

2015

Faculty Senate Minutes October 15, 2015

University of Rhode Island Faculty Senate

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October 15th, 2015 Minutes of URI Faculty Senate

1. The regular meeting of the Faculty Senate was called to order at 3:05 p.m. in the Cherry Auditorium, Chester Kirk Building, Chairperson Rollo-Koster presiding.

All members were present except Senators Byrd, Chadha, Cooper, Lee, Mandel, and Omand; ex officio members Vice Presidents Sonnenfeld and Valentino; Vice Provosts Libutti and Katz, CIO Bozylinsky; Deans Bonn, Kirby, Richmond, Sullivan, Wright, and Zawia. Associate Dean Seitsinger represented Dean Ciccomascolo, and Associate Dean Smith represented Dean Corliss.

2. Chairperson Rollo-Koster announced that the minutes of the September 10, 2015 Special Meeting of the Faculty Senate and Faculty Senate Meeting #1, September 17, 2015 had been posted with the agenda. She asked if there were any additions, corrections to or questions about these minutes. There were none. Chairperson Rollo-Koster ruled that, in the absence of any changes or corrections, the two sets of minutes were approved.

3. REPORTS OF OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

A. Announcements

1. Chairperson Rollo-Koster thanked President Dooley and Lynne Baker-Dooley for graciously agreeing to sponsor the Senate reception at their house after the meeting.

2. Chairperson Rollo-Koster reminded Senators that it is expected that their departments will support their participation in the Senate by arranging schedules to allow attendance at meetings. She cited the By-Laws of the Faculty Senate and read the following: *(By-Laws 3) Because of the responsibility attendant upon membership in the Senate, department chairpersons shall arrange teaching, research and extension schedules to permit attendance of senators at regular meetings of the Senate.*

Chairperson Rollo-Koster also reminded Senators that the call to order requires a quorum and she urged faculty to regularly arrive by 3:00 p.m.

3. Chairperson Rollo-Koster announced that, as part of the administrator evaluation process, at today's meeting the Provost would report on the review of the Vice Provost for Academic Finances and Academic Personnel that was conducted in the spring of 2015. She added that a report of an evaluation is made at a Senate meeting when an administrator's constituency is not affiliated with a single college but represents a university-wide constituency.

4. Chairperson Rollo-Koster announced that the Constitution, By-Laws, and University Manual Committee would present a report stemming from their January 2015 charge to review language in the University Manual regarding Senate membership eligibility. She said that the Committee would be recommending that a referendum to the General Faculty be conducted requesting language changes in the Senate Constitution. These changes would allow full-time, non-tenure track faculty to be eligible for election to the Faculty Senate after one year of service.

5. Chairperson Rollo-Koster provided a brief update on the implementation of the new general education program. She summarized that 75% of the seats needed for the start of program have been submitted through the course proposals received to date. Proposals are undergoing approval.

6. Chairperson Rollo–Koster reminded non–Senators to sign the Permission to Speak form and asked everyone to remember to wait to be recognized and to identify themselves before speaking.

B. Activities of the Executive Committee

Vice Chairperson Welters announced that the Minutes of the 2015–16 Executive Committee Meetings #7 – #10 were available on the Faculty Senate website. She asked if there were any questions. There were none.

C. Vice Chairperson Welters called on Provost DeHayes to present the report on the review of Vice Provost Katz, the Vice Provost for Academic Finances and Academic Personnel. Provost DeHayes said that one benefit of the new evaluation process [piloted in 2012 and approved by the Faculty Senate in 2013] was the opportunity for him to “close” the process by reporting back to those who had participated in the survey. The Provost said that the reporting to the constituency is intended to convey that the process is taken seriously, that the administration listens, and that voices are heard. He thanked the members of the Administrator Evaluation Committee of the Vice Provost: Professors Barbour, Carroll, Krueger, and McWilliams, and Senator Welters. He reported that 110 faculty and 50 staff members had responded to the survey. Survey results, he said, indicated positive responses in the areas of leadership on financial matters, strategic allocation of resources, oversight of budget expenditures, and allocation of resources for information technology and infrastructure. The Vice Provost was also given positive evaluations in areas of encouraging debate and dialogue, contributing to a culture of respect at the University, creating new databases, and communicating the goals and values of his office. The Provost said that respondents considered the Vice Provost to be trustworthy and institution–centered. The Provost reported that areas requiring further attention were identified as transparency in the operation of the office and the pace of decisions and actions. The Provost said that changes in process are under review, particularly relating to business with the Human Resources Administration.

4. REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

The President stated that, as indicated on the agenda, legislation forwarded to him after the September 17 Senate meeting had been approved.

The President commented on the action taken at the October 14 meeting of the Council on Postsecondary Education. The Council had voted unanimously to freeze tuition at URI (and Rhode Island’s other public colleges) in FY17. This action, the President said, reflects the view of the Governor. She has indicated that she would like more time to consider funding for higher education but she and her staff understand that a tuition freeze will likely require additional state appropriation to the institution. The President said that the Governor and her administration understand the importance of higher education in a growing state economy and the need to keep tuition competitive. He said she also understands the problem that the timeline of the state budgeting process presents for the university. URI needs to know its budget in March; however, the assembly does not approve the state budget until June. The President said that he would keep the faculty apprised of budget developments. The President was asked about the supplemental performance–based funding. He replied that he expects it, with a directive to develop a funding formula, to be returned for consideration in the upcoming legislative session. The President said that the Capital Improvement Plan was approved by the Council and that it is expected to be considered by the full Board of Education in a couple of weeks. If it is approved, the November 2016 ballot will include a bond question for funding of Phase 2 of the new College of Engineering complex and for the Fine Arts Building.

The President invited all present to attend the reception at his house after the meeting.

5. REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

A. Professor Owens presented the Five Hundred and Twenty-Sixth Report of the Curricular Affairs Committee. She said that Section I was Informational and asked if there were any questions. There were none. She reported that Section II required Senate approval. New courses, course changes, and curricular changes were moved for approval, separately, and each motion carried.

B. Professor Kinnie presented General Education Committee Report 2015-16-3. He said that 3 Library courses had been approved by the General Education Committee to be included in the existing general education program to allow offering in Spring 2016. He moved approval. The motion passed.

C. Professor Gindy presented the Report of the Academic Standards and Calendar Committee #2015-16-1. She presented a revised calendar for Summer 2016 stating that the Summer 2016 calendar approved at the May 7 Faculty Senate Meeting had contained errors. She also presented the Summer 2017 calendar and moved approval of both schedules. The motion passed.

D. Professor Wenisch presented the Report of the Constitution, By-Laws, and University Manual Committee #2015-16-1. He provided some background to his report, describing the charge to the Ad-hoc committee to address Faculty Senate membership and faculty voting rights on matters requiring Faculty Senate approval. In February 2015, the Faculty Senate had enacted legislation allowing full-time non tenure-track faculty members voting rights in department and college meetings on matters requiring Faculty Senate approval after having served in their position for at least one academic year. In April 2015, the Faculty Senate provisionally approved that full-time non-tenure track faculty could be eligible for Faculty Senate membership after having served in their positions for at least one academic year, and that each college or unit represented in the Senate be allowed one senator for twelve (instead of ten) of its members. Professor Wenisch explained that this change to Senate membership requires a change to language in the Senate Constitution. Changing the Senate Constitution requires a referendum of the General Faculty and passage by a 2/3rds majority of those voting. He outlined the language changes in Article III, paragraph 1 and moved that the Faculty Senate approve the changes to the Faculty Senate Constitution's Membership Paragraph as proposed, and direct the Faculty Senate Executive Committee to conduct a referendum of the General Faculty concerning the changes. The motion was seconded and discussion ensued. The motion to conduct a referendum was approved. Professor Wenisch continued, explaining that, if the referendum passes and the language in the Senate Constitution is changed, passages in the Senate By-Laws, Section 2.2, that reference the ratio of faculty to senators would automatically change. Additionally, the second sentence of Senate By-Laws, Section 2.2 will require changing for consistency and can be voted on only after the changes to the Senate Constitution are approved. He moved that, contingent on approval of the changes to the Faculty Senate Constitution, Senate By-Laws, Section 2.2, be changed as indicated. The motion was seconded and discussed. Because a proposed amendment to the By-Laws may not be voted upon at the meeting at which it is first moved, Professor Wenisch said that, contingent upon passage of the referendum, this motion would be returned to the floor at the next Senate meeting.

6. PRESENTATION

Provost DeHayes, Senate Vice Chairperson Welters, Senator Kusz, and Ms. Morrissey presented the work of the Joint Committee on Academic Planning (JCAP) to draft the Academic Strategic Plan, 2016-2021. The

timeline of activities, going back to Fall 2014, and the steps taken to develop the draft of the Plan were summarized. Senators were told that the Plan was available on the JCAP website and that comments were welcome. The Plan was described as a focused set of goals intended to influence future directions, that it is not prescriptive, and that adjustments will likely be necessary over time. The 6 goals and accompanying strategies should be considered firm guideposts, intended to guide resource allocation. Each college will produce its own plan using the Academic Strategic Plan as a guide. The presenters answered questions and noted suggestions. Faculty were told that comments on the Plan would be accepted until October 30. JCAP members will continue to address and incorporate feedback from the community and will finalize the Plan in November.

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Chairperson Rollo-Koster asked if there were any Unfinished Business. There was none.

8. NEW BUSINESS

Chairperson Rollo-Koster asked if there were any New Business. Senator Brady expressed concerns about the timeline for implementation of the new general education program. She said that the original timeline that was laid out in January 2015 was not followed, courses are only now in the process of submission and review, and that department chairs who need to schedule courses in Fall 2015 for Fall 2016 are only able to guess at the general education course availability. She said that, given the proposed changes to general education requirements by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), it is likely that there will be repercussions and the need for additional changes by 2017. Senator Brady moved that the Faculty Senate postpone implementation of the new general education program until Fall 2017. She noted that the (URI) professional programs are not certain if they can meet the new general education requirements without having to increase degree credits. Senator Brady read the names of 28 department chairs who indicated to her that they support a postponement. The motion was seconded. Discussion ensued. Faculty expressed concern that information about the course review process was lacking and that, in spite of the workshops and materials provided by the Implementation Steering Team, the job of planning for and coordinating a program to be ready by Fall 2016 was not feasible. Faculty also expressed concern that the courses submitted to date were heavily grouped in the Humanities outcome and that the other outcomes were not well represented. Discussion continued. At the end of the debate time, a motion to extend debate for 15 minutes was approved. Director Swift, Chair of the Implementation Steering Team, said that course proposals were being received daily; over 210 courses had been pledged. She reminded faculty that Grand Challenge courses and courses assessing the Integrative outcome would not be needed for the incoming freshmen in Fall 2016; there was time to develop them. Professor Honhart, a member of the Implementation Steering Team and a member of a course approval panel, said that courses submitted to the new program have not and will not be rejected. If an approval panel has questions or concerns, the faculty proposer is asked to revise the course materials (syllabus and templates); unless the proposer does not respond, the course is ultimately approved. The Provost noted that URI would undergo an accreditation visit by NEASC in 2017. In the 5th year interim report to NEASC in 2012, URI indicated that the institution was developing a new general education program, a program that was finally legislated in 2014. Failing to be able to assess the new general education program in 2017, the Provost said, will reflect badly on the shared governance standard at the institution. At the end of the debate time, the vote was called. The motion failed, 18 in favor, 23 opposed.

9. A motion was made to adjourn. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 4:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Neff