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FSEC Minutes March 26, 2018

University of Rhode Island Faculty Senate

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Faculty Senate Executive Committee Meeting #26
March 26, 2018
MINUTES

1. The meeting was called to order at 1:05 PM on Monday, March 26, 2018, in Library Conference Room B, Chairperson Conley presiding. Senators Derbyshire, Gindy, Leonard, Mahler, and Rice were present. Vice Chair-elect Senator Nassersharif was also present.
2. Minutes from FSEC meeting #25, March 19, 2018 were approved.
3. **ANNOUNCEMENTS/CORRESPONDENCE/REPORTS**
 - a. The Committee was reminded that Mr. Temple, Academic Chair of the Student Senate, would be joining the meeting at 2:00 PM to discuss the idea of an interdisciplinary undergraduate major.
 - b. The Committee reviewed agenda items for the upcoming meeting of the Chair and Vice Chair meeting with President scheduled for March 27.
 - c. Responding to the request by Director Goldsmith for two faculty representatives to serve on a committee to consider a new learning management system to replace SAKAI, committee members suggested possible faculty for the task.
 - d. The FSEC confirmed its plans to meet with the 2018-19 FSEC on May 7 at 1:00 PM.
4. **ONGOING BUSINESS**
 - a. The FSEC reviewed the suggestion of the Council of Deans that general education course proposals be submitted through GCH [Grand Challenge course code] topics shells and be approved by the Director of General Education in order to address a deficit of seats in certain general education courses. A shortage of seats has been identified in C1, develop and engage in civic knowledge and responsibilities; C3, develop and exercise responsibilities relating to diversity and inclusion, and Grand Challenge. The FSEC examined the existing general education course proposal process and identified barriers to course development including those that were not part of the Senate proposal and approval process. Committee members indicated that 1) a separate structure and approval process would duplicate the one already in place, 2) use of a course code (GCH) with no college or department connection could create problems associated workload, responsibility, and budget; 3) the GCH code had been developed for a pilot program which has since been terminated; and 4) because topics courses are limited to three offerings, time and effort would be duplicated to re-propose them as permanent courses. Discussion followed. The FSEC asserted that the reasons for the deficit of seats/outcomes needed to be thoroughly understood before considering a solution.
 - b. The FSEC reviewed the proceedings of the March 22 Faculty Senate meeting pertaining to the

presentation by the Dean of the Graduate School of the Accelerated Bachelor's and Master's degree requirements. Chairperson Conley attributed some of the issues that arose in that discussion to a lack of timely information provided to affected colleges, departments, faculty, and others with a vested interest and to those parties involved in the policy-making. The FSEC discussed the authority of the Faculty Senate to govern matters carried out by the Graduate Council based on language contained in the University Manual particularly sections 4.70.10 - 4.70.12.

5. NEW BUSINESS

The following members of the URI Student Senate joined the meeting at 2:00 PM: Mr. Riley Temple, Academic Chair; Ms. Brianna Benedict, On Campus Student Senate representative; and Mr. John Morabito, On Campus Student Senate representative. They presented information about the idea for an interdisciplinary major, one that would allow students to design their own majors, take courses from multiple colleges tailored to their interests in order to pursue specific educational areas of expertise not available within existing degree curricula, and potentially be more marketable to employers or more competitive if applying to graduate schools. The request by the Student Senate that URI consider developing and offering such a program had been discussed with members of the Provost's Office. The students explained that this opportunity was available at other institutions including the University of Connecticut, the University of Massachusetts Amherst, and Brown University. Discussion followed. FSEC members expressed general support of the idea but expressed concern that 1) because many degree programs are subject to accreditation standards, a self-directed program consisting of only some of the requirements would not be an equivalent to that degree from an institution with an accredited program (e.g. bachelor's in social work, architecture); 2) ethical considerations would need to be thoroughly examined to ensure that students' expectations could be met; 3) it was unlikely that any single faculty member or advisor would possess the expertise to offer the depth of advising necessary; and 4) at URI, the resources allocated to colleges do not accommodate large investments in students who will not graduate with a degree from that college. FSEC members advised the students, as they worked to develop the idea, to start with a pilot involving only two colleges and obtain financial commitments from departments/colleges in order to meet the needs of the program (advisors). Senator Derbyshire noted that high interest on the part of students in a particular major or discipline has, in the past, prompted the development of a degree in that discipline.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Neff