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**Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC)
Meeting #37 February 16, 2021, 9:30-10:30am
FSEC with Provost and Vice Provost, 11:00-12:00
Via Zoom**

MINUTES

1. President Echevarria called the Zoom meeting to order at 9:31 a.m. Vice President Cardany, Senators Barbour, Hicks, Morokoff, and Welters were present.
2. **ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPDATES:**
 - a. President Echevarria explained that she will be working with the Faculty Senate specialist in obtaining the data from the Office of Instructional Research to begin the College apportionment process for elections of faculty senators.
 - b. President Echevarria found broken and incorrect links in Faculty Senate documents, archives, and the website. She believes Faculty Senate student Wightman may be able to help correct errors and might also have suggestions and ideas for the website.
 - c. President Echevarria asked for a Nominating committee update. Senator Morokoff explained that Laura Meyerson and Michael Rice are the nominees for Vice President/President Elect. Senator Barbour suggested that having both biographies displayed on one page at the Senate meeting would be preferable, while the full longer biographies will be linked to the agenda. The President mentioned that the listserv system was down and the agenda would be going out via other means.
 - d. President Echevarria explained she had reached out to Senator Izenstark regarding HELIN. Senator Izenstark recommended colleagues that could be contacted. President Echevarria hopes to meet with them soon.
 - e. President Echevarria updated the Committee on the meeting with President Dooley.
 - i. President Dooley expressed having Provost DeHayes stay in his position for six months after the new president's appointment would be an ideal situation.

- ii. Commencement is being discussed by the Commencement Committee. The hope is for a scaled down in-person ceremony. The details are still under discussion.
- iii. The Graduate School dean search is under review. The search may be a national search rather than an internal search.
President Echevarria informed President Dooley that the review of University Manual language regarding the Graduate School is ongoing. She and Vice President Cardany will keep in close contact with the President and Provost on the revisions.
- iv. The issue of diversity in the academic calendar, particularly adding Juneteenth, was discussed. As the calendar is state approved, URI cannot add Juneteenth as a day off. President Dooley is supportive of going to the State Legislature with this issue. A recommendation was made to contact Kelly Mahoney and the URI Board of Trustees, who could assist with understanding and navigating processes within the State legislature.
- v. President Echevarria relayed that if the new federal stimulus package is approved, President Dooley hopes URI may receive additional funding from the State.
- f. President Echevarria discussed the meeting with the Faculty Senate Committee chairs regarding the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) charges given to the standing committees. The Competitive Grants Subcommittee added a line to their application encouraging work in DEI. President Echevarria announced that she will be meeting with Senator Mead, Chair of the General Education Subcommittee, to discuss the identification of exemplary courses in further detail. The goal is to identify general education beyond those approved with the C3, Diversity and Inclusion outcome.

3. MINUTES:

- a. The minutes from the FSEC Meeting #29, December 9, 2020, FSEC Meeting #30, December 16, 2020, and FSEC Meeting #31, December 23, 2020, and FSEC Meeting #36, February 9, 2021 were approved as revised.

4. DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- a. President Echevarria discussed data she received from Sr. Associate Director Humphrey from Enrollment Services. The number of students on the dean's list for fall 2020 (7,254) was an increase from the previous spring 2020 semester (7,206). The ability to graduate with honors was discussed including the effects of the extended parameters for second grade option. Director Humphrey pointed out the other issues such as transfer credits, students on conditional status, and overlapping dean's list qualifications could also affect graduation and academic honors.
- b. The FSEC discussed the proposed University Manual changes related to SAC (SEDA) and upcoming February 23, 2021 conversation with Vice President Rider. The proposed paragraph 5.41.11 contained a typo; the word "shall," was removed. The FSEC inquired if both a representative from the Office of Enrollment Services and the Vice Provost for Enrollment Services were necessary. The size of the committee and a clarification of the academic planning were discussed.
- c. President Echevarria presented the information received by the Research and Creative Activities, Centers Subcommittee. The subcommittee is proposing changes to the University Manual involving the sections on Centers. The FSEC discussed the readiness of the revised language being presented to the Faculty Senate at the February 18th meeting. Senator Hicks verified that the Constitution, By-Laws, and University Manual was requested to review the language only. The Executive Committee discussed the level of involvement of the President, Provost and URI Board of Trustees in the Center approval process. The Research and Creative Activities Committee, Center Subcommittee would

like to simplify the definition and process for temporary centers, determine the role of the research office, and set a consistent process for the creation and review of Centers. Senator Roman, Chair of the Research and Activities Committee, will present an overview report at the February Faculty Senate meeting with the University Manual language being presented at the March or April Senate meeting.

- d. The Graduate School and pending issues were forwarded to the February 23rd FSEC meeting.

The FSEC meeting adjourned at 10:35 a.m. to be reconvened at 11:00 a.m.

11:00am-12:00pm: FSEC meeting with Provost DeHayes and Vice Provost Veeger

1.
 - a. President Echevarria asked Provost DeHayes and Vice Provost Veeger for an update on the RI Open Textbook initiative. A survey was sent to URI faculty members several years ago inquiring about their familiarity with open education reduced cost textbooks, as part of the Governor's OER initiative. Faculty members will receive another survey in the spring semester. President Echevarria pointed out that some of the costs for required technology fees can be as expensive as textbooks. Provost DeHayes mentioned that a Davis Grant had been available for faculty to adopt open or reduced cost resources for their courses, however that grant has been expended. Vice Provost Veeger explained that the RI Open Textbook Initiative has a very narrow scope (openly-licensed textbooks) and is considering a URI survey that could capture additional information regarding reduced and no cost educational resources adopted by faculty; Provost DeHayes suggested that the initiative should be called "affordable course materials."
 - b. President Echevarria inquired about the status of the honorary degrees that has been awarded to Michael Flynn and Rudy Giuliani. The Provost assured the FSEC that the Honorary Degree Committee had met and conducted thorough and thoughtful due diligence on the matter. A confidential report from the Honorary Committee has been delivered to the President.

2. President Echevarria discussed the changes to the faculty senate committee structure. She inquired if the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) should be revisited between Provost and Faculty Senate due to these changes. Alternative methods of affording workload adjustment for Faculty Senate Committee work were discussed. Provost DeHayes was in support of reviewing the MOU; he expressed his willingness to share information with the college deans. He proposed a meeting with the Vice Provost, Faculty Senate President and Vice President to discuss the appropriate wording and details for the MOUs.

President Echevarria suggested that perhaps a mechanism should be in place for full- or half-day meetings of the Curriculum and Standards and General Education Committees for summer work, allowing curriculum issues to be dealt with year round. Provost DeHayes agreed supports the need for year round curriculum approval so that the institution can be agile and responsive to opportunities that may emerge throughout the year.

3. President Echevarria inquired about the future of University College for Academic Success (UCAS) and Advancement for Teaching and Learning (ATL). Provost DeHayes stated that he has begun an open process for reviewing the important work and structure of UCAS. He recently met with the UCAS staff to receive their input and views on what works well and what needs improvement. UCAS serves a critical role in our student success efforts and the overall improvement in retention, graduation rate, student support, and career and internship interests of students. The review underway includes a two-part strategy. The first entails hearing directly from staff on their thoughts. That process is well underway. The second step would be to form a Steering Committee, which will include faculty. The steering committee would discuss their perspectives of what is working and not working, make recommendations on the structure of UCAS, determine how to move forward. Provost DeHayes believes UCAS should continue to reside in academic affairs as it aligns and resonates with the academic core mission of the university. Special Assistant to the Provost for Academic Planning Morrissey is working with Provost DeHayes on the process.

President Echevarria expressed concerns of overlap with ATL. Provost DeHayes explained that ATL is faculty centric and supports faculty, and UCAS supports students. He acknowledges that while there is some overlap they are two entities with two different target users; however, we certainly could consider mechanisms to ensure coordination and communication..

4. President Echevarria inquired about the Graduate School dean search process. Provost DeHayes stated that an open search will begin shortly and we are in the process of finalizing search committee membership. Dean Anthony Rolle has agreed to Chair the search committee.

President Echevarria informed Provost DeHayes the FSEC will continue working on revisions to the Graduate School portion of the University Manual. Provost DeHayes noted some aspects of the University Manual relative to the Graduate School should be updated and urged that the senate and the graduate school work together to ensure our policies and practices are contemporary for 21st century research university.

5. Given the emergence and increasing availability of efficacious vaccines, Provost DeHayes strongly encourages re-establishing the URI campuses as the centerpiece of learning, academic scholarship, and community spirit for students, faculty and staff. He also stressed that health and safety remain paramount and we will certainly ensure our future plans will align with CDC and RI DOH guidelines that may emerge in the future. President Echevarria mentioned that she had been contacted by faculty, some prefer in-person teaching, others preferring online teaching, and all were concerned about health. Vice Provost Veeger commented that programs should look at the modality of teaching and verify if any barriers exist for students and the program overall. Provost DeHayes has also met with AAUP Executive Director Walsh and AAUP President to discuss plans for fall 2021 and vaccinations for faculty and staff before the fall semester begins.
6. President Echevarria asked about the next steps for Diversity Strategic Planning and the Academic Plan. Provost DeHayes noted that the Anti-Black Racism at URI: An Academic Affairs Action Agenda for Change has received very good and helpful input from many

faculty and is being updated to incorporate information that emerged from facilitated discussions at the recent Academic Summit. In addition, each college is working on a college diversity plan and is asked to report annually on progress related specifically to DEI progress. He explained that academic affairs is working with Associate Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer Almandrez and the Office of Community, Equity, and Diversity (CED). The Academic Affairs Diversity Task Force was created in order to encourage and welcome faculty input and involvement in promoting diversity and anti-racism initiatives pertinent to the academic core mission. The Task Force has been a very effective body for promoting academic issues in support of diversity. Provost DeHayes welcomes the collaboration of the CED, and the Faculty Senate as well as the colleges --- all who have contributed good ideas and suggestions. He stressed the importance of moving forward quickly. The updated Agenda for Change is expected to roll out shortly.

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.