

4-29-2021

## Faculty Senate Minutes April 29, 2021

University of Rhode Island Faculty Senate

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## **FACULTY SENATE MEETING #9 Via Zoom**

**THURSDAY, APRIL 29, 2021, 3:00pm**

### **MINUTES**

**1. CALL TO ORDER OF THE FACULTY SENATE MEETING** – Senate President Echevarria called the meeting to order at 3:04 PM. All senators were present except for Senators Akanda, Eaton, Hatfield, Leatham, Loose, Mok, and Xu. Ex officio in attendance included: President Dooley, Provost DeHayes, Vice President Rider, Vice President Snyder, Vice Provost Bodah, Vice Provost Libutti, Vice Provost Veeger, Dean Bontempi, Dean Boughida, Dean Ebrahimpour, Associate Dean Reynolds for Dean Riley, Associate Dean Sartini for Dean Kirby, Dean Wolfe, Interim Dean DeBoef. Newly elected senators in attendance included: Nina Eichacker, Jay Fogelman, Guarav Khanna, Lenore Martin, Emi Uchida, Theodore Walls, Xuerong Wen, Mingxi Zhou. Others in attendance: CIO Kaugars, Associate Vice President Almandrez, Associate Vice President Ciccomascolo, Dean Graney, Associate Dean Krueger, Associate Dean Leveillee, Associate Dean Mosley Austin, Associate Dean Smith, BOT Faculty Representative Gindy, Professor Beauvais, Professor Cohen, Professor Shukla, Associate Professor Chen, Associate Professor Covino, Associate Professor Howlett, Associate Professor Kolbe, Associate Professor Liberberger, Associate Professor Licht, Associate Professor Thoma, Assistant Professor Kim, Assistant Professor Murray-Johnson, Assistant Professor Yalcin, Clinical Professor Olagundoye, Teaching Professor McGregor-Graham, Teaching Professor Pisa, Teaching Professor Romanow, Senior Lecturer Dupuis, Senior Lecturer Steen, Lecturer Mandal, Lecturer Pisabarro Sarrió, Director Burgess, Director DiCioccio, Director Goldsmith, Director Kroll, Assistant Director Torrens, Specialist Santucci, AAUP President Reumann, Ombud Tyler, Assistant Dean Boisclair, Advisor Delaney.

**2. DISPOSITION OF MINUTES** of April 15, 2021 Faculty Senate meeting. FS President Echevarria announced that the minutes of the April 15, 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 approved.

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

#### a. **Announcements** – Senate President Echevarria

i. **Recognition of Outgoing Senators.** President Echevarria recognized the outgoing Senators and thanked them for their service, particularly in light of the unprecedented challenges of the past year:

**College of Arts & Sciences:** Megan Echevarria, Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures; Art Mead, Economics; Lisa Tom, Art; Ping Xu, Political Science

**College of Business:** Dara Schniederjans, Supply Chain Management

**College of Engineering:** Ali Akanda, Civil & Environmental; Manbir Sodhi, Mechanical, Industrial & Systems, Leon Thiem, Civil & Environmental

**College of the Environment and Life Sciences:** Richard Burroughs, Marine Affairs; Joel Chandlee, Cell and Molecular Biology; Bridget Ruummele, Plant Sciences and Entomology

**Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies:** Sandy Jean Hicks, Education

**Graduate School of Oceanography:** Brice Loose

**College of Health Sciences:** Molly Greaney, Kinesiology; Dana Kovarsky, Communicative Disorders; Skye Leedah, Human Development and Family Studies; Patricia Morokoff, Psychology

**College of Nursing:** Debra Erickson-Owens, Nursing

**College of Pharmacy:** Tracey Taveira, Pharmacy Practice

**University Libraries:** Amanda Izenstark, Public Services

ii. **Welcome to Newly Elected Senators.** President Echevarria welcomed newly elected Senators to the Faculty Senate:

**College of Arts & Sciences:** Chris Parker, Political Science; Bridget Buxton, History; Barbara Costello, Sociology and Anthropology; Nina Eichacker, Economics; Emmett Goods, Music and Africana Studies

**College of the Environment & Life Sciences:** Lenore Martin, Cell and Molecular Biology; Brian Maynard, Plant Sciences and Entomology; Emi Uchida, Environmental and Natural Resource Economics

**The Allen Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies:** Jay Fogelman, Education

**College of Health Sciences:** Karen McCurdy, Human Development and Family

Studies; Natalie Sabik, Health Studies; Theodore Walls, Psychology

**College of Business:** Ying Chen, Management

**College of Engineering:** Bahram Nassersharif, Mechanical, Industrial & Systems; Leon Thiem, Civil & Environmental Engineering

**College of Nursing:** Diane Martins, Nursing Instruction

**College of Pharmacy:** Xuerong Wen, Pharmacy Practice

**Graduate School of Oceanography:** Mingxi Zhou

**University Libraries:** Amanda Izenstark, Public Services

iii. **Organizational meeting of the newly constituted 2021-2022 Faculty**

**Senate.** President Echevarria announced the organizational meeting of the newly constituted 2021-2022 Faculty Senate on May 13, 2021, at 3 PM.

Newly-elected Senators will vote at this meeting for the new FS Executive Committee. Special guests attending the meeting will include Margo Cook, Chair of the URI Board of Trustees; Thomas Ryan, Trustee and Chair of the Presidential Search Committee; and Marc Parlange, incoming President of URI.

b. **Activities of the Executive Committee** – Vice President Cardany

i. **Minutes of Executive Committee Meetings.** Faculty Senate Vice President Cardany announced that the minutes of the Executive Committee Meetings had been posted with the agenda. She asked if there were any questions. There were none.

ii. **Proposal to clarify Senate transitions.** Vice President Cardany presented the second reading and vote on the proposal to amend the Senate Constitution and By-laws to clarify Senate transitions and to create flexibility for timing the organizational meeting of the newly constituted Senate each year. The proposal passed with unanimous approval. The amendment to the Constitution is subject to ratification by the General Faculty through a referendum.

iii. **Proposal on Intellectual Property.** Vice President Cardany introduced the proposal for University Manual language changes on intellectual property. There was discussion concerning whether this change might impact or interfere with students in need of accommodations that include recording class sessions. Vice

President Cardany confirmed that it would not: Students in such circumstances would follow standard practice, working with the Office of Disability Services. The vote on the proposed changes to the University Manual clarifying the language on faculty intellectual property passed with unanimous approval.

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

a. **Announcements.** President Dooley noted that he had approved all of the Bills from the busy April 15th meeting of the Faculty Senate. The President reported that senior leadership would meet soon with the Rhode Island House and Senate leadership to discuss URI's budget requests and endorsement of the Governor's recommendations, which include robust support for URI. Advocacy continues at the Rhode Island House and Senate for a package of Bills that would benefit URI in a number of significant ways. Among them are approvals for future bond issues to support a university integrated counseling and health center. More information on these Bills may be obtained from Linda Acciaro.

The President shared that he recently had his first in-depth meeting with incoming President Marc Parlange. President Dooley related that Dr. Parlange is excited to be coming to URI, is enthusiastic about shared governance at URI, and is eager to begin working with the Faculty Senate.

b. **Status of Actions** forwarded to the President after the Faculty Senate Meeting of April 15, 2021:

Bill #20-21-32 Research and Creative Activities Committee and Centers Review Subcommittee, Revisions to University Manual Language on Centers, Sections 8.90.10 - 8.90.40. Approved by President Dooley on April 19, 2021.

Bill #20-21-33B Curricular Report #2020-21-6 from the Graduate Council to the Faculty Senate: Curricular Proposals. Approved by President Dooley on April 19, 2021.

Bill #20-21-34B Curriculum and Standards Committee Report #2020-2021-9: Curricular Changes. Approved by President Dooley on April 19, 2021.

Bill #20-21-34C Curriculum and Standards Committee Report #2020-2021-9: Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies, General Studies major. Approved by President Dooley on April 19, 2021. Pending approval of the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees.

Bill #20-21-34D Curriculum and Standards Committee Report #2020-2021-9: Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies, Learner Designed major. Approved by President Dooley on April 19, 2021. Pending approval of the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees.

Bill #20-21-36 Constitution, By-Laws, and University Manual Committee Report #2020-2021-4: Updates to University Manual Language Referencing General Faculty and URI Board of Trustee in various sections. Approved by President Dooley on April 19, 2021.

Bill #20-21-37 Constitution, By-Laws, and University Manual Committee Report 2020-2021-4: Creation of Abbreviated Bachelor's to Master's Program Language in the University Manual, Chapter 3, Sections 3.30.18 – 3.30.22. Approved by President Dooley on April 19, 2021.

Bill #20-21-38 Academic Program Review Committee, Revisions to University Manual, Sections 5.86.10, 8.86.10-8.86.14. Approved by President Dooley on April 19, 2021.

## **5. REPORTS OF JOINT AND STANDING COMMITTEES**

a. **Report from the Joint Committee on Academic Planning.** President Echevarria noted that the written report from the Joint Committee on Academic Planning had been made available with the meeting agenda and invited Provost DeHayes and Vice President Cardany, Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee, to respond to any questions or comments. There were no questions.

Before the year-end committee reports, President Echevarria related that diversity equity, inclusion, and justice (JEDI) are fundamental to every facet of the business and work of the URI General Faculty. She recalled that the Faculty Senate Executive Committee had worked with each Standing Committee Chair at the beginning of the academic year to develop charges highlighting how JEDI relate to the respective committee's areas of focus. She thanked all committee members for their diligent and collaborative work in making remarkable progress with these ambitious projects.

### **b. Research and Creative Activities Committee**

i. **Year-end report.** Senator Roman, Research and Creative Activities Committee (RCAC) Chair, presented the [RCAC year-end report](#) on behalf of RCAC and the two subcommittees, the Competitive Grants Subcommittee and the Centers Review Subcommittee. RCAC devoted a great deal of time and effort

to updating and correcting the Centers and Institutes section in the University Manual to make it more consistent with the future vision for such entities, charted by the Provost and by the Vice President for Research and Economic Development.

Questions related to JEDI have been included in the center/institute application and review process forms, making it possible to assess and track how the mission, composition, and activities of university centers and institutes align with these important institutional priorities.

The Competitive Grants subcommittee also conducted a comprehensive five-year review of grants. In this year's internal grant application, the subcommittee included a means for collecting data relating to demographic information, including gender, race, ethnicity, and disability. The subcommittee submitted a proposal to the Vice President for Research and Economic Development for future funding for a competitive grant for research, scholarship, or creative work related to antiracism, diversity, inclusion, equity & social justice.

ii. **Proposed centers.** Following the newly introduced Center approval process, Chair Roman presented a proposal for two centers to become permanent Centers: the National Institute for Undersea Vehicle Technology and the Social Science Institute for Research, Education, and Policy Proposals. The Faculty Senate approved both centers.

c. **Joint Graduate Council and Curriculum and Standards Report.** Interim Associate Dean Mosley Austin presented the Joint Report of the Graduate Council and the Curriculum and Standards Committee #2020-2021-3 recommending approval of three accelerated bachelors to masters programs from the College of Business and the College of Environment and Life Sciences. Approval of the report was moved and seconded. Associate Dean Mosley-Austin asked if there were any questions; as there were no questions or discussion, FS President Echevarria presented the voting poll. The Joint Report of the Graduate Council and Curriculum and Standards #2020-2021-3 was approved.

d. **Curriculum and Standards Committee**

i. **Informational report.** Senator Kincaid, Chair of the Curriculum and Standards Committee (CSC), presented an informational report (#2020-2021-10) to the

Faculty Senate.

ii. **Year-end report.** Senator Kincaid presented the [CSC year-end report](#). Chair Kinkaid thanked his committee members for all of their work and especially thanked the Faculty Senate Specialist, Joanne Lawrence, for her effectiveness, patience, and dedication to the committee and to the Senate. During the past academic year, CSC reviewed 279 courses. As part of their JEDI-related charge, they considered ways to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in URI's curriculum. Working with the General Education Subcommittee (GEC) and the FS Executive Committee (FSEC), the three committees created a survey of faculty in order to collect data on the relevance of a variety of JEDI-related issues in specific courses. The responses to the survey from 170 members of the faculty provide valuable information about their JEDI-related priorities for teaching and curriculum development relating to 260 courses. The CSC and GEC chairs also interviewed Associate Professor Bryan Dewsbury about how critical inclusive pedagogy is to meaningful integration of JEDI in the curriculum.

e. **General Education Subcommittee.** Senator Mead, Chair of the General Education Subcommittee (GEC) presented the [GEC year-end report](#). Senator Mead emphasized the importance for the Curriculum and Standards Committee (CSC) and the GEC to communicate and work together. He also thanked the committee and the FS Specialist for all of their assistance over the last year. Senator Mead reviewed the recent evolution of General Education (GE), highlighting that, with 12 outcomes and the Grand Challenge overlay, URI offered 2617 GE courses during the 20-21 academic year. With regard to the GE course approval process, Senator Mead applauded Vice President Cardany for her effective revisions to and streamlining of the course proposal forms. Senator Mead also noted that the committee had reviewed a number of excellent GE course proposals this year. He remarked that, with only minor revisions, a number of those proposals would have easily been approved for the Grand Challenge overlay. Senator Mead's recommendations included devising ways to recognize the importance of integration of GE as an integral part of a student's curriculum. Other recommendations from the GEC included close communication between the CSC and GEC, although he noted that the recently approved model of having both committee chairs serve on both committees may not be sustainable without an appropriate accommodation for the time spent. Furthermore, Senator Mead also noted how critical it is for the GEC and the Director of



General Education to work together as a team. Referring to the referendum of the General Faculty that is in progress, he spoke of the importance of including lecturers and clinical faculty in the membership of the GEC. Senator Mead demonstrated excitement about the new Quali Curriculum Management System (CMS), while also underscoring the importance of providing faculty with support and other resources as the Quali CMS is rolled out. Senator Mead recommended the creation of a JEDI committee or faculty board, composed of faculty champions of the C3 outcome. Such a committee could be established by the GEC and the Director of Innovation in General Education and could assist in the process of guiding the evolution of and potential refinements to the outcome in the future.

After Senator Mead finished his presentation, President Echevarria invited Senators to ask questions or make comments for either the CSC or the GEC. President Echevarria noted that ATL has provided critical resources to faculty via professional development related to inclusive pedagogy and the integration of our commitment to JEDI in teaching and learning. She expressed her hope that ATL would receive additional resources in the near future to make it possible for them to provide their valuable support to even more faculty.

**f. Academic Calendar Subcommittee.**

I. **Year-end report.** Senator Meyerson, Chair of the Academic Calendar Subcommittee (ACC), presented the [ACC year-end report](#) and a proposed resolution. Senator Meyerson expressed thanks to the Student Senate, Jack Humphrey Associate Director of Enrollment Services, Senate President Echevarria, Vice President Cardany and the ACC members. The ACC worked with individuals and organizations throughout the campus to identify important days throughout the year that they believed should be officially recognized, and to examine and propose changes to the Academic Calendar. They created and distributed a survey to strategically selected members of the URI community: 23 organizations and 88 faculty, staff, and students. As a result of the survey, Juneteenth was identified as a particularly important day. The committee consulted with Rhode Island state and federal representatives, and discovered that the Rhode Island House of Representatives will be re-introducing legislation to mark Juneteenth as a holiday in Rhode Island, and that a similar motion has the support of the Rhode Island delegation of the US Senate and House of

Representatives.

ii. **Resolution.** The ACC presented a motion to approve a resolution to express support for June 19th or Juneteenth being designated an official state holiday in Rhode Island and a federal holiday in the United States. The motion was approved unanimously.

g. **Technology and Infrastructure Committee.** Senator Pearson-Merkowitz, Chair of the Technology and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee, provided the committee [T&I Committee year-end report](#). Senator Pearson-Merkowitz thanked all committee members for their contributions. The committee charge was to conduct a University-wide review of equity in access to technology and infrastructure, and in the allocation of information technology resources, conduct the review according to the plan, and, based on the results of the review, develop a proposal to address inequities. Senator Pearson-Merkowitz noted how extensive and expansive the charge was and shared that the committee had decided to focus their work during the 20-21 academic year on designing, testing, and distributing a survey to faculty for the purpose of evaluating equity in access to T&I. To date, 328 faculty members have responded to the survey. In addition to designing, testing, and distributing the survey, the Committee has also engaged in a process of designing and implementing an interview protocol for college deans, in order to ascertain how each college allocates and makes allocation decisions regarding T&I resources. The committee has already interviewed most college deans and plans to complete the remaining interviews in the coming weeks. Senator Pearson-Merkowitz noted that the data that they have collected so far has been enlightening. The next steps for the committee will include analyzing the valuable data that they have collected over the course of this year, and continuing with other important elements of the initial broader charge during the coming academic year.

h. **Constitution, By-Laws, and University Manual Committee.** Senator Hicks, Chair of the Constitution, By-Laws, and University Manual (CBUM) Committee, presented the Committee year-end report and two items for approval.

i. **Year-end report.** Senator Hicks presented the [CBUM year-end report](#), thanking the committee members for their work and dedication, and noting the substantive progress that they had made. The committee successfully achieved their goals related to the Faculty Senate's JEDI focus.

ii. **Editorial changes to the Constitution and By-Laws.** Senator Hicks presented the second reading and vote on editorial changes to the Constitution and By-Laws. As there were no questions or discussion, FS President Echevarria presented the voting poll. The editorial changes to the Constitution and By-Laws were approved.

iii. **Gender neutrality.** Senator Hicks presented proposed changes to the University Manual and the Constitution and the first reading of proposed changes to the By-Laws on gender neutrality. Senator Hicks explained that the purpose of the proposed changes was to foster more inclusive language in the University Manual, Constitution, and By-Laws through gender neutral language. As there were no questions or discussion, FS President Echevarria presented the voting poll. The motion to change the language in the University Manual and the Constitution was approved. The changes to the Constitution are subject to ratification by the General Faculty via a referendum. There will be a second reading and vote on the proposed changes to the By-Laws at the May 13th Faculty Senate meeting.

i. **Service & Community Life Committee.** Senator Derbyshire, Chair of the Service & Community Life Committee (SCL), presented the [SCL year-end report](#). The focus of the Committee this academic year was on "developing recommendations for increasing and nurturing the diversity of our community, and creating campuses where antiracism, inclusion, equity, and social justice are observable realities." The Committee met with individuals on campus who, in order to maximize candor, wished to speak anonymously. Service expectations were mentioned during these conversations and the need for these service contributions to be valued and recognized. Individuals mentioned the importance of adequate weight and consideration of significant service contributions in the tenure and promotions process. Some faculty are overburdened with committee work, and such work is critical to the university's progress toward pivotal ambitious institutional goals of antiracism, justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. As a result, members of the community believe that such contributions should be considered more seriously in the promotion and tenure process. With regard to community life, the committee recommends a cohort approach for new hires. Such an approach facilitates smooth transitions of new personnel into the campus community. The committee also

recommended a strong system of mentoring for new hires. Other suggestions from the committee included developing micro-credentials related to social justice and inclusion, and creating effective incentives for participation in the existing micro-credential in Social Justice & Inclusion offered by the Office of Community, Equity and Diversity.

**j. Teaching, Advising, and Assessment Committee.** Senator Sodhi, Chair of the Teaching, Advising, and Assessment Committee (TAAC), introduced TAAC members Senator Zozula and Senator Ramnarain, who gave a [presentation](#) on the [TAAC year-end report](#). The objectives of the TAAC included identifying practices around justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) that faculty at URI across colleges, disciplines, and departments are currently engaging with in their teaching, advising and assessment, and determining what they believe are the most significant barriers to continued progress in this work. The committee developed a flexible template to assess JEDI efforts related to teaching, learning and assessment. In addition, they gathered information from peer institutions to ascertain what other colleges and universities are doing in this regard. The TAAC found that while there is much interest and expertise in JEDI, most faculty are carrying out the work in silos. They recommended that JEDI in the context of teaching, advising, and assessment be framed as faculty development with more recognition for people doing this essential work. Other recommendations included addressing the need for dedicated platforms for the sharing of ideas. ATL was recognized as fostering connections. Another recommendation focused on including JEDI professional development activities for current and new faculty. Senator Ramnarain noted that 43 percent of the peer institutions surveyed have made such activities mandatory. The Committee thanked the faculty who participated in the discussion.

When asked about the focus for the next academic year, Chair Sodhi requested that the agenda include academic integrity and related topics, based on requests and concerns expressed by faculty. He also recommended that work related to other elements of the committee's JEDI charge continue into the next academic year.

Senator Morokoff congratulated all committees for their accomplishments and suggested their reports be compiled to preserve their valuable work and ensure that the community is able to derive maximum benefit from their findings and recommendations. FS President Echevarria confirmed that the intent from the outset was to disseminate these reports widely across the URI community, specifically to incoming President Parlange,

senior leaders, college leaders, faculty, and staff across the entire institution.

**k. Faculty Senate Executive Committee Resolution.** After recognizing and demonstrating gratitude for the remarkable work of the committees, FS President Echevarria introduced a resolution from the Executive Committee supporting a commitment to anti-racism.

President Dooley thanked all of the Senators for the extraordinary work carried out, noting that he marveled at how it was possible for the Senate to accomplish such an unprecedented amount of meaningful and high-impact work during this year of such unprecedented challenges. He noted that he was convinced that the Senate's efforts during this academic year will contribute to making the University as a whole a better place for all. President Dooley stated his firm belief that institutions that take these kinds of actions will be more competitive and more successful in the years to come. He indicated that he was impressed by both the effort and the outcomes achieved by the Senate, which place the university in a solid position to move forward and to continually improve our pedagogy, our support of students, and our support of one another. He expressed strong support for the Faculty Senate's resolution.

FS President Echevarria presented the voting poll: the resolution was approved unanimously.

## **6. OLD BUSINESS**

FS President Echevarria asked if there was any old business. There was none.

## **7. NEW BUSINESS**

FS President Echevarria asked if there was any new business. The Associate Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) Almandrez spoke of an initiative to formalize a university-wide land acknowledgment statement. The initial statement was drafted by the A&S Diversity Committee and forwarded to the University Diversity Council. CDO Almandrez invited input from the Faculty Senate and the broader campus community on the current version of the land acknowledgment statement. She also highlighted other initiatives in discussion, including academic scholarships for members of the Narragansett tribe.

## **8. ADJOURNMENT**

A motion to adjourn the meeting was seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:29 PM.