, Ms. Fabiano and Mr. Stewart drafted a summary document to explain which provisions in the interim Policy were required by law and not subject to change during the public comment period.



Additionally, Ms. Fabiano and Mr. Stewart drafted visual representations of how a complaint filed under the interim Policy would flow through the grievance process. Each of these documents could be shared with the WPI community during the public comment period.

Ms. Fabiano informed the members of the APG that several students have gone through, or are currently going through, the grievance process as outlined in the interim Policy and the Title IX Office has received feedback from them and others on the grievance process. Ms. Fabiano further stated that there have been recent social media post about sexual misconduct among WPI students and moving this interim Policy into the public comment period at this time would provide an opportunity capture student feedback in a meaningful way.

In sum, per the [APG Process](#), Ms. Fabiano asked the APG to move the interim Title IX & Sexual Misconduct Policy into a 30-day public comment period, beginning Monday, February 14, 2022. During that period, the Title IX Office and the Office of the General Counsel are planning student listening sessions and separate faculty and staff listening sessions. Given the volume of anticipated public comments it will take approximately two weeks to digest the WPI community's feedback. The goal would be to provide the final policy to the APG on April 1, 2022 for an APG vote the week following and move it forward to President Leshin for approval as a permanent policy, effective May 15, 2022.

Ms. Fabiano then asked for questions from the members. Prof. Fehribach asked about the students' current views of the policy. Ms. Fabiano stated that their views are generally that the interim Policy is complicated, which is an unfortunate reality due to the complexity of the law itself. But, Ms. Fabiano reiterated, the collaboration over the the prior academic year and summer 2021 from Profs. Richman and Boudreau helped make the interim Policy more readable. Mr. Stewart reiterated that much student confusion is because they do not understand what aspect of the interim policy are mandated by federal/state law, as opposed to what WPI choses to require.

To that point, Mr. Clay stated that the summary document prepared by Ms. Fabiano and Mr. Stewart (detailing what is mandated by law vs. what WPI is chooses to include in the policy) is a fantastic resource. Mr. Clay sought clarification of whether these ancillary documents would be made available during the comment period. Ms. Fabiano deferred to the members on what may be most helpful without overloading the WPI community.

Prof. Cowlagi asked whether there is a version of the interim policy with in-line highlights for sections that are mandated by law. Ms. Fabiano responded that doing so would make it too difficult to read and reiterated that the summary document achieves this same purpose.

Mr. Clay asked whether there would be any additional changes to Title IX (federal law) in the near future. Ms. Fabiano stated that the federal government is planning to announce proposed rulemaking for Title IX in April 2022, but that process would not lead to potential changes to the current Title IX law for at least 1.5 years, if not longer.



Chair Horan questioned whether there is there anything that can really be changed as a result of the public comment period or is this more of a learning process for the WPI community, given that much of the interim Policy is required by law. Ms. Fabiano stated that the purpose of the public comment period on this interim Policy is threefold: (1) educating the WPI community about WPI's Title IX and Sexual Misconduct policy and grievance process ; 2) obtaining feedback on those parts of the interim Policy that are not required by law, and 3) obtaining feedback to make the interim Policy easier to understand.

Provost Soboyejo stated that we should extend the 30-day public comment period to 45 days to give the WPI community more time to provide feedback on such a lengthy policy.

Ms. Fabiano therefore requested the APG move this interim Policy into a 45-day public comment period beginning February 14, 2022 through and including March 31, 2022. Profs. Cowlagi and Fehribach abstained; all other members of the APG approved of this plan.

Finally, Mr. Bunis noted that the APG appreciates the collaboration with faculty governance leaders on this very important Policy.

3. Extension of Interim Remote and Flexible Work Policy

Mr. Thaler notified the members that, per our [APG Process](#), the APG will seek approval from President Leshin of a 6-month extension of the [Interim Remote & Flexible Work Policy](#). Mr. Thaler reminded the members that policies may be approved on an interim basis by the President, which remain in place pending completion of the APG Process, or for up to six months from the date of issuance. The [Interim Remote & Flexible Work Policy](#) is set to expire unless it is extended for another interim period. The intention is that the additional time will allow us to evaluate how the policy is working and consider any modifications before the policy becomes permanent.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

David A. Bunis
Secretary, Administrative Policy Group