

10-15-2020

## Faculty Senate Minutes October 15, 2020

University of Rhode Island Faculty Senate

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## Faculty Senate Meeting #2 via WebEx

Thursday, October 15, 2020

### MINUTES

1. **CALL TO ORDER** The meeting was called to order at 3:02 PM by Senate Chair Echevarria. All senators were in attendance except for Senators Akanda, Mok, Roman, Rarick, Kovarsky, Leatham, and Zhang. Ex officio members in attendance: President Dooley, Provost DeHayes, Vice President Collins, Vice President Snyder, Vice Provost Bodah, Vice Provost Libutti, Vice Provost Veeger, Dean Boughida, Interim Dean DeBoef, Dean Kirby, Associate Dean of Nursing Leveillee representing Dean Wolfe, Associate Dean of Arts & Sciences Reynolds representing Dean Riley, and Associate Dean Smith of the Graduate School of Oceanography representing Dean Bontemps, and Associate Dean of Arts & Sciences Reynolds representing Dean Riley. Also in attendance: Associate Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer Almandrez, Athletic Director Bjorn, Associate Vice President of Student Affairs Ciccomascolo, CIO Kaugars, Dean Graney, Associate Dean of Arts & Sciences Krueger, Associate Dean of CELS Sartini, BOT Faculty Representative Gindy, Director of Learning, Assessment & Online Education Goldsmith, Director of External Relations & Communications Mahoney, and Student Senate Academic Committee Representative McGrath.
2. **DISPOSITION OF MINUTES** Senate Chair Echevarria announced that the minutes of Faculty Senate Meeting # 1 on September 17, 2020 had been posted with the agenda. She asked if there were any proposed additions, corrections, comments, or questions. There were none. Chair Echevarria ruled that, In the absence of any corrections or changes, the minutes were approved.
3. **REPORT OF OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**
  - a. **Announcements and Welcome Remarks –**

Senate Chair Echevarria welcomed Senators and guests to the Faculty Senate's second meeting. The Faculty Senate Chair congratulated the URI community for all achieved during such a challenging semester and encouraged all to be compassionate and take care of themselves and be empathetic with students and colleagues. Chair Echevarria reported that the Presidential search has begun in earnest. The Presidential Search Advisory Committee is organizing multiple ways for URI community members to contribute to the presidential search process. The committee is organizing town hall meetings, designing surveys, and creating online comment forms so that different stakeholders may share their perspectives on the key priorities and challenges that URI will face over the coming years. These efforts will contribute directly to the search process by determining the essential characteristics and qualifications of the next URI president.
  - b. Senate Chair Echevarria announced the 2020-2021 Administrator Evaluations for Dean Boughida, Dean Ebrahimpour, Dean Larrat, Chief Information Officer Kaugars, and Vice President Snyder.

c. **Activities of the Executive Committee**

- i. Minutes of Executive Committee Meetings of September 2, 9, 16, and 23 were presented by Senate Vice Chair Cardany and noticed.

d. **Recommendations of the Executive Committee**

- i. Senate Vice Chair Cardany presented a second reading for a vote on the Faculty Senate Executive Committee's Motion to change the Faculty Senate By-Laws to allow, in the sole case of online meetings, for an extension of Faculty Senate meetings beyond 5 PM for a maximum of 30 additional minutes. The Motion was approved.

4. **REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT**

**Announcements** The President reported that the efforts with COVID-19 testing were going well. Dr. Deborah Birx, the White House Coronavirus Task Force coordinator, praised the University of Rhode Island during her recent visit. Because small group gatherings related directly to some sororities and fraternities have been responsible for increased transmission of the coronavirus and an increase in the positive test rate, a shelter in place order was instituted to limit COVID-19 transmission in the Greek system. President Dooley expressed encouragement that there have been no virus transmissions in academic settings. The President praised VP Collins and Housing, and Health Services, who have been working with energy and enthusiasm to help the University overcome numerous challenges related to COVID-19.

The President also reported that testing sites have been established at the URI Memorial Union and the Ryan Center to facilitate widespread and efficient COVID-19 testing of asymptomatic students, faculty, and staff.

**Status of Actions Pending Approval After the September 17, 2020, Faculty Senate Meeting:**

**Bill #20-21-1A** Curriculum and Standards Committee Report #19-20-12. Approved by the Faculty Senate on September 17, 2020.

**Bill # 20-21-1B** Curriculum and Standards Committee Report #2019-20-12: Organizational changes. Approved September 24, 2020, Subject to Notification to the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees

**Bill #20-21-2** Curriculum and Standards Committee, Academic Calendar Subcommittee Report #19-20-13: Revisions to Spring 2021 Academic Calendar. Approved September 24, 2020.

## 5. PRESENTATIONS

a. The Director of Athletics Thorr Bjorn, and student-athletes Maxwell Dickens and Sarah Dudinski presented the report of the Department of Athletics. They outlined URI teams' successes and included information on athletes representing over 58 majors, Spring 2020 term GPA of 3.54, and a six-year graduation rate of 90%. The student-athletes also reported on Rhody Life Skills, which is involved in several community service projects such as fundraising for nonprofit organizations, reading to elementary school students, and involvement in RI Special Olympics. Student-athletes will also assist at the polls on election day.

## 6. REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

a. Senator Pearson-Merkowitz, The Chair of the Technology and Infrastructure Committee, gave a brief report on the committee's goals for the academic year. The Committee intends to look at equity and IT issues and survey faculty and students. They will present their survey findings in the Technology and Infrastructure Report in February.

b. Senator Sodhi, Chair of Teaching, Advising, and Assessment Committee(TAAC), gave a brief report on the committee's goals for the academic year. He stated that TAAC is a diverse committee that began the academic year with a broad charge related to diversity, equity, inclusion and justice. The committee has since begun to focus, refine and reprioritize that charge. Their first tasks consist of developing a working definition of decolonization, defining the scope of the committee's work, and determining what elements of the charge they can realistically accomplish this year.

c. Senator Derbyshire, Chair, provided a brief report from the Service and Community Life Committee on their goals for the academic year. The Committee will focus on determining which elements of their charge relating to diversity, equity, inclusion and social justice they should focus on achieving this year. The committee will collaborate with the Office of Community, Equity and Diversity (CED) which is leading the effort to develop and distribute a campus-wide climate survey. The committee also plans to collaborate with the University Diversity Council (UDC). They will also conduct an audit related to issues of diversity, equity and racial justice in order to examine the current state of our community and determine critical needs and challenges that we must address.

d. Senator Kincaid, Chair of the Curriculum and Standards Committee gave a brief presentation on the goals of the committee for this academic year.

- i. Chair Kincaid presented the Curriculum and Standards Committee Report #2020-2021-1, which was approved.

e. Senator Hicks, Chair of the Constitution, By-Laws, and University Manual (CBUM) Committee, delivered a report on her committee's goals for this academic year. The committee has already begun reviewing the University Manual and developing proposed edits to reflect changes in the URI governance structure triggered by the creation of the Board of Trustees. The Committee also plans to develop and propose revisions to the University Manual for the purpose of using more inclusive, non-gendered language. They also plan to examine the issue of Faculty Senate membership.

- i. Chair Hicks reported that the General Faculty referendum to change the Faculty Senate Constitution, Appendix B of the University Manual, to substitute Faculty Senate "President" for Faculty Senate "Chairperson" or "Chair" and Faculty Senate "Vice President" for Faculty Senate "Vice Chairperson" or "Vice Chair" was approved.
- ii. Chair Hicks presented the second reading of and called the vote on the Motion to change the By-Laws to substitute Faculty Senate "President" for Faculty Senate "Chairperson" or "Chair" and Faculty Senate "Vice President" for Faculty Senate "Vice Chairperson" or "Vice Chair." The motion was approved.
- iii. Chair Hicks presented a motion to change the University Manual to substitute Faculty Senate "President" for Faculty Senate "Chairperson" or "Chair" and Faculty Senate "Vice President" for Faculty Senate "Vice Chairperson" or "Vice Chair," and it was approved.

7. **OLD BUSINESS** Chairperson Echevarria asked if there was any Old Business. There was none.

8. **NEW BUSINESS** The Chair disclosed a forthcoming communication from the Presidential Search Committee Advisory Committee to faculty, staff, and students announcing Town Hall meetings next week. A survey link will be sent to faculty, staff, and students to solicit community input that will directly impact the candidate profile and search process. The Faculty Senate Chair urged Senators to participate and contribute to the process, and requested that they also urge their colleagues to participate.

9. **ADJOURNMENT** Chairperson Echevarria asked for a motion to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 4:19 PM.