

10-4-1979

Report of the Ad Hoc Committee to Review University Regulations and Make Recommendations Regarding Petitions

University of Rhode Island Faculty Senate

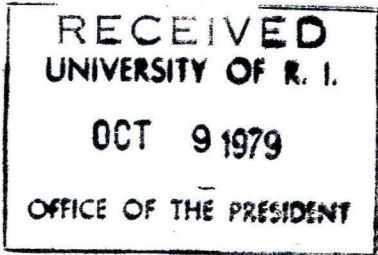
Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/facsen_bills

Recommended Citation

University of Rhode Island Faculty Senate, "Report of the Ad Hoc Committee to Review University Regulations and Make Recommendations Regarding Petitions" (1979). *Faculty Senate Bills*. Paper 648. https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/facsen_bills/648

This Legislation is brought to you by the University of Rhode Island. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Senate Bills by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@URI. For more information, please contact digitalcommons-group@uri.edu. For permission to reuse copyrighted content, contact the author directly.

UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND
Kingston, Rhode Island



FACULTY SENATE
BILL

Adopted by the Faculty Senate

TO: President Frank Newman
FROM: Chairperson of the Faculty Senate

1. The attached BILL, titled Report of the Ad Hoc Committee to Review University Regulations and Make Recommendations Regarding Petitions

_____ is forwarded for your consideration.

2. The original and two copies for your use are included.
3. This BILL was adopted by vote of the Faculty Senate on October 4, 1979 (date).
4. After considering this bill, will you please indicate your approval or disapproval. Return the original or forward it to the Board of Regents, completing the appropriate endorsement below.
5. In accordance with Section 8, paragraph 2 of the Senate's By-Laws, this bill will become effective on October 25, 1979 (date), three weeks after Senate approval, unless: (1) specific dates for implementation are written into the bill; (2) you return it disapproved; (3) you forward it to the Board of Regents for their approval; or (4) the University Faculty petitions for a referendum. If the bill is forwarded to the Board of Regents, it will not become effective until approved by the Board.

October 5, 1979
(date)

Alvin K. Swonger
Alvin K. Swonger
Chairperson of the Faculty Senate

ENDORSEMENT

TO: Chairperson of the Faculty Senate
FROM: President of the University

1. Returned.
2. a. Approved ✓.
b. Approved subject to final approval by Board of Regents _____.
c. Disapproved _____.

10/18/79
(date)

F. Newman
President

REPORT

Ad Hoc Committee to Review University Regulations and Make Recommendations Regarding Petitions

Procedure

The Committee obtained information and suggestions by interviews and communications with college and university administrators, student representatives, Faculty Senate committee reports, and solicitation to the faculty at large.

Findings

The several colleges differ widely in their ways of handling students' requests for exceptions to academic rules and requirements established either by the respective colleges or by the General Faculty. These differences reflect in part variations among the colleges in size, faculty-student ratios, advising practices, the presence or absence of professional accreditation requirements, students' latitudes in selecting courses, and other factors. Petition-processing and its attendant decision-making range from elected standing committees that receive formally written requests, to simple informal talks between a dean and a student. Among both students and faculty there appears to prevail generally a lack of knowledge about how requests for exceptions are presented and processed.

The Committee became aware of quite strong sentiments among the colleges that petitions, whether for waiver of college rules or of university rules, should continue to be handled at the college level. While these sentiments might spring from a natural desire among respective collegians to maximize their autonomy, the reasons given for them to the Committee seem compelling:

- (a) The academic and personal circumstances attending a particular student's waiver request can be meaningfully known at a level no higher than that of the student's college.
- (b) Because waiver requests occur within the colleges' respective contexts, decisions by persons not well-acquainted with these contexts may tend to be inappropriate in terms of students' long-run best interests.

As to the quantity and kinds of petitioning: In neither numbers nor in proportions of students involved is petitioning a big business at URI. During the period 1 September 1977 through 31 August 1978, some 900 petitions were processed by the colleges, amounting overall to about 9.6 percent of the students enrolled in those colleges. However, relatively heavy petitioning in University College, probably reflecting its unique mission, distorts somewhat the general picture. University College's petitioning percentage was about 14; the percentage in the other seven colleges taken together was 5.4.

Within these seven, about 20 percent of the petitions related to the general education requirements, 66 percent to wholly college matters, and the remaining 14 percent to readmissions and dismissals, credits required for graduation, residency and miscellaneous. Within University College, 46 percent concerned dismissal appeals, 23 percent were readmission appeals, and 31 percent concerned post-deadline dropping of courses.

Recommendations

Our four legislative proposals are, by design, interrelated. Properly enforced, they would mean that waiver of any University Manual regulations pertaining to individual students could be achieved only by written petitions processed in the colleges by established and announced procedures, and be subjected to periodic scrutiny by the Faculty Senate.

1. The Committee assumes that the rules and requirements created by the General Faculty and published in the University Manual are of such moment that their waiver ought not to be done casually, and surely not done at all except through procedures which accord with faculty intentions and wishes. Such procedures, moreover, ought to be made known to interested members of the university community. While the Committee believes that these principles are, in fact, generally observed, legislation is needed to assure compliance where they are not. Therefore:

XX.XX.XA Every undergraduate college shall establish and publish procedures for dealing with student requests for exceptions to courses of study or to other degree requirements or academic rules prescribed by that college or by the General Faculty.

2. A college should be free to arrange whatever petition-handling process--formal or informal, routine or ad hoc, oral or written--it deems best suited to its own circumstances. However, petitions seeking waivers of University Manual regulations should at the least be matters of record.

Therefore:

XX.XX.XB Undergraduate students seeking exceptions to any University rule pertaining to their academic circumstances, including degree requirements and courses of study, shall do so by written petitions submitted to the students' respective deans. Copies of all such petitions shall be preserved by the respective deans for not less than two years.

3. About 200 petitions were reported to us which involved the drop-add rule (all in University College), but none concerning deletions of entries on transcripts, courses taken by students while they were in dismissed status and the like. It has been said that "various academic deans"... "frequently" on their own waive manual provisions on these kinds of matters. While information we have neither refutes nor supports this allegation, the Committee feels that in the interest of assuring integrity of the manual provisions, no rule waivers of these provisions should be made except through petitions of record. Therefore:

XX.XX.XC No waiver of any college or university rule or requirement pertaining to an individual undergraduate student's academic circumstances may be granted except in conformity with XX.XX.A and XX.XX.B.

4. Our final recommendation takes cognizance of the concern expressed in some quarters that colleges or their administrators sometimes, on behalf of their students, flout academic rules established by the General Faculty. Our information suggests that this is rarely, if ever, done, but since we very likely were not informed of every action taken with respect to every waiver-seeking student in the year we surveyed, there could have been flouting in numbers sufficient to cause concern. Whatever the facts actually are, we see our last recommendation as precautionary rather than remedial.

Some months ago the Faculty Senate considered a proposal to set up a standing Senate committee to receive and act on all petitions asking waivers of manual regulations. For reasons given earlier, we do not support this proposal, but we are sensitive to its intent that means be found to protect the General Faculty's rules against undermining--however well-intentioned--by the colleges. At the same time, we feel that petitions should be considered and decided in the colleges. One way to reconcile partially this paradox is to require that the colleges periodically show their hands to a senate committee. Therefore:

ADDENDUM TO REPORT OF AD HOC COMMITTEE ON BUDGET PROCESS

July 2, 1979

- I. Add the following new sections 10.80.10 through 10.80.13 to the University Manual:

10.80.10 Budget Process. The Vice President for Business and Finance shall publish and make available to all faculty a calendar showing key dates for the annual budget process which affect all faculty, department heads and deans. Dates of meetings of the Budget Advisory Committee (see 5.34.10 - 5.34.14) shall be included on the calendar.

10.80.11 Department chairpersons shall actively solicit faculty participation in the budget process of the department.

10.80.12 Each individual department or unit shall establish a small budget task force to assist the department or unit in analyzing needs and projected requirements. The task force shall also make recommendations to the chairperson on priorities regarding budgetary needs as well as in the allocation of funds in the existing budget.

10.80.13 The Vice President for Business and Finance shall make available in the University Library five copies of the budget request as submitted to the Board of Regents when finalized for a given fiscal year.

- II. Replace the present sections 5.34.10 and 5.34.11 of the University Manual with the following new sections 5.34.10 through 5.34.14:

5.34.10 The Budget Advisory Committee shall review the capital, operating and personnel services budget request as developed during the budget development process and advise the President prior to his final approval and submission to the Regents. The committee shall review and advise the President on the following: supplemental priorities and requests, allocation or reallocation of resources required for support of new programs or expenditure activities; tuition, fees, auxiliary income and any other income.

5.34.11 The committee shall also review quarterly presentations of the University's budget status and advise on solutions or reallocations of funds dealing with potential deficits or surpluses projected through the year. In addition, the committee shall review and advise on the final allocation of the operating budget as administrative decisions are made concerning allocations during May and June of each budget year.

5.34.12 This committee shall be available to the University community for hearing and initiating the resolution of any inequities regarding budgetary decisions.

5.34.13 The membership shall comprise four faculty members appointed by the Faculty Senate; two* staff members to be appointed by the President, who are not part of the integral budget process by function; two undergraduate students appointed by the Student Senate; and one graduate student appointed by the Graduate Student Association. The Budget Director and the Vice President for Business and Finance shall serve as ex officio non voting members of the committee. Faculty and staff shall serve three year terms. Student terms shall be for two years. Terms shall be served on a staggered basis. The President shall select the chairperson.

* Amended by the Faculty Senate on May 10, 1979

5.34.14 Meetings of the committee shall be scheduled as an integral part of the budget development process. The committee shall also hold formal meetings to review the status of the budget each quarter. These quarterly meetings shall be attended by designees from the Faculty Senate, Student Senate and Graduate Student Association; these designees shall be chosen by the respective Executive Committees of the organizations. Additional meetings may be called by the chairperson or any three members of the committee.

Prior to the adjournment of the May 10, 1979 meeting of the Faculty Senate, a motion to amend 5.34.13 by substituting "The chairperson will be elected by the committee" for "The President shall select the chairperson" was on the floor.

XX.XX.XD At least once each academic year the Academic Standards and Calendar Committee shall request of and shall receive from the several undergraduate colleges particulars on all petitions which requested grants of exceptions to courses of study, to other degree requirements, and to any other academic rule established by the General Faculty.

Our four legislative recommendations are reproduced as requested, below.

LIBRARY COMMITTEE REPORT, 1978-79

Legislative Recommendations

XX.XX.XA Every undergraduate college shall establish and publish procedures for dealing with student requests for exceptions to courses of study or to other degree requirements or academic rules prescribed by that college or by the General Faculty.

XX.XX.XB Undergraduate students seeking exceptions to any University rule pertaining to their academic circumstances, including degree requirements and courses of study, shall do so by written petitions submitted to the students' respective deans. Copies of all such petitions shall be preserved by the respective deans for not less than two years.

XX.XX.XC No waiver of any college or university rule or requirement pertaining to an individual student's academic circumstances may be granted except in conformity with XX.XX.XA and XX.XX.XB.

XX.XX.XD At least once each academic year the Faculty Senate Academic Standards and Calendar Committee shall request of and shall receive from the several undergraduate colleges particulars on all petitions which requested grants of exception to courses of study, to other degree requirements, and to any other academic rule established by the General Faculty.

John Boulmetis
Ralph England, Chairman
Joan Halpin
Charles Latos
Niels West
Leonard Worthen

Committee Members:

Elena DiIorio, Undergraduate Student
Ronald Fontaine, Graduate Student
Margaret J. Keefe, Library
Robert Kinsella, Undergraduate Student
John Leo, English, Extension Division
Marion L. McGuire, Education
William D. Metz, History
George R. Parks, Dean, University Library (Ex Officio)
William M. Rosen, Chemistry
Bernard Schlessinger, Dean, Graduate Library School (Consultant)
Stephen B. Wood, Political Science

May 4, 1979

March 12, 1979

Library Committee Report, 1978-79
Information

Last year, 1977-78, the Library Committee devoted its efforts to evaluating the quality of the University Library and the condition of its staffing. The Committee's members concluded in their Report to the Faculty Senate:

The Library needs help. Its staff is overburdened and becomes more so each year. In consequence, essential tasks are deferred or left undone, and this backlog of unfinished work irresistibly piles up. In consequence also, new services necessary to carry forward the University's emerging purposes cannot be undertaken. And all the time, the collections are being expanded, for acquisition goes on despite what happens to higher education generally or to the changing fortunes of various disciplines. Inevitably, the University community suffers from this state of affairs, although the damage may not be immediately or dramatically apparent, and it will continue to suffer until a "quantum jump," as Vice President Ferrante has phrased it, is made in the personnel and financial resources allocated to the Library.

We believe that the University faculty, administration and students should adopt policies which will assure that the Library receives resources commensurate with its role in the University--to become, in Vice President Ferrante's characterization, "a first-rate library in a first-rate university." If we act decisively, the entire University community will benefit and our colleagues in the future will be able to draw upon a greatly enriched inheritance. By the same token, if we fail to act, our colleagues in the future will have to live with the result. And so will we. . . . Vice President Ferrante put the matter exactly as it lies when he told us that "an educational institution expresses its priorities basically by its choices in allocating personnel and resources." The issue is sharpened in a recent memorandum from the Director of Technical Services in the Library: "What the Library desperately needs is a substantial increase in budgetary support, regardless of the source, and it needs the support of the University faculty to see that that support is forthcoming."¹

The Committee's Report to the Senate contained six major recommendations for action.² They were designed to bring up the Library to the quality neces-

¹Library Committee Report, 1977-78, Part 2, "Recommendations for Action," pp. 1, 4.

²(1) That, for the next five years, three (3) faculty positions per year be allocated to the Library along with appropriate increases in supportive staff;

(2) That the University provide funding to the Dean, University Libraries, to retain a qualified management consultant;

(3) That the University student aid policy be re-examined and altered as necessary to make it possible for the Library to employ students for longer periods of time, that is, more hours per student per year, to create a more efficient student work force;

(4) That the Library's allocations for acquisitions and for related

sary to serve the University's educational and research mission. These recommendations were approved unanimously by the Senate on April 27, 1978, and were submitted to President Newman who signed them on May 18, 1978.

This year, 1978-79, the Library Committee has devoted its efforts to trying to insure that these recommendations were implemented--as swiftly and as fully as possible. We took as our guide the injunction of one of the consultants employed by the Budget Task Force: "The library problems and the reason for their existence must be presented to the faculty and to the students."² And we concluded that a larger public must also be moved to action: namely, the Board of Regents, the Governor, the State Legislature and the people of Rhode Island. We reasoned that the will to implement the recommendations could be developed only if the University community and the supporting agencies of governance became attentive to the Library's problems, informed about the consequences of those problems and committed to doing something decisive about them. In other words, our goal became to coalesce support for improvement of the Library and to assure that the resources necessary to achieve that improvement were actually allocated to the Library on a sustained basis.

To achieve this goal, the Committee's members were divided into two subcommittees, one on internal affairs chaired by Professor William Metz and another on external affairs chaired by Professor William Rosen. Both subcommittees have been unusually active. The internal affairs subcommittee centered its efforts on two principal tasks: (1) disseminating information to faculty, staff and students about the adverse effects upon the Library of the inadequate funding of the past decade and of the specific budget cuts imposed this year; and (2) soliciting varied forms of support for the Library from the various sectors of the University community. The needs of the Library were undoubtedly made most apparent to the University community by the numerous public reports which appeared in such publications as the Providence Journal and Bulletin, The Good 5¢ Cigar, This Week and The Great Swamp Gazette.³ In addition, members of the sub-

cataloging processes be increased in such amounts each year following as necessary to permit the purchase of 40,000 volumes each year;

(5) That Phase 3 of the Library building plan (the third and final phase) be made the fourth item on the Board of Regents list of items recommended to the Governor for inclusion in the Education portions of the statewide referenda for capital construction in November, 1978; and, failing adoption of this recommendation, that Phase 3 be placed at the top of the University's capital development recommendations for the 1980 referenda;

(6) That the University provide funding to hire a consultant to advise the Library on remote storage of library materials.

¹Senate Bill 77-78--35.

²Library Committee Report, 1977-78, Part 2, p. 6.

³A partial listing of journalistic reports about the Library which have appeared during the academic year can be found in appendix A.