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FSEC Minutes April 7, 2014

University of Rhode Island Faculty Senate

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Faculty Senate Executive Committee Meeting

Minutes #34

April 7, 2014

The meeting was convened at 11:00AM on April 7, 2014 in the President's Conference Room, Green Hall. Present: President Dooley, Chairperson Byrd, Vice Chairperson Rice, Senators Brady, Cerbo, Rice, and Nassersharif.

The following matters were discussed:

1. The FSEC discussed with the President the proposed changes to the University Manual describing the new administrator evaluation process. The President was reminded that the two-year pilot process would be complete at the end of the 2013-14 academic year and that changes were scheduled to be brought to the next Senate meeting for approval. The proposed changes included faculty evaluation of all Vice Presidents and Associate Vice Presidents. The President indicated that he would talk with the Vice Presidents about this request, but he had concerns in part because many faculty are not in a position to give an informed opinion of the performance of a Vice President other than the Provost. He said that the other Vice Presidents touch faculty interests in a peripheral way. He said that the Associate Vice President for Community, Equity, and Diversity occupies a slightly different position than the Vice Presidents but he would like to discuss it with his team before replying. The President was open to the possibility of creating another avenue through which faculty could be invited to give input if faculty had concerns about the Vice Presidents. Senator Nassersharif indicated that the rationale for including the Vice President for Administration and Finance was because that office makes decisions that impact faculty through its many interconnection points: hiring practices (HRA), business practices (Budget Office), purchasing and payroll (Controller's Office), classroom conditions, and campus traffic and parking issues. The President indicated that he would have a final reply by the end of the week.

Regarding Section 10.90.12, the President requested that the Committee consider removing the word "anonymously" from the proposed language. Discussion then ensued about the differences between anonymity and confidentiality, and academic freedom (as defined by the AAUP). The President indicated that a thoughtful critique of an administrator's ability to perform his/her job is useful and can drive change but that mean spirited comments protected by anonymity are not useful. The Committee responded that participation increases when anonymity is assured.

2. The President was asked if a decision had been made by the Board of Education regarding the possibility of reporting Senate evaluation findings of the President, in 2015, directly to the Board. He said that he would be speaking with the Board Chair on that subject before the end of the week. The President reiterated that he considered the Board involvement as a best practice.

3. Chairperson Byrd asked the President how work was being managed in the Office of Research and Economic Development in the absence of the Vice President. He responded that important issues were moving forward through the efforts of the staff but that some consideration was being given to hiring some short-term expertise.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Neff