

2-23-2023

## Faculty Senate Minutes February 23, 2023

University of Rhode Island Faculty Senate

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**Minutes**  
**FACULTY SENATE MEETING**  
**Hope Room, Higgins Welcome Center**  
**Thursday, February 23, 2023 3:00 PM**  
**Remote option via ZOOM**

1. Call to order - The meeting was called to order by Faculty Senate President Rice at 3:08 PM with the reading of the University Land Acknowledgment Statement. All Senators were on hand except Senators Blanthorne, Buxton, Eichacker, Kaskosz, Maier-Speredelozzi, McGough, Quashie, and Zozula.

Ex officio members and others in attendance included: President Parlange, Provost Wolfe, Vice Provost Bodah, Vice Provost Veeger,, Associate VP Libutti, Deans Larrat, Dennis, Hunter, Chen, Riebe, Marchese, Graney, Larsen and Rambur, Associate Dean Mouw, CIO Kaugars.

2. Disposition of Minutes of the Faculty Senate Meeting of January 26, 2023 - The minutes were approved via voice vote.

**3. REPORTS OF OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**a. Announcements - Senate President Rice**

i. Today's reception is sponsored by the College of Arts and Sciences - thank you Dean Riley!

b. Minutes of Executive Committee Meetings December 12 and 19, 2022 and January 23 and 30, 2023 - Vice President Nassersharif presented the minutes and there was a question about the FSEC's involvement in the referenced effort to update HR policies. President Rice explained that he is a member of this working group and their work is ongoing. No new policies relevant to faculty are ready yet for viewing.

**c. Election of Faculty Senate President and Vice President/President-Elect for the 2022-2023 Academic Year**

i. Report of the Nominating Committee -- Senator Welters presented the Committee's report which consisted of a single nominee for the Vice President/President-Elect position. The nominee was Senator Theodore Walls (CHS). There were no nominations from the floor. Senator Walls was elected unanimously.

d. Recommendation of the Executive Committee - President Rice

- i. By-Laws Amendment to Section 2.7 of Appendix C - President Rice presented the draft amendment which would allow Senators to serve two consecutive terms before being required to step away for a year. FSEC has recommended the move in an effort to lend more continuity to committees and to help in leadership development. The proposal requires two readings for approval and will be back on the agenda in March for a vote.

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

a. Announcements - Provost Wolfe on behalf of the President. Provost Wolfe's remarks included a recap of the President's State of the University event and of the Board of Trustees meeting on Feb. 16. These events placed emphasis on the budget and on-going efforts to advocate for more state support. "URI Day" at the state house is set for March 28 which is another opportunity to shine a light on the University's contributions and call for increased funding. Provost Wolfe noted the recent BOT meeting also highlighted the 10-year Strategic Plan and its key performance indicators. She also mentioned the pending stint of Congressman Langevin in the College of Arts and Sciences which is an exciting opportunity for students.

b. Status of Actions Forward to the President

- Bill #22-23-22B Curricular Report No. 2022-2023-4 from the Graduate Council, New Social Media Certificate. Approved by President Parlange on January 31, 2023.
- Bill #22-23-23B Curriculum and Standards Committee Report #2022-2023-05, Program Closure: BS in NonProfit Administration. Approved by President Parlange on January 31, 2023. Pending Approval by the URI Board of Trustees.
- Bill #22-23-23C Curriculum and Standards Committee Report #2022-2023-05, Program Closure: BS in Professional Leadership Studies. Approved by President Parlange on January 31, 2023. Pending Approval by the URI Board of Trustees.
- Bill #22-23-25 Constitution, By-Laws, and University Manual Committee, Report #2022-2023-12 (Amended), Correction of Language in University Manual Chapter 6, Section 6.12.11. Approved by President Parlange on February 9, 2023

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

a. Curricular Report No. 2022-2023-05, Appendices A-F, G from the Graduate Council to the Faculty Senate - Associate Dean Colleen Mouw presented the informational report which addressed several course changes. There were questions about the prerequisites for MCE 568 which were answered and the report was accepted. AD Mouw then presented the items for action which included five program changes, a program suspension, and one new ABM. The report came to the Senate moved and seconded by the Graduate Council and it was approved unanimously.

b. Curriculum and Standards Committee Report No. 2022-2023-06, Appendices A-I, J, & Report No. 2022-2023-06A, Appendix K - Chair Preisser presented his Committee's Report #6 which included several informational items not for

action. It also included 12 course changes for approval. A question was raised about one of these (BAI 476) which was pulled from the report to allow the Committee time to address the concern. The report also contained two new courses, 9 program changes, and an organizational change. Following some discussion, the report was approved unanimously (with the exception of the BAI 476 change).

Chair Preisser moved on to discuss Report 6A which addressed proposed changes to the PLA 100 course (Prior Learning Assessment Portfolio Development). This proposal was addressed independently as the Committee anticipated substantial debate. He clarified the proposal to note that the course was not intended to be offered for zero credits. He offered a friendly amendment to memorialize this in the proposal and the amendment was approved. Chair Preisser added that while his Committee initially thought it might be more appropriate to offer the course for an S/U grade rather than a standard letter grade, they were ultimately convinced that the letter grade is a better choice that might actually lead to more robust performance by students. It was further clarified that the class would only be repeatable in cases where no credit for a portfolio was awarded.

A number of questions followed, pertaining to: how to resolve potential disagreements between the staffers teaching the PLA course and the faculty members reviewing the portfolios, especially regarding grades; the lack of incentive for faculty to be involved since they are not getting credit for teaching the class for which they are evaluating the work; how the PLA 100 course will be maintained/revised over time when it is housed in UCAS which is a college without faculty and it has no curriculum committee; a lack of clarity around the budgetary impacts of the proposal - which touts the potential benefits given the number of Rhode Islanders who might avail themselves of this course, but fails to address the real costs given the demands on faculty time. Vice Provost Bodah explained that the proposal could move forward with the outstanding concerns about faculty workload and compensation, but if approved, some renegotiation with the AAUP may be required. The proponents of the proposal provided some background, noting that their review of peer institutions and of NECHE trend data indicates that this proposal is consistent with current best practices in this area. A motion was made and approved to extend the discussion time for this matter.

Provost Wolfe had several questions, primarily related to the budget and financial impacts of the proposal, especially related to the amount of tuition or fees being collected in exchange for PLA credits. She was also concerned about long-term maintenance of the course, given that it will reside in UCAS where there are not faculty members with expertise in assessment available to help with on-going course maintenance. AVP Libutti noted his support for the proposal, noting that it puts awarded credits in the hands of the faculty and seems to represent a model of best practices being used at similar institutions.

As debate on the matter had already exceeded the time allowed, there was a motion to table to the next meeting to allow the CASC time to address concerns raised today. The motion was approved via show of hands.

c. General Education Committee Report No. 2022-2023-06 - Committee member Koster presented the brief report on behalf of Chair Rarick. It was approved unanimously.

d. Constitution, By-Laws and University Manual Committee Reports 2022-2023-15 and 2022-2023-16 and Informational Report 2022-2023-17. Chair Echevarria first provided an update on CBUM matters from the January meeting. She explained that, although the Faculty Senate had authorized a referendum on amending Chapter 4 of the University Manual, the referendum will not be conducted. A referendum was determined to be necessary since the proposed changes would impact the General Faculty. Instead, however, the University President and Provost have announced an intention to change the way that General Faculty meetings occur and how that body conducts business. This marks a shift in campus culture that could be very positive. Chair Echevarria touted the administration's proposal as a welcomed change and encouraged all faculty to support it and help set the effort up for success. The two related CBUM reports dealing with Chapter 4 that were addressed at the January meeting are effectively rescinded in light of this new information.

CBUM Report #15 is a By-Laws amendment that requires two readings for approval. It essentially codifies the hybrid option for Faculty Senate meetings. It will be back on the March agenda for a vote.

Report #16 is an amendment to Chapter 8 of the University Manual dealing with Grades of Incomplete. Chair Echevarria thanked members of the other Senate Committees that assisted in this effort along with Registrar Jack Humphrey, various Assistant Deans and other staffers. The report sought to resolve incomplete grades via a clear process with specific deadlines. The new protocol encourages accountability from both faculty and students while being sensitive to a wide variety of unique circumstances that might arise. The report was approved unanimously.

Report #17 was Informational and required no action. It served as a reminder to faculty about excused absences for students per Chapter 8 of the University Manual.

e. Technology and Infrastructure Committee Report -- Senator Walls

i. CTI Recommendations for Access - Senator Walls offered a detailed presentation of his Committee's efforts to understand recent cybersecurity protocol roll-outs. The committee is attempting to assist IT Services in improving communication about the new policies, and is also making recommendations about possible modifications to the new

policies and their implementation schedules. In response to the threat of losing its cybersecurity insurance, IT Services made dramatic changes to the way it manages endpoint protection. As a result, many faculty members have lost their administrator privileges and all network access for some colleges and units is now managed by IT staff. The impact in some cases has been very detrimental to classroom and research endeavors around the university. Senator Walls and his Committee plan to remain engaged throughout implementation of these changes and will continue to make recommendations about improving messaging to the people most impacted and working more collaboratively in the departments and colleges to make sure faculty needs are met. He reminded the group that the new policies allow for exceptions which should be pursued as appropriate if current situations dictate. It is the Committee's position, however, that an absolute standard with individual carved-out exceptions is not the most effective approach. They will advocate for a "tiered" system of network access and endpoint control, based on training, software needs, device ownership and other factors. Senator Walls will be back at a future meeting to update the Senate on the Committee's efforts.

f. Service and Community Life Committee Report - Chair Martin

i. Proposed Resolution from Professors Marc Hutchison, Skip Mark, Karen Sweeting, and Cheryl Foster to offer a formal statement of solidarity and support to our fellow colleagues and associated communities in Florida. Cheryl Foster noted the news from Florida is extremely concerning and academic communities have been asked to draw attention to and raise concerns about the threats to free inquiry. Chair Martin praised the work of Dr. Foster and her colleagues and provided some background on the effort to draft the subject resolution. Some questions and comments were posed, primarily about additional ways to show support (for example, through professional associations). The resolution was unanimously approved by the Senate and President Rice explained that it will be forwarded to President Parlange for signature as well.

g. Calendar Committee Report -- Chair Kovoor presented a brief report calling for the official University calendar to reflect Commencement Weekend each year as extending from Friday through Sunday. Given the growth in programs and enrollments, graduation-related events must now be spread out over more days due to space and other limitations. The report was unanimously approved.

6. **PRESENTATION:** Honors Program Annual Report - Continued from January meeting - Presentation by Director deBruin.

The presentation was tabled to the March meeting due to time constraints with the assurance that the matter will definitely be taken up next time, as it has already been postponed once before.

**7. CALL for NEW BUSINESS:**

**8. ADJOURNMENT:**