9-16-2010

3rd meeting of the 2010-2011 AY

Committee on Governance, Worcester Polytechnic Institute

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The Committee on Governance (COG) held its 3rd meeting of the 2010-2011 academic year on Thursday, September 16, 2010 in the Forkey Conference Room in Harrington Auditorium.


1. Prof. Kinicki called the meeting to order at 11:03 AM.
2. The minutes of the September 9, 2010 meeting (#2, AY 2010-2011) were accepted with minor corrections.
3. The sole topic of the meeting was how to proceed with the COG effort of last year regarding institutional goals and elimination of the 3/5 year rule. Prof. Richman reviewed last year’s history which resulted in a motion being brought to the Faculty which combined eliminating the 3/5 year rule and adopting institutional goals concerning the balance between numbers of tenure/tenure track faculty and numbers of non tenure track faculty. The COG motion received a majority vote, but did not receive the 2/3 vote required for passage. At that time, Prof. Rissmiller indicated that he would propose a motion to just eliminate the 3/5 year rule. However, due the procedural requirements of changing the Faculty Constitution and lack of remaining meetings, that motion was never addressed by the Faculty and was later withdrawn.

Prof. Rissmiller outlined the reasons he supported eliminating the 3/5 year rule, including that the people who come under the rule are valuable faculty, the 3/5 year rule is unworkable and the work-around to the rule that is presently used, does not directly address the issue. He indicated he would be willing to work with others to try to develop a solution.

There was considerable discussion about the need to better account for the concerns of both tenured and tenure track faculty, on the one hand, and the non-tenure track faculty on the other. There appeared to be general agreement that COG should first focus on developing and having the Faculty vote on a goal for WPI that emphasizes the central role played by the tenured and tenure track faculty at WPI and states an appropriate balance among faculty constituencies. While developing a goal statement might be challenging, it was felt that once such a goal statement had been passed, the Faculty may be more comfortable eliminating the 3/5 year rule.

4. The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Allen H. Hoffman
Secretary