



Memorial Student Union, Room: 201 | 50 Lower College Road,
Kingston, Rhode Island 02881
Telephone: (401) 874-2261
Email: info@rhodysenate.org

University of Rhode Island Student Senate
March 26th, 2025 General Assembly Meeting Minutes

Recording Secretary: Lynn Sawyer

Meeting Start Time: 6:31

A. CALL TO ORDER

B. ROLL CALL

C. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Senator Acharya moves to approve the agenda, seconded by Chair Sorto-Justiniano

D. READING AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTIES

Senator Troxell moves to approve the minutes, seconded by Senator Hinrichs

E. PUBLIC FORUM

Dan Graney, Dean of Students and Vice-President Ellen Reynolds ~ Division of Student Affairs

- *Key areas: health and wellness, student engagement and leadership, housing and dining*
- *Students do better academically when they are engaged.*
- *Key resources: Counseling center: Full and complete staff at the counseling center*
- *Telushealth: 24/7 access to physicians so students can get immediate help*
 - *2288: counseling center after hours.*
- *Substance use treatment and recovery support*
- *Stress workshop on Friday April 11th*
- *Contact Kelly Ryan for help with Title Nine: kelle_ryan@uri.edu*
 - *Confidential resources: counseling center, health services, psychological consultation center*
- *New online appointments at the health center, and can cancel appointments online*
 - *URI EMS on campus ambulance*
- *DAI - disability access and inclusion, students with multiple types of disability, office*

assists with accessing accommodations for in and out of class. Staffed by incredible people.

- *Student engagement and leadership: 300+ student organizations, leadership development, volunteer and civic engagement.*
- *Fitness and wellness: club sports, intramural sports, fitness and wellness.*
- *Town hall: Thursday March 27th. University hosting a town hall at Edwards auditorium to discuss important issues and questions facing higher education and URI. Register online at Events.uri.edu*
- *New position posted for Student Affairs: Assistant Vice president for student engagement and director, memorial union, officially posted.*
- *Greek life being moved under student organizations instead of being separate*

F. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

- Student Organizations Committee

Chair Milner:

- *3 bills on the floor this week*
- *Ask questions ask about organizations*
- *Handing out beautiful flyers all around campus including on all the screens around campus to set up new clubs*
- *Lecture series April 3rd at 7pm in room 308 for clubs*

- Academic Affairs Committee

Chair Wentworth:

- *Our next booth will be on April 28th from 12-3 in the MU*
 - *Handing out exam rights sheets and drop box for concerns*
 - *Reach out if you can help*
- *Exciting news Basil the therapy dog is coming to hang out at April 9th at 11 -12 in the office*
- *Please like the instagram post of the women in computing club*
- *We will not be doing a Senate study session I do have some ideas that I want to implement in the coming semesters*

- External Affairs Committee

Chair Cayer:

- *Last week we had our first meeting with the south county housing coalition to stay in touch with what the municipalities are thinking*
- *2100 foundation meeting next week*
- *Bill on the floor tonight*

- Cultural Affairs Committee

Chair Reyes:

- *I did want to share that Senator Gonzalez brought up a new proposal for a new library quote. Please let me know if you have any ideas, which have been tabled for next semester. If you know of anyone that has opinions please let me know. That way when we do present this we have feedback and support.*
- *Next week we have the awards for the multicultural organization to make sure president parlagas signature are on it. We want to make sure the organization can come*
- *Women of color conference on Saturday at 8:30, anyone can come. They are*

going to have a box to collect clothes and necessities for the women's refugee center. That is going to be carried out at this event.

- Campus Affairs Committee

Chair Buono:

- *We will be having the pie a senator fundraiser in April, poll for times and dates coming out tonight*
- *Anytime before 4pm*
- *Campus dining services meeting will be held Monday March 31st. Meet outside of Rhody market*

G. REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH/CABINET

- Speaker of the Assembly

Speaker Peckham:

- *Hey guys, Basil is coming in wednesday april 9th at 11am, take some time help your mental health*
- *Formal is Friday April 18th from 6 to 10pm*
 - *People are allowed to bring more than one plus one*
 - *I would really appreciate it if you guys could pay for a formal and RSVP!*
 - *We need 60 people to go to be able to bring the ticket price down*

- Student Body President

- *Be on the lookout for an email about "Tag"*

- Student Body Vice President

No report

- Director of the Treasury

No report!

- Director of Communications

DOT Cronan:

No report

H. REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Elections Committee

Chair Sorto-Justiniano:

- *All election results will be posted in the office and on social media next week.*
- *As a reminder you can not campaign within the office and with the vicinity of the office*
- *Do not coerce anyone to vote for you*
- *5 Cent Cigar article posted*

Lucas:

- *Everything should be good now with candidates not showing up for eligible students*
- *If you have any questions, happy to answer them*
- *Debate on monday night for presidential tickets*

Constitutional Review Committee

Chair Cayer:

- *Basically done, bill with all of the revisions be presented next week*
- *Currently figuring out what would be the best way to make the changes. Figuring out the best way to present to the student body.*

I. REPORT OF THE COURT

J. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Wentworth moves to enter into executive session, seconded by Speaker Peckham

Chair Cayer moves to end executive session, seconded by Senator Hinrichs

K. SPECIAL ORDERS

L. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

M. NEW BUSINESS

SS-24/25-41 – BILL CALLING FOR THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF “SANKOFA CHRISTIAN MINISTRY” AS A SENATE-RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATION

Whereas, the “Sankofa Christian Ministry” mission statement is, “*A Bible Based Multicultural organization that is dedicated to spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ at the University of Rhode Island*”, and

Whereas, Sankofa Christian Ministry meets the requirements to be a senate-recognized student organization, and

Whereas, it is custom for the senate to do so, therefore be it

Resolved, that the University of Rhode Island Student Senate acknowledges Sankofa Christian Ministry as a recognized organization, and be it

| | |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| SPONSOR: | Student Organizations Committee |
| BILL HANDLER: | Chairman Milner |
| DATE: | Wednesday, March 26th, 2025 |
| RECOMMENDATION: | (6-0-0) |
| EXPIRATION: | Valid Until next re-recognition |
| ACTION: | Vote Tonight |

Chair Milner:

- *SOC bills on the floor tonight, were all bills on the floors before rerecognition, all meet the criteria. Ask questions.*

Senator Hinrichs moves to begin voting, seconded by Chair Reyes
Bill passes unanimously

SS-24/25-42 – BILL CALLING FOR THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF “URI MED LIFE” AS A SENATE-RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATION

Whereas, the “URI Med Life” mission statement is, “*To improve access to medicine, education, and development for underserved communities while empowering students to make a difference. Through fundraising, volunteering, and educational events, we aim to raise awareness about global health disparities and take action locally and internationally. Our club provides opportunities for students to engage in hands-on service, including Service Learning Trips that support sustainable healthcare initiatives*”, and

Whereas, URI Med Life meets the requirements to be a senate-recognized student organization, and

Whereas, it is custom for the senate to do so, therefore be it

Resolved, that the University of Rhode Island Student Senate acknowledges URI Med Life as a recognized organization, and be it

Resolved, that URI Med Life is provided with the first-year financial benefits package of \$50 which is to be paid out over the course of the 2024- 2025 fiscal year.

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| SPONSOR: | Student Organizations Committee |
| BILL HANDLER: | Chairman Milner |
| DATE: | Wednesday, March 26th, 2025 |
| RECOMMENDATION: | (6-0-0) |
| EXPIRATION: | Valid Until next re-recognition |
| ACTION: | Vote Tonight |

Chair Milner moves to amend line 5 to change 2025-2026 fiscal year to fiscal year 2024-2025, seconded by Senator Hailu

*Senator Hailu moves to begin voting, seconded by Chair Reyes
Bill passes unanimously*

SS-24/25-43 – BILL CALLING FOR THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF “THE RHODY EXCHANGE” AS A SENATE-RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATION

Whereas, the “The Rhody Exchange” mission statement is, “*Build a collaborative community for students to explore and engage in finance, investing, financial reporting and personal finance. Provide opportunities for hands-on learning through research-driven trading simulations, collaborative discussions, and educational workshops.*”, and

Whereas, The Rhody Exchange meets the requirements to be a senate-recognized student organization, and

Whereas, it is custom for the senate to do so, therefore be it

Resolved, that the University of Rhode Island Student Senate acknowledges The Rhody Exchange as a recognized organization, and be it

Resolved, that The Rhody Exchange is provided with the first-year financial benefits package of \$50 which is to be paid out over the course of the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

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| SPONSOR: | Student Organizations Committee |
| BILL HANDLER: | Chairman Milner |
| DATE: | Wednesday, March 26th, 2025 |
| RECOMMENDATION: | (6-0-0) |
| EXPIRATION: | Valid Until next re-recognition |
| ACTION: | Vote Tonight |

*Chair Milner moves to begin voting, seconded by Senator Singh
Bill passes unanimously*

SS-24/25-44 – BILL ADDING AN “Off-Campus Renter Liaison” TO THE STUDENT SENATE BYLAWS

Whereas, the population of students who rent houses off-campus do not have guaranteed representation from the Student Senate Constitution or Bylaws, and

Whereas, the current off-campus seats do not guarantee representation of students who rent off-campus and thus do not guarantee that their needs will be heard or understood, and

Whereas, there is no efficient way to add a full representative seat for renters as it is not possible to confirm which students rent off-campus and thus cannot form a definitive constituency for the election of such position, and

Whereas, a liaison position would allow for there to be guaranteed representation and specific duties stated for the off-campus student renters without the need to add an extra representative seat, therefore be it

Resolved, that Article 2, Section 9, Part 4 of the Student Senate Bylaws shall add the following clause after 9.27: "9.28 The committee shall appoint an Off-Campus Renter Liaison from any member of the Assembly, under the preference that they rent a house off-campus during that term, to speak on behalf of the population of students who rent houses off-campus. The liaison shall report a minimum of once a month to the external affairs chair and may be asked by the chair to attend off-campus housing related meetings as a representative of the Student Senate and the off-campus student renter population."

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| SPONSOR: | External Affairs Committee |
| BILL HANDLER: | Chair Cayer |
| DATE: | March 26th, 2025 |
| RECOMMENDATION | (5-0-0) |
| EXPIRATION: | Valid Until Review |
| ACTION: | Vote Tonight |

Chair Cayer:

- *I do understand that there has been some argument against this bill, I'm going to break down the thought process. Possibly in the future removing liaison positions soon. That being said, I did want to emphasize that these positions are really important for us. These allow me to do my job effectively, not everyone rents off campus and therefore this brings a representative who is informed into this position. We don't have accurate statistics of how many people even rent off campus. Do need a ¾ majority to pass this bill*

Senator Rinne:

- *I definitely understand the thinking behind the bill, we talked about this in the academics meeting yesterday. We think this falls under the external chair position. Dilutes the flow of work and is unnecessary. Liaison roles are not improving to be effective, they are not showing more productively. Believing having a bunch of liaisons like this can lead to the lack of strategic focus and lack of sharing of ideas. This is overcomplicated and a confusing way to organize. In the future, future chairs might not need this liaison and strips away the chairs responsibilities. Best solution would be to appoint some advisors*

instead of doing a change to the bylaws.

- *Chair Cayer: Why liaisons aren't always effective, because they are not normally in the bylaws or the constitution. Chairs can assume a liaison role. If there is a chair that does rent off campus and could assume this role. Minimum of once a month report to the chair, this would make it a specified job. Wouldn't be too much to have the position.*
- *Speaker Peckham: What your describing sounds to me like a college rep, off campus renter representative could be an idea*
- *Senator Rinne: would be hard to implement because the school does not have information about who rents and who commutes. I don't think that this organization should be included in the bylaw but that shouldn't have someone to help you.*
- *Chair milner: Things get overengineered, it is more of an internal position for you to put someone in instead of a bylaw change. The levels that these things get on get touch to keep. It's important to keep things as uncomplicated as possible. More of an internal thing than an external thing*

Chair Cayer moves to amend the bill action to "Vote Next Week", seconded by senator Roach

N. GENERAL DISCUSSION AND OPEN FORUM

Chair Milner:

- *Going to the URI leader town hall is important, super important to go and be informed and hold your leadership accountable in these times. Encourage you to go check it out.*

Lucas:

- *RSVP closed March 25th at 1pm.*
- *Welcome Days dates please sign up for at least 1 and it counts toward your office hours for that week based on what's available.*

O. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting End Time: 7:54