

2016

Faculty Senate Minutes October 20, 2016

University of Rhode Island Faculty Senate

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October 20th, 2016 Minutes of URI Faculty Senate

1. The regular meeting of the Faculty Senate was called to order at 3:03 p.m. in Room 105 of the Richard E. Beupre Center for Chemical and Forensic Sciences, Chairperson Sullivan presiding.

All members were present except Senators Boving, Kincaid, Licht, Meghani, Melanson, Ohley, Pearson-Merkowitz, Post, Rynearson, and Wang; *ex officio* members Vice President Collins, CIO Kubica; Deans Bonn, Ebrahimpour, Larrat, Wolfe, and Wright. Associate Dean Seitsinger represented Dean Ciccomascolo, Associate Dean Smith represented Dean Corliss, and Associate Dean Veeger represented Dean Kirby.

2. Chairperson Sullivan announced that the minutes of Faculty Senate meeting #1, September 22, 2016 had been posted with the agenda. He asked if there were any additions, corrections to or questions about the minutes. There were none. Chairperson Sullivan ruled that, in the absence of any changes or corrections, the minutes were approved.

Chairperson Sullivan announced that the President was not expected to arrive until 3:45 p.m. and said, if there were no objections to moving the order of business, he would proceed with the Reports of the Officers and the Executive Committee. There were no objections.

3. REPORTS OF OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

A. Announcements

1. Chairperson Sullivan said that he had been contacted by Senator Kirschenbaum who, subsequent to observing public news articles on the subject, had inquired of the Chair about the level of commitment on the part of the institution to open source textbooks (Open Educational Resources). Chairperson Sullivan reported that a number of faculty have volunteered to review options available to their students but that he is aware of no intent to make open source mandatory. He added that he was aware that the Student Senate was examining how open access might be of benefit to students.

2. Chairperson Sullivan said that Provost DeHayes had shared with the Executive Committee recent revisions, proposed by Commissioner Purcell, to the Policy for Articulation and Transfer Between Public Institutions of Higher Education in Rhode Island. He said that the intent of the [proposed changes](#) was to facilitate transfers among the three state institutions but indicated that some of changes were of concern. A [written response](#) from the institution (jointly from the Provost and the Faculty Senate Chairperson) suggested a meeting with the Commissioner to discuss the changes. Chairperson Sullivan said that a draft of the proposed agreement would be shared.

3. Chairperson Sullivan reported that he has been functioning as acting chair of both the General Education Committee and the Curricular Affairs Committee since the beginning of the semester. He said that he has been surprised by the lack of attention to the completion of curricular submission requirements. He asked that those with curricular processing responsibilities attend appropriately to the details.

4. Chairperson Sullivan reported that the following administrators were being evaluated this year through the Faculty Senate process: Provost DeHayes, Vice President Sonnenfeld, Vice Provost Libutti, Dean Zawia, and Dean Richmond. He urged Senators to consider serving on a review committee.

5. Chairperson Sullivan acknowledged with thanks the President's sponsorship of the reception to follow the meeting.

B. Activities of the Executive Committee

Vice Chairperson Conley announced that the Minutes of Executive Committee meetings #10 and #11 were available on the Faculty Senate website. He asked if there were any questions. Regarding statements included in the minutes of meeting #10, September 19, 2016 about the assessment reporting requirements of programs that meet extramural accreditation standards, Director Goldsmith (Office for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning) said that the only requirement (at the institutional level) is the completion of a short form. Regarding statements included in the minutes of meeting #11, September 26, 2016, Associate Dean Eaton asked for more information about the discussions concerning Senate committees and said that the College of Arts and Sciences supported permitting lecturers to serve on committees.

C. Recommendations of the Executive Committee

Vice Chairperson Conley presented a list of committee appointments made since the September 22 Faculty Senate meeting. He moved approval of the additional 2016–2017 appointments. The motion was seconded. Senator Nassersharif asked about the Subcommittee on Assessment of General Education. Vice Chairperson Conley responded that it was a subcommittee of the General Education Committee, that some of its members are also members of the General Education Committee, and that its relationship with the General Education Committee was under review. The motion was approved.

4. REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

A. Professor English presented the 534th 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. Four new courses and 6 course changes were presented and approved. Professor English presented and moved approval of 3 program change proposals: a change to the requirements of the BA and BS in Economics, a change to the BS in Marine Biology, and the transfer of the Schmidt Labor Research Center to the College of Business Administration. The motion passed.

B. Chairperson Sullivan presented General Education Committee Report 2016–17–2. He said that the General Education Committee had met on October 6 and had approved 5 courses in the new general education program. Because these were existing courses, they were presented as informational.

6. PRESENTATION

A. Director Barrett presented the annual State of the Budget address using [Power Point slides](#). She described the unrestricted and restricted budgets for FY17 (July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017). The total budget for FY17, \$753.6 million, included \$414.1 million in unrestricted funds derived primarily from tuition and fees (\$293.1 million) and the state appropriation (\$75.6 million). The restricted budget totaled \$338.5 million and included funds derived primarily from auxiliaries, sponsored research (overhead), and federal student financial aid. Director Barrett summarized the numbers of full-time faculty vacancies (38) and authorized faculty searches (54.5 in FY17 and FY18). She also summarized overhead revenue noting the marked increase in revenue between FY10 and FY12 that was the result of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding. Subsequent to the end of the ARRA funding, revenues declined but the FY16 projection (\$13.1 million) was exceeded by the actual (\$13.5 million). She indicated that the projection for FY17 was \$13.9 million. Director Barrett summarized the Rhode Island Capital Plan Fund (RICAP)

budget noting that it was allocated to asset protection and building renovations. She discussed the plan to use RICAP funds over 4 years to renovate the Fine Arts Center. She reported that the FY18 budget request that has been submitted to the Council (Postsecondary) totaled \$777 million, including an \$84.5 million state appropriation request. Director Barrett answered questions.

7. PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS TO THE URI FACULTY

Chairperson Sullivan introduced President Dooley who greeted those assembled. The President said that the state budget request in the next fiscal year represented a significant increase, \$25 million in new funding to be derived from a tuition increase and an increase in state appropriation, but that it was well justified and highly desirable. He cited some of the University's accomplishments: increase in number of student applications, qualifications, and diversity; improvements in 4-year and 6-year graduation rates; and expansion of the full-time faculty. The improving quality of both students and faculty who were attracted to the University, the President said, reflected the growing national and international reputation of the institution. The growing recognition that URI provides an exceptional education for a reasonable cost has been a good outcome of promoting bond initiatives to the voters every two years. He discussed the upcoming November 8, 2016, \$45.5 million higher education bond question. The President described URI as a tremendous national asset and partner to the people in the state of Rhode Island because of the quality of the teaching, research, and scholarship at the institution. He cited additional achievements: increased first year retention rate (for all students) over the last five years to 84%, and increases in on-track credit accumulation resulting in increases in graduation rates; increased research funding from \$69 million in FY14 to \$85 million in FY15; student enrollment of 17,000+ in a local and regional environment of stagnant or declining enrollment; increases in financial aid (\$100 million in the FY16 budget); high level of investment in capital improvements (over \$400 million in projects in the last few years); and the development of the Nursing Education Center in Providence which the President described as one of the state's signature achievements. He indicated that these accomplishments make URI more competitive nationally, reflect confidence in the institution, and are a strong statement of the leadership at URI. The President enumerated more ongoing and future goals: new and expanded facilities for the College of Engineering, the plan to renovate the Fine Arts Building, renovation of the Graduate School of Oceanography, renovation of the historic buildings on the quadrangle, an \$85 million project, funded through URI's auxiliary operations, to build student apartments (anticipated in summer of 2019); and, possibly, through a public-private partnership, development of Upper College Road to include a hotel with conference center, housing, office, and retail space. The President answered questions. Senator Cooper asked about the enrollment capacity at the institution. The President said that he would like to see growth in student diversity, and international and graduate enrollment. He said that 18,000 students might be the number for achieving the enrollment goals while ensuring appropriate numbers of faculty and resources to deliver the academic programs. He added that he was not in favor of increasing enrollment in order to increase revenue. Senator Williams asked about expanding the academic term from the current 13-week semester. The President said that he would like to see technology used in strategic ways to enable students to move through the curriculum at a self-determined pace with greater efficiency. He suggested that URI might consider more semester "starts" to create greater flexibility, an advantage in the higher education market. He answered other questions pertaining to the cost of room and board, expanding opportunities and making the best use of space at the Providence campus, expanding full-time faculty at the Providence campus, the development of the innovation center (part of the Rhode Island Higher Education Bond Question 4), and the development of Upper College Road.

6. PRESENTATION

B. Professor Bodah introduced himself and said that the Provost had asked him, last March, to coordinate URI's self-study effort for the 2017 New England Association of Schools and Colleges

(NEASC) accreditation evaluation. He said that NEASC had issued new evaluation standards (effective July 1) and that they were available on the NEASC website. He reported that 75 faculty, staff, and students were working in 8 committees (covering 9 standards) to draft reports that would be due by the end of December. His job, with the help of the chairs of the 8 committees, was to use the reports to compose a report to NEASC that would be due in April 2017. The report would be made available to Senators for their review. He said that the NEASC site visit would take place in October 2017. The Provost thanked Professor Bodah for his leadership.

8. NEW BUSINESS

Chairperson Sullivan introduced URI graduate students Abigail Reilly and Shawn McCabe. The Chair explained that the students had approached the Senate Executive Committee seeking the cooperation of the Senate in carrying a project for HDF 574, Environmental Theory and Assessment in Higher Education. With Senators' consent, the students would be following up through email to ask questions. The Chair said that individual Senators should inform Ms. Neff if they wished not to be contacted.

9. Chairperson Sullivan moved to adjourn. The motion was approved. The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Neff