9-11-2008

2nd meeting of the 2008-09 Academic Year

Committee on Governance, Worcester Polytechnic Institute

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The Committee on Governance (COG) held its second meeting of the 2008-09 Academic Year in the Hagglund Room of the Campus Center at noon on Thursday, September 11.

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 previously submitted by Prof. Hanlan.

2. The Committee elected a new COG Secretary.

3. The Committee approved the Provost’s appointees to standing committees.

4. The Committee appointed a replacement to the WPI Teacher of the Year Committee.

5. The Committee elected an appointee to the Educational Development Council.

6. The Committee discussed the memo "Academic Deans at WPI", previously submitted by Provost Orr.

Details:

1. Professor Hanlan's Agenda was approved as submitted.

2. Professor O'Connor was elected to serve as COG Secretary.

3. The following Provost appointees to standing committees were approved:
   a. Prof. L. Schachterle--CAP and CAO
   b. Prof. A. Heinricher---CASL and Outcomes Assessment
   c. Assoc. Provost W.G. McGimpsey---CGSR

4. Prof. J. Rulfs was appointed as COG representative to the Educational Development Council.

5. Prof. R. Norton was appointed to the WPI Teacher of the Year Committee.

6. Provost Orr's memo "Academic Deans at WPI" was presented:
   a. Provost Orr introduced his memo:
      1. This memo was discussed at the Department Heads' meeting on Wednesday, Sept. 10th.
      2. Much of the rationale and the principal contents of the document are drawn from last year's draft;
      3. The Departmental groupings--under the Deans--are the same for the Dean of Engineering and the Dean of Science as those discussed by President Berkey at the Faculty meeting of last Thursday (9/4/08);
      4. There remains to be some work done on the precise titles of the various Deanships;
      5. Provost Orr has asked the Department Heads within the various
groupings to meet in order to discuss these proposed administrative changes;

6. Provost Orr would like to begin the searches for the two first Deanships (Dean of Engineering and Dean of Science) as soon as possible. He hopes that these two Deans can be in place by July 1, 2009. (As announced by President Berkey at the Faculty meeting last Thursday, funds have already been donated to finance these two new positions.)

7. The timing of the appointments of the other two Deans (Dean of Liberal Arts and Dean of Management) is uncertain at this time.

8. Provost Orr believes that few changes need to be made (or should be made) to Faculty governance procedures to accommodate these administrative changes.

b. COG discussion followed Provost Orr’s introduction. Among the topics discussed were:

1. The Provost’s expectations that the Deans would be appointed at the Full Professor level;
2. Should searches be both external and internal? (E.g., If there are not external searches, the Deanships might be considered as just promotions for individuals already on the Faculty);
3. the relationships between "Deans" and "Schools";
4. the precise role of COG in this transitional phase;
5. the need to diffuse the skepticism which was expressed by some Faculty after the topic was introduced last year;
6. the concerns which Department Heads may have over the status of their positions under the new Deanships;
7. the role of Deans with regard to tenure and promotion decisions;
8. concerns which CTAF and COAP—-in particular—may have over their roles under the new Deanships.

c. Provost Orr expressed the hope that Faculty members would express their views on this draft document either to him directly, to their Departments, or to the COG.

The Committee adjourned at 11:50 a.m. Discussions will continue on Provost Orr’s draft at the Committee’s next meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

J.T. O’Connor, Secretary