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FSEC Minutes November 14, 2022

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Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC)

November 14, 2022

8:30 - 10:30 AM

MINUTES

**In person - Pastore Conference Room RM224
(remote option via ZOOM)**

1. Call to order - President Rice called the meeting to order at 8:35 AM. Senators Maier Speredelozzi, Echevarria, Forrester, and Gindy were present.
2. Guest (9 AM): Dean Christopher Hunter, UCAS; discussion topics to include potential creation of a UCAS curriculum committee and Prior Learning Assessments.

Dean Hunter provided some background on UCAS in terms of how it was created and the vision for its future. He noted his prior experience with UCAS was predominantly related to advising but there is a lot more that UCAS does in that they teach some courses and are involved in experiential education, internships and career planning, and they house the Transfer Resource Center. A proposal was recently advanced that called for the creation of a curriculum committee for UCAS but FSEC members noted that UCAS has no faculty of its own. Members expressed concern about curriculum being developed by any parties other than faculty members. Dr. Hunter noted that UCAS is currently in a position of randomly recruiting faculty members to sponsor their proposals and the idea behind the recent initiative was to formalize a process across colleges. Following considerable discussion, the FSEC thought it might be time for UCAS, under new leadership, to take a step back and more fully consider its future. Nationally, universities are doing some innovative things to create a more meaningful first year experience for students. There was a task force formed some years ago when the URI 101 program launched and it was suggested that it might be time for a new task force. Dr. Hunter agreed to pass along the original report that led to the creation of URI 101. FSEC members observed that while some colleges have their own course codes for things like internships, not all colleges do and some standardization might be called for. This is another component that should be considered as UCAS imagines its future. This

was seen as further rationale for a re-imagining of UCAS. Dr. Hunter was asked to have his team consider an alternative where, instead of having their own curriculum committee, their programs and services get built into all the other colleges' processes, perhaps via a cross-listing system.

There was a brief discussion about the Prior Learning Assessment process and the need for faculty involvement and some standardization. A meeting is being set up with the new PLA Coordinator who is a UCAS staffer. Some concerns expressed by faculty members included the amount of time that is required to do a thorough assessment; the maximum number of credits that can be awarded through PLA is 30 and that seems excessive; credit acceptance is especially problematic in programs that are accredited. Dr. Hunter will work with FSEC and the Curriculum committees going forward.

3. Announcements

- a. The Tuesday November 8 Election has yielded results that are favorable to URI with the Question 1 \$100 Million Bond issue for Narragansett Bay Campus infrastructure passing with >57% of the electorate approving.
- b. There was a November meeting among Provost Beauvais, Vice Provost Veeger, President Rice & VP Nassersharif. Major topics were: a) Shared governance, including Provost Office direct *ex officio* participation in curriculum-centric committees; b) Policy for in-person exams for online courses; and c) Pilot programs for synchronous summer online courses.
- c. The Joint Committee on Online and Distance Learning has been formed with meetings to be called by Chairperson Kathleen Torrens.
- d. Pres. Rice attended the Nov 10 farewell reception for US Rep. Jim Langevin who has been a staunch supporter of URI.
- e. On the Mondays Nov 21 and Nov 28, Sen. President Rice will be away, so the FSEC meetings will be presided over by VP Nassersharif.

4. Approval of Minutes

- a. FSEC minutes of October 31 and November 7, 2022. The November 7 minutes were approved unanimously. The October 31 minutes were tabled to 11/21.

5. Old Business

- a. Student Senate Resolution on Attendance Policy - Faculty have two specific concerns about the Resolution: 1) It is inconsistent with Health Services policies and has the potential to overburden those resources; and 2) A universal attendance policy would contradict the right of individual faculty members to set their own attendance expectations. FSEC members agreed it is important for faculty to honor their attendance policies and students should be encouraged to pursue complaints within relevant Departments and Colleges. FS President Rice will draft a response to the Student Senate.
- b. Formation of *ad hoc* cross-committee task force group to work with OTL on the issue of Assessing Learning Outcomes; possible future reconfiguration of LOOC & APRC. Senators Forrester and Maier Sperdelozzi will participate. The LOOC as currently configured expects to offer a report to the Senate in December.
- c. President Parlange's continuing recommendation to review existing courses across campus for enrollment numbers and possible sunseting of under-enrolled courses or less frequency of course offerings w/ goal to free-up faculty time for increased engagement in research and creative activities. The FSEC agreed unanimously that it is not the job of the Faculty Senate to consider the teaching workload in colleges and departments. Further the Faculty Senate cannot and should not examine filled seat numbers as part of a resource assessment aimed at manipulating teaching assignments. The FS President and Vice President have a meeting with the University President coming up on 11/18 and they will suggest that his assertions about a need to justify lightly enrolled classes should be taken to the Council of Deans rather than to the Faculty Senate. FSEC members hope that a more nuanced approach is ultimately pursued since there are certainly situations when smaller classes are important to accomplishing the University's overall strategic goals.

6. Discussion Items

- a. Updates on Manual Revisions & Policy Development - continued from 11/07/22
 - i. 'Legal status' of APC policies. APC policies are confirmed to be valid and in full force and effect at the time of their publication. They are, however, like the University Manual, dynamic and can be revised or updated as needed. The CBUM is of the strong opinion that a couple of the recently promulgated policies are not purely administrative policies and should not have been adopted and published under the auspices of the APC. The legal team has apprised the CBUM Chair that where faculty find that a policy has academic implications, they should suggest amendments. FSEC members agreed on the following: more precise and complete definitions of "academic" versus "administrative" are needed; faculty do not have access to a team of lawyers to help draft policies and policy revisions which puts them at a disadvantage in responding to APC actions; and the APC should really not be considering policies without appropriate faculty stakeholders or representatives in the room. FS President Rice suggested that in his next meeting with the University President, he would like to gain a baseline agreement that most policies generated are both academic and administrative, which means the faculty must be more involved in their creation. It also means that the APC repository is inaccurately named and misleading as a result. Revisions to Appendix G as well as the policy webpage will likely be necessary if this issue is to be successfully resolved.
- b. Setting agenda for November 17 Senate Meeting - The agenda was reviewed and determined to be ready for posting pending a couple of attachments. The importance of speakers honoring the indicated time limitations was emphasized if the Senate is to complete all docketed business, including making a decision on future FS meeting modality.
- c. Advance planning - Fall FSEC agendas:

- Transition plan for Joanne Lawrence 's retirement
- Other Administrators for visits?

7. Call for New Business - None.

8. Adjournment - The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 AM.