Committee on Governance Minutes

Committee on Governance

10-2-2008

5th meeting of the 2008-09 Academic Year

Committee on Governance, Worcester Polytechnic Institute

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The Committee on Governance (COG) held its fifth meeting of the 2008-09 Academic Year in the Morgan Room of the Campus Center at 11 a.m. on Thursday, October 2.

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

Summary: 1. The Committee acted on the Agenda a previously submitted by Prof. Hanlan.
2. The Committee acted on the Minutes of its previous meeting (9.25.08) previously submitted by Prof. O'Connor.
3. The Committee discussed the Resolution which Prof. Hanlan was to present to the Faculty at its meeting that afternoon.
4. The issue of evaluations of members of the Administration by the Faculty was discussed briefly.
5. The Committee continued its discussion of Deanships at WPI.
6. The Committee discussed recent e-mails it has received concerning the Ad Hoc Committee on Information Technology Policy (CITP).

Detail: 1. The Committee accepted the Agenda as previously submitted, with one addition.
2. The Committee accepted the Minutes of its previous meeting as previously submitted.
3. The Committee accepted a draft Resolution (as previously submitted and revised) to be presented to the Faculty by Prof. Hanlan. The Resolution asks the Faculty to delegate to the COG the authority to fill currently vacant positions on the Undergraduate Outcomes Assessment Committee and on the Campus Judicial Board. These positions would be one-year appointments. The Resolution is designed to avoid the necessity of another Faculty election.
4. COG members agreed that the current method by which Faculty members evaluate members of the Administration is not working well. One indication of the problems is the low response rate. The Committee will add this item to a future agenda.
5. Committee members addressed several items related to Deanships at WPI:
a. Should Deans be appointed for specific time periods? Provost Orr noted that, as administrative appointees, the Deans will be appointed to indefinite terms--at the discretion of the Provost.

b. Should Faculty members have a role in the evaluation process of their relevant Deans? There was a consensus that Faculty members should have a role in the evaluation of Deans.

c. Would it be more advisable to have just three Deanships (Dean of Arts & Sciences, Dean of Engineering and Dean of Management) rather than the four Deanships currently proposed? Among the points noted were:
   . many Faculty support the concept of two Deanships;
   . a two-Deanship configuration would be more familiar to academic communities outside of WPI. Since the role of the Deans will involve significant interactions with outside communities, this would be an advantage;
   . prominence to particularly important academic areas (e.g., Biology/Biotechnology) should be reflected in the expertise of the persons appointed to the Deanships, rather than in the organizational structure of the Deanships;
   . the "silo problem", of concern to many WPI Faculty, would be minimized by a smaller number of Deanships;
   . there would be a more evenly balanced distribution of Faculty and students between two Deanships than among the currently proposed Deanship configuration;
   . current dissatisfactions within some Departments concerning their proposed locations among the proposed four Deanships could be minimized by a two Deanship configuration.

d. Should the searches for Deans be both internal and external? The COG's consensus opinion was that the searches should be both internal and external.

e. Proposed changes in the Faculty Manual necessary because of the advent of Deanships--initially put forward by Provost Orr and subsequently revised in the light of suggestions made by COG members--will be submitted for comment to COAP and CTAF, before being
submitted to the Faculty at large. (COAP and CTAF will be asked to submit their comments prior to the end of Term B.

6. In view of recent e-mail correspondence concerning the Committee on Information Technology Policy (CITP), it was noted that when the Faculty approved the authorization of this ad-hoc Committee in 2007, the following wording was included in that authorization:

"It will be the responsibility of the Faculty members of the CITP to update COG, CAP, and CTAF on any new policies formulated in their work with the IT division, and to bring to COG for its consideration any policy related to information technology that will affect the academic environment at WPI or the working routines of the Faculty. With COG's approval, any such policy will be forwarded to the Faculty."

The Committee adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

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