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Faculty Senate Executive Committee Meeting

Minutes #23

November 20, 2014

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:10 AM on Thursday, November 20, 2014 in Library Conference Room A, Chairperson Nassersharif presiding. Senators Cerbo, Rollo Koster, Sullivan, and Welters were present. Senator Rarick was absent.

2. Minutes of FSEC Meeting #17, October 9, 2014 were approved.

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS/CORRESPONDENCE/REPORTS

a. The committee was reminded that the Provost and Vice Provost Beauvais would be joining the meeting at 9:00 AM. Agenda items were reviewed.

b. Senator Rollo Koster reported on the Health Collaborative Forum that had taken place on Nov. 18th. Faculty had voiced concern about the impact on individual college accreditation, the details regarding interdisciplinary collaborative work, medical science researchers in departments not included in the proposal, voting procedures, and faculty eligibility to vote.

c. Chairperson Nassersharif and Vice Chairperson Rollo Koster reported that they had met with the Provost and Vice Provost Beauvais on Nov. 17. They had discussed the issue of faculty voting eligibility relative to the health collaborative proposal. The Provost, and Vice Provost Katz who was asked to join the meeting, had discussed the retroactive summer salary. The Chair and Vice Chair were told that the source of the funds for these payments would be college and department overhead accounts. FSEC leadership had indicated that the source of the retroactive payments should be commensurate with the original disbursement of the overhead monies. Also discussed were the repeated requests for compensation for release time for the Senate Chair and Vice Chair.

4. The Provost and Vice Provost Beauvais joined the meeting at 9:10 AM. The following matters were discussed:

a. The Provost offered to arrange and host a meeting for the FSEC to meet Jim Purcell, the new Commissioner of Postsecondary Education. The FSEC gratefully accepted. The Provost said that his office would invite the Commissioner to the Kingston campus. The purpose of the meeting would be to acquaint the Commissioner with the University and how it differs from the other two state institutions and the role, mechanisms, and importance of shared governance at URI.

b. The FSEC and the Provost discussed the administrator evaluation process. Chairperson Nassersharif reported to the Provost that some faculty are asking for more information regarding survey results and asked if he would be amenable to distributing summaries of survey question data. The Provost expressed concern for the fact that the review is a personnel matter. He considered the possibility in the future of separating the faculty evaluation from the other evaluation aspects of the review for the purpose of reporting, although he acknowledged that the comprehensive review has the most information. Discussion ensued. The FSEC asked the Provost if he would be amenable to reporting back to administrators' constituencies by means of written statements rather than verbal reports. The Provost said that, in instances of a broad constituency (more than a single college faculty), he would consider a written report, although he cautioned that public written personnel reviews could be problematical in many ways.

Chairperson Nassersharif said that the President's letter summarizing the review of the Provost had set a good example for a written response.

c. Chairperson Nassersharif asked the Provost about the decision to procure retroactive summer salary payments from department overhead monies. The Chair indicated that Principal Investigators are disadvantaged by this formula. The Provost said that he had not been part of that analysis or decision. The Chair understood that the Council for Research had not been consulted and he wondered who had made the decision. The Provost said that he would look into the matter. The Chair asked that a policy be established to address similar situations in the future.

Chairperson Nassersharif reported to the Provost that budget transfers for course release funds for the Senate Chair and Vice Chair had still not been made. The Provost said he would follow up on that matter.

d. The FSEC and the Provost discussed the forum on the health collaborative proposal that had been held previously in the week. The Provost and Vice Provost Beauvais, co-chair of the phase II health committee and moderator of the forum, said that they considered the event to have been very positive. The presentation of information and questions from those in attendance had helped to dispel misconceptions and clarify the structure of the proposed collaboration. The phase II health committee comprised a panel at the forum and, individually, committee members had answered questions. The Provost and Vice Provost Beauvais thought the format had been very effective. Vice Provost Beauvais said that the phase II health committee would meet to consider changes to the proposal based on the feedback. Vice Chairperson Rollo Koster told the Provost that some faculty hoped there would be a second forum. Discussion continued about the process for making institutional-level changes and the shared responsibility of engaging with colleagues for the welfare of the institution.

The FSEC discussed the issue of faculty voting eligibility that had been raised at the forum. The FSEC understood the University Manual to state that continuing (tenure track) faculty only may vote on matters requiring Faculty Senate approval. The Provost said that some Manual sections are outdated. He considers the manner in which faculty are hired as the determinant of their eligibility to vote on Senate matters. He believes that clinical professors, research professors, and lecturers should be afforded voting privileges on this matter if they have had voting rights in their units on past academic matters. Chairperson Nassersharif said that he would present the subject to the Senate in a forum at an upcoming Senate meeting.

e. The Provost asked if the Undergraduate Academic Advising Committee had been meeting. The Student Senate leadership had reported to him that they had not received notification of meeting times. Ms. Neff said that she would follow up on that matter.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Neff