10-16-2008

7th meeting of the 2008-09 Academic Year

Committee on Governance, Worcester Polytechnic Institute

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Suggested Citation

The Committee on Governance (COG) held its seventh meeting of the 2008-09 Academic Year in Higgins House, Suite #2, at noon on Thursday, October 16, 2008.

Present: Professors K. Fisler, J. Hanlan (Chair), J. O'Connor (Secretary), M. Richman, J. Rulfs, and H. Vassallo.

Summary: 1. The Committee acted on the Agenda previously submitted by Prof. Hanlan.
2. The Committee acted on the Minutes submitted by Prof. O'Connor.
3. The Committee continued its discussion of Deanships at WPI.
4. The Committee continued its discussion of Faculty Misconduct Policies.

Detail: 1. The Agenda previously submitted by Prof. Hanlan was accepted without change.
2. The Minutes of the previous COG meeting (October 9, 2008) were accepted, with one further revision.
3. COG discussed several topics related to Deans at WPI:
   a. A meeting on this topic will be held between Provost Orr and several representatives of Faculty Governance (COAP, COG, CTAF, FAP and the Secretary of the Faculty) on Wednesday, October 22, 2008. (The Chair of COG cannot attend this meeting, but COG will send Prof. Rulfs as its representative.)
   b. The evaluation of the Deans needs to include processes for evaluations by the pertinent Department Heads and Faculty members.
   c. Consistent evaluation processes need to be derived for these Deanships as well as for Undergraduate and Graduate Deans.
   d. Because the current system by which the Faculty evaluates the performance of members of the Administration appears not to be working well, it makes sense to consider revising that process so that it provides more constructive feedback from the Faculty and to institute similar processes to evaluate all of the new Deans.
   e. Because the new Deans are Academic Deans, these evaluation processes--when drafted--need to be submitted to the Faculty by COG.
4. Several comments were made concerning drafts of three separate policies (dealing with sexual harassment, Faculty research misconduct, and Faculty misconduct) which have been submitted to the Committee:
a. A clear rationale for changing existing policies in this area needs to be presented to COG; that is, in what ways are the existing policies inadequate?
b. A clear rationale for why it is necessary to have three separate procedures for three separate forms of misconduct needs to be provided. Even if three separate policies are needed, the three policies should be as parallel as possible (which does not appear to be the case as these policies are currently drafted).
c. Care must be taken to provide that all procedures in this area which involve review by Faculty groups assure that the members of these groups are impartial.
d. Could punishments which involve suspension for specific periods of time— in effect— compromise the Faculty member’s tenure status at WPI?

Discussion of these policies was not completed at this meeting and will need to be continued.

The Committee adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

J.T. O’Connor, Secretary