The Service and Community Life Committee
Report March 21, 2019

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Sen. Christy Ashley, COB (2020)
Sen. Molly Greaney, CHS (2021)
Sen. Tracey Taveira, COP (2021)

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4.61 Faculty governance: The Committee shall study faculty efficiency in legislative decision-making and oversight throughout the university and make recommendations to the Faculty Senate aimed at enhancing this efficiency. To accomplish this, the Committee shall review and report on practices of faculty governance University-wide and within Colleges; offer training on best practices of faculty governance, including facilitating and encouraging best practices for college elections and recruitment; create and administer mentor programs for new faculty senators; monitor the implementation of Senate-approved initiatives and report any issues identified to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee.

4.62 Quality of working environment: The Committee shall study the University work environment and make recommendations to the Faculty Senate which will enhance the quality of this environment. To accomplish this, the Committee shall assist faculty with understanding of promotion and tenure policies; recommend policies that could assist in faculty retention, including matters of work/life balance; consider issues and make recommendations concerning areas affecting the work environment, such as transportation and accessibility.

4.63 Community life and impact: The Committee shall study the University community and make recommendations to the Faculty Senate aimed at enhancing this community and its impact on the broader world. To accomplish this, the Committee shall examine the meaning of a diverse community (including students and faculty interacting online); create, support, and promote events that foster a sense of campus culture, including efforts to foster a greater sense of unity among the
university’s different campuses; provide opportunities for interdisciplinary networking across campus; promote efforts to be of service to the wider community as well as to one another and to our students.

4.64 The Committee shall meet at least once a month and shall prepare and present, in March of each year, an annual report to the Faculty Senate including a review of current initiatives, policies, and practices as well as recommendations for future improvements.

Summary

The Service and Community Life (S&CL) committee initially prioritized ways to get the word out about existing initiatives and programs, including diversity initiatives and promoting voting in a coordinated way (as part of our civic duty and social responsibility) (4.63). We also investigated snow removal, parking concerns, organizational culture surveys (4.62). More recently, we added Indigenous People’s Day and the use of plastics on campus (4.62).

In general, perhaps due to the relatively new nature of the renewed committee, we identified overlap with other functions and units around campus in many of the above areas. We believe, going forward, a priority may be to facilitate communications about these initiatives – to utilize the faculty senate as a way to amplify messages and increase engagement about initiatives.

Updates

Indigenous People’s Day

Efforts to facilitate communications about Indigenous People’s Day were initiated in February 2019 and are ongoing.

S&CL Committee members are communicating with (or plan to communicate with):

- Senator Kris Bovy, who is working with Rod Mather (History) and professional archaeologists in the state to plan an event for next October to coincide with RI State Archaeology Month. “Our goal is to expand awareness of the deeper history of this land (beyond the 125 year anniversary hoopla of a few years back). There has been a lot of archaeological work done on campus, both Narragansett sites and early historic sites (including possible slave burials). The archaeological picture (scientific approach) is obviously not the full story. Narragansett tribal members would have their own stories to tell about the land, and we do plan to reach out to Loren Spears (Tomaquag Museum) to see if this could be a collaborative endeavor.”
- Mary Grace Almandrez
- Senator Bill Ohley
- The Native American Student Organization

Plastics on Campus

Senator Diane DiTomasso spoke with Marcia Garcia, Campus Sustainability Officer, who directed our attention to the website for the President’s Council for Sustainability to learn what is happening with plastics on campus. Abby Rider, VP of Administration and Finance, also has an interest in this topic. One challenge in efforts to reduce single use plastics on campus is the contract with Coca-
Cola. Other challenges include costs associated with alternatives (e.g. corn starch straws), which may limit vendor willingness to participate. Marcia noted that there are efforts to offset this impact on campus with the Cupanion Program (described on the website). She described how the Student Action for Sustainability group is focused on increasing awareness of single use plastics. A tentative speaker is scheduled for mid-April who is a professional surfer and campaigns for this issue. April is "Earth Month" this year.

The Council for Sustainability is open to suggestions from faculty. Marcia would welcome the opportunity to discuss this topic with faculty. She would appreciate suggestions and would like to have conversations with faculty about implementing this topic into curriculum (however she is not sure if faculty senate is the correct forum for this discussion).

Marcia also provided Diane with a link to download the Strategic Plan for Campus Sustainability and Climate Action on this page: https://web.uri.edu/sustainability/what-were-doing/planning-for-the-future/

Action Item: The S&CL Committee would like to start with broader awareness during Earth Month and recommends the 2019-2020 S&CL Committee work with Marcia and Abby to see how we can help. For example:
- Facilitate brainstorming about how to bolster initiatives listed under “How We're Doing”
- Find ways to offset costs of things like switching to corn starch straws

**Organizational Culture**

According to Dean of Students Dan Graney, there were four surveys that different members of the community requested: 1.) Race/ Identity; 2.) Sexual Assault, Gender & Relationship Violence; 3.) Mental Health (Student Only); 4.) Alcohol & Other Drugs. Provost DeHayes was coming up with the plan for putting these surveys into the field. There were questions about implementation.

There may also be opportunities for collaboration/potential overlap with the Community, Equity, and Diversity (CED)’s desire for data under Goal 3, Strategy 4.

**Action item:** The 2019-2020 S&CL Committee should work with interested stakeholders to create a survey that gathers baseline data associated with 4.62: Committee shall assist faculty with understanding of promotion and tenure policies; recommend policies that could assist in faculty retention, including matters of work/life balance; consider issues and make recommendations concerning areas affecting the work environment, such as transportation and accessibility. This can help guide and measure future initiatives from the S&CL Committee (and other stakeholders).

**Parking**

We chose to table parking initiatives to avoid interference with the URI AAUP’s response to the Lot 30 proposal.

*Dear Faculty,*
Most of you have probably seen the university's offer of "premium" parking in the new lot across the street from Fogarty Hall, for a mere $800 per year. The Executive Committee of the URI/AAUP strongly encourages you NOT to participate in this. This is an unfair labor practice on the part of the university to implement a policy unilaterally that it could not win through negotiations.

1. The policy represents bad faith bargaining during negotiations because the proposal was made, rejected and withdrawn in recently concluded collective bargaining.
2. The policy represents a substantial and material change in working conditions because parking in the new location would be available only for a fee, thereby setting a fee-for-benefit precedent.
3. The policy represents bad faith bargaining because it was directly communicated with members rather than through the Union.
4. The policy represents bad faith bargaining because the mechanics of implementation — apportioning spaces, waiting lists, lottery, carry over from year-to-year, etc., have not been negotiated.

It should also be noted that if implemented this would constitute the "nose of the camel under the tent" and that in the next round of negotiations the university would appeal to this practice as both precedent and as evidence that faculty don't mind paying for parking. No doubt it would strengthen their hand in arguing that ALL faculty should pay for parking and it would also erode our ability to insist that faculty should not pay for parking.

We have notified the university that we find this policy unacceptable and an unfair labor practice for the reasons mentioned above and we have demanded that they cease implementation of this plan. We ask that you stand up for the interests of all faculty by refusing to participate.

Sincerely,

Bill Bartels, President, URI/AAUP
and the entire Executive Committee of the URI/AAUP