10-9-2008

6th meeting of the 2008-09 Academic Year

Committee on Governance, Worcester Polytechnic Institute

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The Committee on Governance (COG) held its sixth meeting of the 2008-09 Academic Year in the Morgan Room of the Campus Center at noon on Thursday, October 9, 2008.

Present: Provost Orr. Professors J. Blandino, K. Fisler, J. Hanlan (Chair), J. O'Connor (Secretary), 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 of its previous meeting (10.02.08) previously submitted by Prof. O'Connor.
3. Professor Hanlan informed the Committee of the responses to his solicitation for Faculty volunteers to fill vacant positions on the Undergraduate Outcomes Assessment Committee and the Campus Hearing Board.
4. The Committee continued its discussions on the topic of Deanships at WPI.

Detail:
1. The Agenda previously submitted by Prof. Hanlan was accepted without change.
2. The previously revised Minutes of the last COG meeting (10.2.08) were accepted.
3. The Committee appointed Prof. Fonfana to the vacant position on the Undergraduate Outcomes Assessment Committee, and Prof. Gobert to a vacant position on the Campus Hearing Board. (Prof. Vassallo—in her position as Secretary of the Faculty—is still awaiting further information from Student Affairs concerning the precise number of vacant Faculty positions on the Campus Hearing Board.)
4. There appears to be substantial support for the creation of three (rather than four) Deanships at WPI: Dean of Engineering, Dean of Arts and Sciences, and--eventually--Dean of Management. Arguments in favor of this configuration were discussed at some length, and Provost Orr noted that he will be continuing his discussions with President Berkey on this topic. COG agreed that it would be beneficial to have a "paper trail" regarding the rationale, evaluation criteria, and other dimensions of these very significant changes to the administrative structure of WPI. The particular relevance of these changes to WPI—and their intended consistency with the culture of WPI—needs documentation. (Such documentation will be one topic on the Agenda for COG's next meeting.)

The Committee adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
J. T. O'Connor, Secretary