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Faculty Senate Minutes September 30, 2021

University of Rhode Island Faculty Senate

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MINUTES OF FACULTY SENATE MEETING #1
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2021
VIA WEBEX

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 3:10 PM by Senate President Cardany after the adjournment of the General Faculty-Graduate Faculty meeting.

All senators were in attendance except for Senators Buxton, Chen, Kern, Leatham, Maynard, Roman, Sendag, Walls, Zhang, and Zozula. Ex officio members in attendance: President Parlange, Provost DeHayes, Interim Provost Laura Beauvais, Vice President Collins, Vice President Snyder, Vice Provost Bodah, Vice Provost Libutti, Vice Provost Veeger, Vice Provost Ako-Adounvo, Dean Boughida, Dean DeBoef, Dean Ebrahimpour, Associate Dean Smith for Dean Bontempi, Associate Dean Sartini for Dean Kirby, Faculty Senate President Echevarria, Student Senate President Bolu Taiwo, and President of the Graduate Students Association Joshua Gyllinsky. Also in attendance: Board of Trustees President Margo Cook, Associate Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer Almandrez, Athletic Director Bjorn, CIO Kaugars, and Dean Graney.

2. MINUTES

President Cardany asked if there were any additions, corrections or questions related to the minutes of the last meeting. Hearing none, a motion to approve the Faculty Senate Meeting minutes of May 13, 2021 was made, seconded, and approved.

3. REPORT OF OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

a. Announcements and Welcome Remarks

- i. Senate President Cardany welcomed Senators and guests to the Faculty Senate's first meeting of the new academic year and thanked people from across the University community for all of the efforts that made it possible for our campuses to reopen safely this fall. She specifically welcomed our new Student Senate President, Bolu Taiwo, and our new Graduate Students Alliance President, Joshua Gyllinsky. She thanked Joanne Lawrence, Mark Wightman, and Shawn Marie Simmons, for their support of the Faculty Senate during this challenging time. President Cardany expressed that she is looking forward to successful shared governance, noting that we serve in the Faculty Senate because we care about this institution. She said that she has been preparing for her role as president by reviewing the University Manual and past materials. President Cardany acknowledged the difficult challenges that we currently face, saying that we will work closely with President Parlange on the issues of the Campus Climate, the updating of URI's strategic plan, and others.
- ii. A motion that the Faculty Senate consent to Committee Appointments for 2021-2022 was made, seconded and passed.
- iii. President Cardany noted that two referenda items were passed in September including: a) Editorial changes passed with 213 yeas, 8 nays, 5 abstentions, and b)

Proposal to use gender-neutral and non-binary language in the University Manual passed with 213 yeas, 9 nays, 1 abstention

b. Activities of the Executive Committee

- i. Minutes of the Executive Committee Meetings (#1 - 17: May 27, 2021; June 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29, 2021; July 6, 20, and 27, 2021; August 3, 10, 17, 24, and 31, 2021; September 3 and 10, 2021) Senate Vice President Rice presented the minutes of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee meetings going back to May 2021. He asked if there were any questions. There were none.
- ii. Bereavement policy proposal - Motion: That URI establish a bereavement policy for students articulated in Chapter 8 of the University Manual and with procedure and explanation in the Student Handbook. Senate Vice President Rice presented the proposed update to the Bereavement Policy as it applies to students. Policy language will be added to the University Manual using the words “traumatic loss.” Discussion of the policy details followed with input from Dean Dan Graney. The question was called and the changes were approved with a 100% affirmative electronic vote. President Cardany thanked Dean Graney and his team for their hard work on this policy matter. A vote to add the same language to the Student Manual followed, again a 100% affirmative voice vote.
- iii. FSEC Proposed Resolution Recognition of Provost Donald DeHayes. Senate Vice President Rice and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee then took time to recognize and thank outgoing Provost Dr. Don DeHayes for his years of service and his dedication to shared governance. An affirmative voice vote from the whole senate followed, along with the presentation of a gift from the executive committee members. Provost DeHayes expressed his sincere thanks.

c. Per University Manual Section 10.90.15, Verbal Reporting to Constituency, Report on 2020-2021 - Administrator Evaluation Results - Provost DeHayes

- i. Provost DeHayes reported on the administrator evaluation of CIO Karlis Kaugars. He began by thanking Dr. Bahram Nassersharif for his efforts to improve the evaluation process. He said that the evaluation committee met with faculty and staff respondents – overall their rating of CIO Kaugars was extremely positive. He noted that CIO Kaugars has overseen the development of an IT strategic plan, the improvement of the user experience, and the introduction of new IT tools. No areas of weakness were identified, but the staff requested more team building and faculty requested more collaboration. Provost DeHayes concluded by saying that Karlis Kaugars has provided excellent leadership.

4. REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

- a. New URI President Marc Parlange expressed that he is delighted to be here at URI. He stated that it’s been a pleasure to meet everyone, and he sincerely appreciates the dedication and commitment of the Faculty Senate. He thanked President Dooley for his work and said that the two of them are continuing to meet to provide a smooth transition. He noted that he has a “road map” for URI going forward, which includes our pandemic response and preparedness, as well as

building on distinctive strengths to develop a new strategic plan for URI. He discussed the excellent vaccination rate for both students and employees. He then went through additional positive highlights including an enrollment update, records being set in our athletics program, our new faculty members, and research. He noted that we need to focus on fiscal sustainability by diversifying sources of revenue.

b. Status of Actions Pending Approval after the May 13, 2021, Faculty Senate Meeting:

- Bill #20-21-41 Recommendation of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, Revisions to University Manual By-Laws, Sections 5.1 – 5.2, 6.1. Approved by President Dooley on July 15, 2021.
- Resolution #20-21-3 Faculty Senate Executive Committee, Recognition of President David M. Dooley. Approved by President Dooley on June 7, 2021.
- Resolution #20-21-4 Faculty Senate Executive Committee, Recognition of Senate President Megan M. Echevarria. Approved by President Dooley on June 7, 2021.
- Resolution #20-21-5 Curriculum and Standards Committee Chair, General Education Subcommittee Chair, and Faculty Senate Executive Committee, Recognition of Faculty Senate Specialist. Approved by President Dooley on June 7, 2021.

5. PRESENTATIONS

- a. Thorr Bjorn, Director of Athletics gave a presentation regarding the University's athletics department. He provided a complete overview of the student athletes, their GPAs and graduation rates, collaborations with other departments, and life skills as well as fundraising efforts. Questions included how URI compares with our peer institutions with regard to student athlete academic accomplishments. Director Bjorn acknowledged that it is an excellent question that will need further study. Megan Echevarria added that according to her research, URI athletes compare favorably to peer institutions.
- b. Kathleen Torrens, Interim Director for the Office for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning presented on the work of the Joint Committee on Online and Distance Learning (JCODL). She asserted that blended learning is the future and that we need enhanced attention to blended methodology and practice. Additionally, we need revised university definitions and protocols to answer the question of how we make great deep active learning experiences in an evidence-based blended pedagogy. She said that if any of those present would like to volunteer for the committee to please contact her. President Cardany reinforced that request.

6. REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

- a. Special Summer Curriculum Committee Report No. 2021-2022-1a and 2021-2022-1b - Senate President Cardany said that the Faculty Senate Executive Committee approved items on behalf of the Faculty Senate on August 3, 2021 due to the urgent nature and as allowed by the University Manual. Therefore the following courses were approved to create online versions: CMD 460, FLM 220, MGT 443, TMD 326G. No vote is needed.

Further at the July 27th meeting, course deletions from the Music Department were approved and do not require a vote. Deleted courses included MUS 430, MUS 431, MUS 432, MUS 433, and

MUS 434.

Electronic votes were taken on each portion of Section II of report 2021-2022-1b, course changes, new courses, existing courses seeking general education, new courses seeking general education, and program changes. All sections of the report were approved.

A motion to extend the meeting for 15 minutes was made, seconded, and approved by voice vote.

- b. Curricular Report, Curriculum and Standards Committee Report 2021-2022-1 - Senator Kincaid, Chair. Informational matters were course deletions and did not require a vote. Section II of report 2021-2022-1 course changes, new courses, and 1 new program--were voted on electronically and approved.
- c. Report 2021-2022-1 of the Constitution, Bylaws, and University Manual Committee - Senator Barbour, Chair. Emeriti Policy was presented with a motion to update resources to be available for emeritus faculty. The motion was approved.

7. NEW BUSINESS

Open Forum and Update

Topic: COVID-19 Task Force - Samuel Adams, Director of Emergency Management, and Senator La Luna , Response to the pandemic, and how URI decisions are made.

A motion to extend the meeting for 15 minutes was made, seconded, approved by voice vote.

Senator La Luna provided a link allowing senators to ask questions that he will take to the COVID-19 Task Force. Sam Adams, co-chair of the task force said that it is now clear that information needs to be available to faculty, and that regular communications will be created. Senator La Luna will assist in bringing faculty needs to the task force.

Discussion followed. Library faculty noted that they are forced to move around a great deal but may not be notified of cases that they may have encountered. Also, mask compliance in the libraries is very poor. Sam Adams expressed that there is no easy solution, but they are aware of the situation. Further he relayed that all faculty and staff have enforcement roles to some extent, however, there is a group that is working on mask compliance. Regarding classrooms, if everyone is vaccinated and wearing masks, you may not need to be notified. President Cardany asked for input from student representatives, but they were no longer on the call. Senator La Luna discussed the issue of students eating and drinking in class with masks removed, noting that this could cause a risk. Perhaps some health career students could be mobilized to coach other students. In response to a question about encountering maskless students in a classroom, Sam Adams said that the first step is to ask them to mask up, if they refuse, report them for a warning. After warning, suspension is a possible next step. They are required to comply. Communications and Marketing are working on more assertive messaging to the community.

President Cardany thanked Sam Adams and Senator La Luna.

8. ADJOURNMENT

President Cardany asked for a motion to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.