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FSEC Minutes March 24, 2017

University of Rhode Island Faculty Senate

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Faculty Senate Executive Committee Meeting #31
March 24, 2017
MINUTES

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:55 AM on Friday, March 24, 2017, in the President's Conference Room, Green Hall, Chairperson Sullivan presiding. Senators Conley, Leonard, Mahler, and Tsiatas were present. Senator Byrd was absent.

2. **ANNOUNCEMENTS/CORRESPONDENCE/REPORTS**

Committee members reviewed the proceedings of the March 23 Faculty Senate meeting.

3. **ONGOING BUSINESS**

- a. The Committee discussed the proposed restructuring of the standing committees of the Senate. The revised committee configuration under consideration included:
 - Curriculum and Standards, with two subcommittees, General Education and Academic Calendar
 - Teaching, Advising, and Assessment
 - Research and Creative Activities
 - Service and Community Life
 - Technology

The structure and charge of the Constitution, By-Laws, and University Manual Committee would remain unchanged.

The Committee discussed section 4.13 of the By-Laws of the Faculty Senate, which describes the basic committee membership structure. Changes were proposed that reduce the number of student members from three to one. The Committee discussed adding the expertise of University administrators and/or staff members as appropriate to the nature of the work of the specific committee. The individual Senate committee or the Faculty Senate Executive Committee could request the counsel of an "administrator liaison," the role and purpose of which was discussed. Liaisons would not be considered committee members. The Committee discussed the definition of the term "faculty" and its intended meaning in the context of Senate committee membership. Chairperson Sullivan proposed that summer recontracting funds be made available to faculty during the summer (2017) to assist in the development of the new committees and to participate in training for committee membership.

- b. The FSEC discussed the Administrator Evaluation process and suggested that evaluation committee members be asked to provide feedback for improving the process.
- 4. President Dooley joined the meeting at 9:50 AM. The President had attended the Senate Finance Committee hearing on the previous day. He reported that there had been good questions regarding the FY2018 budget on higher education at the hearing. The President acknowledged the election of the new Senate President, Senator Dominick Ruggerio (successor to Senate President Teresa Paiva Weed) that had also taken place the previous day and commented that Senator Ruggerio has been supportive of higher education and initiatives at URI. Discussion followed. The President said that he was not sure how the change in leadership would impact the Governor's signature education initiative, expansion of the RI Promise Program to provide two years of paid college tuition at the state's public institutions. The President was asked about the Innovation Center (\$20 million, part of the bond issue approved by voters in November 2016). The President said that URI was working closely with the RI Commerce Corporation to develop an RFP. He said that URI has no preference regarding the site of the intended center or the kind of research to be developed. Biotechnology, defense, financial services, and life-sciences have been discussed as potential areas for collaborative research and development. The President indicated that URI and the Commerce Corporation would seek private sector partners interested in developing opportunities that would advance the economy of the state. Partners would be expected to match the state's investment. Chairperson Sullivan asked if there were proposals in the current legislative session that the Faculty Senate could impact favorably. The President replied that he continued to believe that the RI Promise Program was very good public policy. In addition to the Governor's tuition plan, the President cited the higher education budget, the funding for the design phase of renovations to the Fine Arts building, and the authorization to proceed with the White Horn Brook apartments (student housing). The President suggested that contacting South County legislators would help in advocating for these issues. Chairperson Sullivan asked the President if he would provide support for summer committee work for faculty to develop new committee structures and to participate in training for committee membership. The President agreed, adding that he considered it a useful investment in strengthening shared governance.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Neff