

2014

## Report of the Nominating Committee May 8, 2014

University of Rhode Island Faculty Senate

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REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE  
MAY 8, 2014

NOMINATIONS FOR OFFICERS  
2014-2015 FACULTY SENATE  
(see biographies below)

**SENATE VICE CHAIRPERSON (vote for one):**

*Joëlle Rollo-Koster, Professor of Medieval History, College of Arts and Sciences*

*W. Michael Sullivan, Professor, Dept. of Plant Sciences and Entomology, College of Environment and Life Sciences*

**TWO 2-YEAR TERMS (vote for two):**

*Arthur Mead, Professor, Dept. of Economics, College of Arts and Sciences*

*Damon Rarick, Associate Professor, Dept. of Languages, College of Arts and Sciences*

**ONE 1-YEAR TERM (vote for one):**

*Linda Welters, Professor, Dept. of Textiles, Fashion Merchandising and Design, College of Human Science and Services*

OFFICERS AND RETURNING MEMBERS  
OF THE 2014-2015 FACULTY SENATE

**SENATE CHAIRPERSON:**

*Bahram Nassersharif, Distinguished University Professor, Mechanical, Industrial, and Systems Engineering, College of Engineering*

**CONTINUING MEMBER (2nd year of a two year term):**

*Michael Cerbo, Assistant Professor Librarian, University Libraries*

Respectfully submitted,

David Byrd, School of Education  
Nedra Reynolds, Writing and Rhetoric  
Michael Rice, Fisheries, Animal, & Veterinary Science



Joëlle Rollo Koster  
Professor of Medieval History

I am currently a Professor of Medieval History. I joined URI in 1996 and followed the traditional *cursus honorum* from Assistant to Full Professor teaching, researching, and serving my department and the university at large. I have served on many committees and was chair of my department between 2011-2013, hence I am familiar with the running of the “big machine.” I have been able to be on both sides of URI, as a professor and as a parent. My two daughters graduated from URI. By now I have taught thousands of students in mostly General Education classes and can claim to have extensive experience with Gen Eds courses and students. In addition to sharing my passion for the Middle Ages with my students, my teaching goals have been to educate their minds, giving them ample opportunities to hone their critical thinking skills in reading, writing, and oral communication. I have also spent close to 30 years researching archives (especially the Vatican) and produced several books and scores of articles. At this point in time I feel that there are many misunderstandings among the faculty and the broader community regarding what teaching and researching the humanities entails. This is one of the reasons why I think that my experience would be an asset to the Senate. I am a big fan of efficient, constructive dialogue. I have no claim or interest in an “administrative” career but I am willing to serve during what I consider a crucial moment of our university’s history.



W. Michael Sullivan  
Professor of Plant Sciences

I am a tenured Professor with over 30 years of extensive University and public service experience. I have academic skills and accomplishments and a lengthy successful management record in both academic and government entities. I was Chair of the Department of Plant Sciences from 1997-2001 during a time of rapid enrollment increase and a diversification of the Department's programs. Along with others I was at the foundation of the efforts which lead to the bond referendum and the construction of the Center for Biotechnology and Life Sciences. Professor Pat Logan and I made the first presentations of this proposal to the then Board of Governors, then Governor Almond, Treasurer Tavares and others which set the project in motion. During the last Governor's administration I was honored to be named to be Director of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management. I will be forever grateful for the opportunity and the confidence shown my leadership and efforts and remain grateful to former President Carothers who granted the leave so I might serve. In addition to these positions I was a founding Director of the Portuguese American Scholarship Foundation which has raised over \$2M dollars in 20 years to provide financial assistance and mentoring to students of Portuguese decent. I served 12 years on the Board of Trustee's for the Rocky Hill School in Warwick, RI including 4 as Board President and continue to serve on the Board of Border's Farm Preservation, Inc a 501C3 that holds title and responsibility for over 200 acres and all programs for this historic property in Foster, RI. I served for a number of years as a University College Advisor, still teach a section of URI 101, have responsibility for our Departmental Internship program along with other undergraduate and graduate teaching/mentoring responsibilities. The programs and methods of teaching are changing and will continue to change as technology and disciplines evolve but I am immensely proud and remain committed to the Land Grant mission of the University where we are charged and challenged to make a difference in our students and our citizen's lives. It is a noble cause that I live for each day.

I am a strong believer in participatory governance and this is evidenced by my having served on the Richmond Town Council or 14 years, the RI State Senate for 4 years and as Director of DEM for 6 years. This blend of academic and government service is unique and I think has value at this time. We have concerns with legislative changes made and proposed to the University governance structures in the State. I believe my experiences will provide some added value to the Faculty Senate. I think FacSen should be at the table in current discussions and future planning currently occurring. We have embarked on a path of new General Educational requirements. These will require a vigilance and heightened awareness to measure success and compliance with intent. It is essential to have a commitment to human development and community service and believe I have demonstrated this throughout my career. My proven senior-level experience in executive decision-making, policy direction, strategic business planning, Congressional relations, financial and personnel management, research and development, and educational accomplishment would be committed to the needs of the Faculty Senate and our community of students if I am honored to be elected.



Art Mead  
Professor  
Department of Economics

I arrived with the Tall Ships in 1976 and in recent years I entered the “service” phase of my professional life. I jumped in because this is a tumultuous time in higher education where external forces – demographic, technological, economic, and political – are transforming public higher education and faculty need to have a strong voice in shaping a response to these threats and opportunities. Furthermore, while there will be changes that affect all three of the legs of the stool, most of those changes will happen on the teaching leg, which is where my energies have been focused. This is why I joined the online teaching committee, the Gen Ed committee, and Faculty Senate. In recent years I have taught introductory economics classes to 400+ students, successfully enough to receive the Teaching Excellence Award. My focus will be to shepherd the Gen Ed reform through to completion so that URI will emerge with a program that better serves both students and faculty.

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As we work together as an academic community to implement our newly adopted undergraduate general education program, there will be many opportunities to strengthen our instructional framework while rethinking our roles, practices and objectives to go beyond ‘business as usual.’ Bringing together often vastly different points of view on this and other critical issues to craft new policies and forge meaningful collaborations is a vital role of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, and I would welcome the chance to contribute my insight, experience, and (gulp) humor in finding creative ways to enhance our University’s learning environment. I have served on a number of Faculty Senate committees and subcommittees, including the Learning Outcomes Oversight Committee (LOOC), the Library Subcommittee on the 2020 URI Library, and the Subcommittee on the Assessment of General Education (SAGE), and was honored to receive the URI Foundation Excellence in Teaching Award in 2007. I also served on both the Steering Committee and the Executive Council of my national professional organization, the American Association of Teachers of German (AATG; 5,800 members), and served on or chaired a number of executive committees, including the Finance, Professional Development, Publications, and Research and Scholarship Committees. In Rhode Island, I served as president of the URI chapter of *Phi Beta Kappa* and the Rhode Island AATG, as executive committee member of the Rhode Island Foreign Language Association, and as a representative to the Brown University Community Council.



Damon Rarick  
Associate Professor  
of German



Linda Welters  
Professor and Co-Chair  
Textiles, Fashion Merchandising and Design

I joined URI in a tenure-track position in 1981. Since then, I have served as department chair for 18 years and co-chair for 2 years. I have been Director of TMD's graduate program since 1989. My current term as Faculty Senator is my third. I also have many years of UC advising under my belt, plus two terms on the Council for Research. I was on the Academic Summit Committee for 2014. I co-chaired URI's Council for Humanities in its formative years, and was on the Board of Rhode Island's Council for Humanities for two terms. I am active in two professional organizations, having served for eight years as editor-in-chief of the scholarly journal for one of them. I am an active researcher and winner of URI Foundation's Scholarly Excellence Award. I am committed to the research and teaching components of university life, but also am very aware of the importance of outreach to the communities that URI serves. I am especially interested in the successful launch of the new Gen Ed program, including the incorporation of arts and humanities courses into the offerings.