5-18-2009

29th meeting of the 2008-09 Academic Year

Committee on Governance, Worcester Polytechnic Institute

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The Committee on Governance (COG) held its 29th meeting of the 2008-09 Academic Year at 12:30 p.m. on Monday, May 18, 2009, in the Morgan Room of the Campus Center.


Summary: 1. The Committee acted upon the Agenda previously submitted by Prof. Hanlan.
2. The Committee acted upon the Minutes previously submitted by Prof. O'Connor.
3. The Committee acted upon the Annual Report previously submitted by Prof. O'Connor.
4. Elections for COG officers for the 2009-10 were conducted.
5. The issue of WPI's non-Tenured/non-Tenure-Track Faculty was discussed extensively.

Detail: 1. The Committee approved without change the Agenda previously submitted by Prof. Hanlan.
2. The Committee approved without change the Minutes previously submitted by Prof. O'Connor.
3. The Committee approved without change the Annual Report previously submitted by Prof. O'Connor.
4. Professor Vassallo will be COG Chair, and Prof. Hoffman COG Secretary, for the Academic Year 2009-10.
5. Last year's Committee on Governance submitted a questionnaire to WPI's non-Tenured/non-Tenure-Track Faculty, and the results were compiled by Prof. Vassallo. Additionally, COG has been asked by two Departments to reexamine the term limits on Professor of Practice appointments (currently a five year initial appointment, with one possible five-year renewal option). The responses to the COG surveys and the questions re term limits for Professors of Practice, together with the widely held view that many of our non-Tenured/non-Tenure-Track Faculty have poorly labeled titles and are inadequately evaluated, has led COG to the conclusion that there is a need for a thorough review of the topic of non-Tenured/non-Tenure-Track Faculty. Some concern was also expressed over the fact that only about 60% of WPI courses are delivered by the Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty. In order to increase that percentage, either additional Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty must be hired or the teaching loads of the existing Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty must increase.

The tentative conclusion drawn by the Committee was that there should be several different categories of Faculty at WPI: Tenured/Tenure-Track, Professors of Practice, Adjunct Professors (teaching--short term--one or two courses), and Lecturers/Senior-Lecturers (full-time teachers, with multi-year contracts). A three person COG committee (Professors Blandino, Rulfs, and Vassallo) will address the topic of non-Tenured/non-Tenure-Track Faculty ranks during the summer, forming recommendations regarding such items as terms of appointment, contract provisions, time limits, appointment & evaluation procedures, category caps, etc., for each of these proposed classifications.

The meeting adjourned at 4 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

J.T. O'Connor, Secretary