

3-18-2021

## Faculty Senate Minutes March 18, 2021

University of Rhode Island Faculty Senate

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**FACULTY SENATE MEETING MINUTES**  
**MARCH 18, 2021**  
**3:00 - 5:00 p.m.**  
**Via Zoom**

**1. CALL TO ORDER OF THE FACULTY SENATE MEETING**

Faculty Senate (FS) President Echevarria called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m. All Senators were present except for Amin, Blanpied, Chen, Leatham, Mok, Pearson-Merkowitz, Ruemmele, Sendag, Taveira, Zhang. Ex Officio members present were: Provost DeHayes, Vice Provost Bodah, Vice Provost Libutti, Vice President Rider, Vice President Snyder, Vice Provost Veeger, Dean Boughida, Dean Larrat, Dean Wolfe, Interim Dean DeBoef, Distinguished University Professor Nassersharif. Others in attendance were: Senior Associate Director Humphrey, AAUP President Reumann, and Associate Vice President Almandrez.

**2. DISPOSITION OF MINUTES of Faculty Senate Meeting February 18, 2021**

FS President Echevarria announced the minutes of the February 18, 2021 Faculty Senate meeting had been posted with the agenda. She inquired if there were any comments, additions, or questions. Hearing none, President Echevarria declared the minutes were approved.

**3. REPORT OF OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

- a. **Announcements** - FS President Echevarria enthusiastically announced that we have reached the halfway point of the semester and stressed that it is a time for hope. She offered a message of support and encouraged faculty, students, and staff to practice self-care and compassion. She asked everyone to support, help, be mindful of each other, and to seek out help if needed. President Echevarria reminded faculty that academic freedom allowed them to review and adjust their approach to achieving course learning outcomes to accommodate the unique semester.
- b. **Activities of the Executive Committee** - Faculty Senate Vice President Cardany announced that the Minutes of the Executive Committee Meetings from February 16th, 23rd, March 2nd and 9th were available for review on the Faculty Senate website. She asked if there were any questions. The Senate did not have any questions.  
FS Vice President Cardany announced the call for nominations for the Sheila Black Grubman Faculty Outstanding Service Award and the Fritz Wenisch Award for Exceptional Contributions to the Faculty Senate. She explained the Faculty Senate website contains nomination information, including instructions, nomination form, and submission deadlines.
- c. **Recommendations of the Executive Committee:**  
FS Vice President Cardany presented the proposed dates for the Faculty Senate Meetings for the academic year (AY) 21-22 to the Senate. In response to an inquiry, she confirmed that a religious holiday calendar was used in determining

the proposed dates. The Faculty Senate approved the meeting schedule for the 2021-2022 academic year.

FS Vice President Cardany discussed the proposal to clarify University Manual language and to broaden access to emeritus status. The proposal was approved by the Senate.

FS Vice President Cardany presented the first reading of a proposal to amend the Constitution and By-Laws to modify the Senate apportionment system and to expand Faculty Senate membership. FS President Echevarria discussed the context of the proposal and the process used to develop this proposal including analyzing previous proposals, researching the models used by peer institutions, and reaching out to faculty senators. The Senate discussion included a statement that small colleges would find it more difficult to add a second senator, and how this proposal seemed to be a good compromise over previous proposals. Vice President Cardany explained the second reading, and the vote on the proposal and University Manual language will take place at the Faculty Senate meeting on April 15, 2021.

#### **4. REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT:**

##### **a. Announcements**

President Dooley announced that he, URI Board of Trustees Chair Cook, and Executive Director Mahoney met with Governor McKee. He expressed that Governor McKee acknowledges that URI is the state's flagship university. He explained that the state budget included a \$7M increase for URI, RICAP (Rhode Island Capital Improvement Program), and URI Online.

He thanked the Senators and all voters for voting yes on Question #1, for renovations to the Fine Arts Center. The Fine Arts Center will require a massive demolition of the old concrete building replacing it with a modern glass building similar to the Engineering Fascitelli Center.

##### **b. Report on the Administrator Evaluation of Vice President Snyder**

President Dooley thanked the Administrator Evaluation Committee members for the evaluation of Vice President Snyder. He was pleased to announce that the review was positive, noting Vice President Snyder's effective and respected leadership, and anticipating that these high levels of confidence in his leadership will continue. A recommendation was made to increase the amount of bottom-up proposals rather than offering primarily top-down proposals.

##### **c. Legislation Forwarded to the President after the January 28, 2021 Faculty Senate Meeting**

Bill #20-21-22B Curricular Report #2020-21-4 from the Graduate Council to the Faculty Senate: Curricular Proposals. Approved by President Dooley on February 23, 2021.

Bill #20-21-22C Curricular Report #2020-21-4 from the Graduate Council to the Faculty Senate: Creation of an Accelerated Online Master of Public Administration (MPA). Approved by President Dooley on March 5, 2021.

Bill #20-21-23B Curriculum and Standards Committee Report #2020-2021-6: Curricular Changes. Approved by President Dooley on March 5, 2021.

Bill #20-21-24 Constitution, By-Laws, and University Manual Committee Report #2020-2021-2: Proposal to Update University Manual language on Committee Structure, Sections 5.78.12, 5.84.13, 8.20.14, 8.20.17, 8.20.30, 8.70.10, 8.70.12, 8.70.13, 8.70.20, 8.70.61, 8.70.72, 8.81.50, and 8.81.80. Approved by President Dooley on February 23, 2021.

Bill #20-21-25 Constitution, By-Laws, and University Manual Committee Report #2020-2021-3: Proposal to Revise Definition of General Faculty, University Manual Section 4.11.10. Approved by President Dooley on February 23, 2021.

## 5. PRESENTATIONS:

- a. FS President Echevarria introduced University of Rhode Island and Alumni Engagement (URIFAE) President O'Rourke and thanked her for attending the meeting. URI Foundation President O'Rourke noted that the URI Campaign is doing well and has received over \$200M of the \$250M goal and the University's endowment has received \$200M, culminating from the generosity of donors. The fundraising goal for this year is \$32.3M; she is optimistic that goal is achievable. URI Foundation President O'Rourke shared that as we all pivot to remote work they launched a remote engagement program for alumni. Since July 1, 2020 over around 1,000 alumni around the world have participated in the different programs available such as yoga classes and reading to children and office hours with faculty.

The URI Foundation pivoted at the start of the pandemic to raise funds for the Student First Fund, working with the Office of Student Affairs to make funds available from donors to address food and housing insecurities. The URI Foundation is also working in partnership with the Office of Enrollment Services to raise additional funds for scholarships.

Last Summer the URIFAE launched URI Career Connect, an online platform for networking and mentoring. She asked Senators to encourage students to sign up for this very important and successful program in order to benefit from alumni mentors.

Foundation President O'Rourke, announced that President and Mrs.

Baker-Dooley are establishing a fund to support the work of the members of the Faculty Senate. The fund will be used to support the work of the Faculty Senate members in teaching, research, and service.

FS President Echevarria thanked President Dooley for his support, leadership, and this donation; she expressed gratitude on behalf of the Faculty Senate.

President Dooley said he wanted to thank and demonstrate his appreciation to the Senate leadership, senators, faculty, students, and staff for the collegial support that allowed URI to weather this pandemic. FS President Echevarria thanked Foundation President O'Rourke for her presentation.

- b. FS President Echevarria introduced the Office of Innovation in General Education Director DiCioccio. Director DiCioccio reported that in 2019-2020, 40 new general

education courses, 13 of which were D1-Integrate and Apply, were approved and an additional 4 courses added either the Grand Challenge (GC) or a second outcome. Director DiCioccio informed the Senate of a new program “Faculty Voices: Engaging with Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion,” where faculty create videos discussing their courses. The videos are intended to generate enthusiasm for general education courses. Director DiCioccio explained that the upcoming spring 2021 assessment will focus on the outcomes of B2-Communicate Effectively and B4-Information Literacy. She anticipates offering workshops in summer 2021 supporting the incorporation of Diversity and Inclusion into courses. Director DiCioccio introduced 2 students, Tori Frank and Leah Popovic, who relayed the impact that a general education course had on them, not only academically but also personally. FS President Echevarria thanked Director DiCioccio for her innovative ideas and hard work.

## **6. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES:**

- a. Interim Dean DeBoef presented Graduate Council Report # 2020-2021-5, to the Faculty Senate. Approval of the report was moved and seconded. Dean DeBoef asked if there were any questions; as there were no questions or discussion FS President Echevarria presented the voting poll. Report #2020-2021-5 from the Graduate Council was approved.
- b. Senator Kincaid presented Curriculum and Standards Committee Report #2020-2021-7 and Report #2020-2021-8, as moved and seconded. He explained that the Curriculum and Standards Committee was presenting several SPC (School of Professional and Continuing Studies) proposals resulting from a reorganization of their majors to a cohort style. With no discussion or questions on the reports the polls were presented for voting. Both reports were approved. Chair Kincaid presented the PLA (prior learning assessment) report from the College of Education and Professional Studies (CEPS). He reported that in the 2019-2020 year one student had received credit for three 1-credit MUS courses.
- c. Senator Mead presented General Education Subcommittee Reports #2020-2021-4 and #2020-2021-5 as moved and seconded. With no discussion from the Senate, FS President Echeverria presented the voting poll. The reports were approved.
- d. Senator Hicks, Chair of the Constitution, By-Laws and University Manual Committee presented the informational Administrative Report-March 2021 on behalf of President Dooley. The changes encompassed revision to University Manual language regarding the Space, Enhancement, Design, and Allocation Committee.
- e. Senator Manbir, Chair of the Teaching, Advising, & Assessment (TAA) Committee reported that the TAA has three focus groups looking into diversity and inclusion (DI). One group is gathering information on justice, equity, diversity and inclusion (JEDI) practices on campus, a second group is looking at curriculum DI issues, and another group is looking into the progress at the university level.

## **7. FORUM: Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Agenda for change**

FS President Echevarria reminded the Senate that a draft of the “Agenda for Change” had been linked to the Senate agenda. She introduced Provost DeHayes who opened by saying that there is little disagreement that there is a need and desire to increase equity, diversity and inclusion in our community and to create an anti-racist action plan for our university. The Provost discussed the creation of the “Agenda for Change” as a living document which has evolved into the draft that was provided to the Senate. The “Agenda for Change” recommended the infusion of diversity and anti-racism learning into the curriculum; expanding professional development focused on anti-racism; transforming search and hiring processes; and much more, including annual college reporting on progress.. He noted that it involves changing the culture of the community. Discussion ensued including having the agenda address more than just anti-Black racism, particularly in the face of recent manifestations of anti-Asian prejudice and discrimination. Individuals also spoke passionately about maintaining the anti-black racism title while also ensuring a broader antiracism agenda addressing all communities. A suggestion was made for the “Agenda for Change” to include language on white supremacy and white privilege rather than removing the focus of anti-Black racism. Senator Myerson, Chair of the Academic Calendar Subcommittee requested that her committee be brought into the discussion.

A motion was made and approved to extend the meeting time by 15 minutes.

Discussion continued with Provost DeHayes emphasizing the imperativeness of the “Agenda for Change” being action steps; he noted the statement from the agenda “We Don’t Need More Bold Statements; We Need More Bold Actions.” He reiterated the need for accountability, action, and the agenda to be a living document.

A motion was made and approved to extend the meeting time by 15 minutes.

FS President Echevarria encouraged everyone to have their voices heard by completing the Campus Climate Survey.

## **8. OLD BUSINESS**

FS President Echevarria asked if there was any old business. There was no old business.

## **9. NEW BUSINESS**

FS President Echvarria asked if there was any new business. Student Senator McGrath, Chair of the On-Campus and Academic Affairs Committee, acknowledged that while he was aware that spring break could not be reinstated, there were concerns of the mental health and wellbeing of students created by not having a break. He inquired about the implementation of mental health days being incorporated for students for the duration of the semester.

FS President Echevarria pointed out that such requests would need to go to the Academic Calendar Committee. Senator Meyerson, Chair of the Academic Calendar Committee offered to make herself available if a meeting was requested. FS President Echevarria stressed that faculty are having the same issues; students and faculty alike

are sharing the same space. She recommended self-care, compassion, and understanding not only for oneself but for others.

10. The meeting was adjourned at 5:26 p.m.