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Faculty Senate Executive Committee Meeting

Minutes #31

February 17, 2015

1. The meeting was called to order at 3:00 PM on Tuesday, February 17, 2015 in Library Conference Room B, Chairperson Nassersharif presiding. Senators Cerbo, Rollo Koster, Sullivan, and Welters were present. Senator Rarick was absent.

2. Dean Zawia and Associate Dean Killingbeck were welcomed to the meeting at 3:00 PM. The following matters were discussed:

a. Dean Zawia announced that Associate Dean Killingbeck planned to retire and that the Graduate School was engaged in an internal search for the next Associate Dean. Dean Zawia reported to the FSEC that he was convening a task force to review the allocation of graduate teaching assistants (TA's) at the institution and establish best practices for their distribution. This review of the general allocation of graduate teaching assistantships to colleges and departments will be carried out in collaboration with the Provost and the deans and is expected to take a year. The FSEC was invited to appoint a representative to the task force. Dean Zawia asked to be notified of the name of the FSEC representative by March 1. Phase I, the Dean said, will examine current practices at URI. Phase II will involve possible re-distribution. The Dean's goal is to increase the number of teaching assistants on campus. Currently, there are 300-350 teaching assistants and approximately 150 research assistants. The cost (tuition and stipend) of an out-of-state TA is \$41K; the cost of an in-state TA is \$35K. Senator Sullivan noted that graduate programs benefit from staff who are dedicated to assisting students with applications for fellowships and other sources of funding. Dean Zawia said that he has requested funding for that purpose. The Dean and the FSEC discussed graduate student enrollments. Between 2009 and 2012, enrollment increased by 100 students per year. It leveled in 2012. Although applications have increased (they are program-specific), enrollment has declined modestly, by approximately 50 students [total graduate students 2,982]. Nationally, enrollments in doctoral programs have declined by 4%. The Graduate School plans to be more aggressive this spring in its efforts to increase the graduate yield by meeting with every program (masters and doctoral). In addition, the Dean reported, there are 4-5 new graduate programs scheduled to start in Fall 2015 that will attract new students. The Dean noted that he has historical program performance data going back 8 years that he would forward to the FSEC.

b. Vice Chairperson Rollo Koster asked if there were an easier means of transmitting the information that the graduate school requests than through its many pdf forms. The Dean indicated that the many (40) forms are necessary as graduate programs are step-wise and form-driven as a means of monitoring progress. The Graduate School is seeking funding for a data management system to improve their processes.

c. The FSEC noted that the Fall 2014 Edition of the Graduate Manual contained language describing graduate faculty status that had not been approved by the Faculty Senate. Associate Dean Killingbeck explained that the existing University Manual language [4.70.10] does not correctly describe graduate faculty and that efforts to amend the language two years ago in the Senate had not been successful. The FSEC asked the Dean and Associate Dean about changes to Graduate Manual Section 8.32 concerning major professors. The new language requires that all major professors be continuing, tenure-track members of the University of Rhode Island Graduate Faculty. The FSEC reported that they had received an inquiry from a clinical professor who serves as a major professor to many students. The Associate Dean said that clinical professors are not as active in scholarly pursuits and do not have the same investment in a program as a tenure-track faculty member. The Dean noted that the policies stated in the Graduate Manual are legislated by the Graduate Council.

The Dean was urged to re-introduce to the Senate changes to University Manual Sections 4.70.10, Graduate Faculty Status.

Dean Zawia and Associate Dean Killingbeck left the meeting at 4:08 PM.

3. Minutes of Faculty Senate Meeting #30, February 10, 2015 were approved.

4. ONGOING BUSINESS

a) The Committee discussed the agenda for the upcoming meeting of the Chair and Vice Chair with the Provost scheduled for February 19.

b) The Committee discussed the agenda of the upcoming February 19 Faculty Senate meeting. The Manual changes proposed by the ad hoc committee on Senate membership and voting rights to be presented to the Senate on February 19 were reviewed. Senator Sullivan summarized the ad hoc committee's discussion at their meeting of February 13 and their rationale for expanding voting rights to full time non-tenure track faculty on matters requiring Senate approval. The committee discussed the process of soliciting nominees for officers for the 2015-16 academic year.

c) The Chair and Vice Chair reviewed their meeting with the President of earlier in the day. The President agreed to establish a Foundation account for the Faculty Senate and provide some seed money. He said that fundraising by faculty on behalf of this account was permissible. Changing the compensation for the Senate Chair and Vice Chair will be discussed after the new leadership term length had been approved in the Senate.

d) The FSEC reviewed and discussed the recommendation of the Academic Standards and Calendar Committee to modify the Spring 2015 Calendar to make up missed classes due to weather-related cancellations. The FSEC reiterated the need for a more comprehensive contingency plan for cancelled classes.

5. NEW BUSINESS

Chairperson Nassersharif reported that he had been contacted by Vice President Sonnenfeld and had been informed that the President had requested an amendment to the Report of the Council for Research Subcommittee on Distribution of Overhead Funds, December 1, 2014. Chairperson Nassersharif understood that overhead funds (aka incentive funds or "F&A") have declined due to fewer grants to the University and that the President is considering a change of the current percent distribution. Ms. Neff was asked to contact Council for Research Chair, Professor Webb, to ask for a copy of the President's report.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Neff