



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
October 30th, 2024 General Assembly Meeting Minutes

Recording Secretary: Lynn Sawyer

Meeting Start Time: 6:34

A. CALL TO ORDER

Present: Acharya, Cayer, Gonzalez, Hailu, Hinrichs, Hook, Hudson, McCloskey, Milner, Reffelt, Reyes, Rinne, Sawyer, Sorto-Justiniano, Stadtman, Sundell, Wentworth, Williamson

Absent: Boucher (excused), Collins (excused), Estes (excused), Naidoo (excused), Njende, Santos, Walding

Executive: Peckham, Cronan, Goswami, Feroz

B. ROLL CALL

C. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Senator Hailu moves to approve the agenda, and seconded by Chair McClosky

D. READING AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Chair Reyes moves to approve the agenda, seconded by Senator Acharya

E. PUBLIC FORUM

URI's Faculty Senate President, Dr. Ted Walls

- *Happy to be here*
- *Interested in possibilities in working together*
- *Faculty Senate is always interested in collaboration of student concern*
- *Thought it would be good to go over what faculty senate structure is*
 - *Senate has 14 committees, seven are standing*
 - *Half of those are curriculum in nature*
 - *Recently become a joint committee in research*
 - *New vice president of research to really standardize these academics*
 - *67 members of the faculty senate*
- *Focus: Advance the cause of the faculty*

Speaker Peckham: how are your committees structured in meetings?

- *All committees meet four times a semester*
- *Discussed collectively picking a charity and having a cornhole game or something like that and making all the money raised go to it could be a great idea*

Senator Millner: What do you see as an ideal working relationship with the Student Senate?

- *Recently experimented with how we can have better ongoing dialogue with many groups at URI and we would like to sort this out together. Don't know if senate has formal attendance for their officers*

Senator Cayer: The whole faculty senate meets once a month correct? Do you think it would be possible to get one or two senators to be liaisons for the committees?

- *Some committees actually require student representatives, so we maybe have some senators fill these roles*
- *Finding a charity that we could both contribute together might be a really good idea for the future*
- *In our last Faculty Senate meeting there was a long conversation about the book store, it seems like the business incentives in selling textbooks are taking too much precedence so faculty can't use the books they want and students can get them. Introduction courses that have these large expensive textbooks are one example. There are many concerns like this that we're trying to address...*

URI's President, Marc Parlange

- *We're here to talk about the proposal for the University property regulations*
 - *Trying to clarify a number of points*
- *University of Rhode Island supports all students freedom of expression*
 - *Regulations do not in any restrict protected speech and are not directed to any group of individuals*
 - *These regulations apply equally to all students*
- *We want an environment that respects and protects all of these engagement of community and business functions, want to protect the campus itself*
 - *We don't have regulations regarding use of university properties*
- *Rhode Island law stipulates that the Board of Trustees should control and make the rules of all properties and highways under their care*
 - *Proposal falls under board of trustees regulations*
- *Would like to encourage of you to go on and read it yourself, couple more weeks for comments on the bill*
- *If you look at any other peer institutions they had these policies for everyone*

President Goswami:

- *Concern lies with the vagueness in the rules and the punishment seems strong*
- *No criteria and no warning,*
- *Opening for interpretation are the most worrisome*

President of the University:

- *Hopefully in the future the next draft will be clearer*

Senator Rinne:

- *Was there a reason for these policies getting updated now?*

President of the University:

- *Everyday I discover something new about URI, and we are always in the process of seeing how we can do a better job*
- *Part of a multi-year process in updating the university policies*
- *Third regulation the Board of Trustees has had*
- *We used to be governed by a board of governors, but it is incredibly helpful that we have a group just focused on it*

Senator Sorto-Justiniano:

- *Ramification for those that insight discomfort, not violence; how is the university going to distinguish that those that construct violence from those that construct discomfort*

President Parlange:

- *We encourage people to have discomfort and difference and we want to ensure that we protect speech*
- *Clarity needs to be provided*

Faculty Senate President Dr. Walls

- *The Faculty Senate has also heard and shared concerns about the policy and wants to hear from other faculty and students.*

Vice-President Feroz

- *Asks how the policy will affect the ability to protest on campus.*

F. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

- *Student Organizations Committee*

Chair Hook

- *Three bills on the floor*
- *Additionally I am stepping down for my position as chair and Senator Stadtman will be taking over*
- *Academic Affairs Committee*

Vice-Chair Wentworth:

- *No updates*
- *External Affairs Committee*

Chair McCloskey:

- *Committee meeting next Tuesday*
- *Cultural Affairs Committee*

Chair Reyes:

- *Hope midterms are going well*
- *Meet this week with the Vice-President of Community, Equity, and Diversity Office*
- *Collaborations between her office and some collaboration with us*
- *New news letter, bottom of the email every week*
- *Using Cultural affairs account as a way to communicate more*
- *Culture committee will be starting a monthly organization recognition certificate*
- *Two restaurants were reached out to for fundraising*
- *Campus Affairs Committee*

Chair Hudson:

- *I reached out for our monthly dining services meeting*

- *Please come to committee meeting tomorrow at 5*
- *Still waiting on blue light walk dates*

G. REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH/CABINET

- Speaker of the Assembly

Speaker Peckham:

- *After some careful consideration, I am going to be canceling General Assembly next week because Wednesday is a Tuesday schedule due to classes being canceled on Tuesday*
- *I apologize for canceling for the meeting on the 23rd, I would not have done that if I had known about the scheduling change*
- *Vote on Tuesday!*
- *Hope you guys enjoyed pumpkin carving today*
- Student Body President

President Goswami:

- *Met with a few number of students about the policy next weekend*
- *Welcome you all to join me in these meetings and hear out each other*
- *Come to a conclusion that we want diversity training to be a more well equipped training across the whole school*
- *Working with diversity dialogue to do this diversity training that is best equipped to help*
- *November 15th session for student organizations*
- Student Body Vice President

Vice-President Feroz:

- *Diversity training is a really good initiative*
- *Growing range of diversity on campus*
- *In many ways we are public facing jobs*
- *Speaking about leadership women's conference and great to see everyone coming together*
- *Senator Gonzalez, and Sorto-Justiniano were present and it is important for us to see this representation*
- *Think deeply about this policies in effect and the worst case scenario that could be reflected in these policies*
- *Nice to see everyone at the pumpkin carving tonight*
- *Would love to interact going forward*
 - Director of the Treasury
 - Director of Communications

H. REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES

- Elections Committee
- *Senator Cayer: 9 declaration packets for this elections*
 - *In our next meeting we are going to figure out the schedule for the election week and what comes after*

I. REPORT OF THE COURT

J. ANNOUNCEMENTS

K. SPECIAL ORDERS

L. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

M. NEW BUSINESS

SS-24/25-13 – BILL CALLING FOR THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF “RHODY SPORTS MEDIA CLUB” AS A SENATE-RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATION

Whereas, the “Rhody Sports Media Club” mission statement is, “Our club acts as a network and a resource for students who are interested in working in the Sports industry. We will connect students with others who share common interests and can assist in getting members involved in on and off campus opportunities.

We aim to empower and mentor club members during their time at URI and beyond creating a lifelong network and support system for continuous personal and professional growth. While providing students with information about on & off campus opportunities that will improve their resumes and portfolios. We will also provide a positive and kind atmosphere that will encourage students to be themselves and reach out for help if needed.”, and

Whereas, Rhody Sports Media Club 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 Rhody Sports Media Club as a recognized organization, and be it

Resolved, that Rhody Sports Media Club is provided with the first-year financial benefits package of \$100 which is to be paid out over the course of the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

SPONSOR:	Student Organizations Committee
BILL HANDLER:	Chairman Hook
DATE:	October 30th, 2024
RECOMMENDATION:	(3-1-0)
EXPIRATION:	Valid Until Next Re-Recognition
ACTION:	Vote Tonight

*Senator Gonzalez moves to begin voting, seconded by Senator Rinne.
Vote passes.*

SS-24/25-14 – BILL CALLING FOR THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF “BEST BUDDIES” AS A SENATE-RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATION

Whereas, the “Best Buddies” mission statement is, “The mission of Best Buddies is dedicated to establishing a global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment, leadership development, and inclusive living for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).”, and

Whereas, Best Buddies 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 Best Buddies as a recognized organization.

SPONSOR:	Student Organizations Committee
BILL HANDLER:	Chairman Hook
DATE:	October 30th, 2024
RECOMMENDATION:	(4-0-0)
EXPIRATION:	Valid Until Next Re-Recognition
ACTION:	Vote Tonight

*Senator Hinrichs moves to begin voting, seconded by Senator Millner.
Vote passes with unanimous consent.*

SS-24/25-15 – BILL CALLING FOR THE NAME CHANGE OF “MINORITY STUDENT ATHLETE CREW” TO “MULTICULTURAL STUDENT ATHLETE CLUB” AS A SENATE-RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATION

Whereas, the organization “Minority Student Athlete Crew” will change their name to “Multicultural Student Athlete Club”

Whereas, Multicultural Student Athlete Club continues to meet the requirements to be a senate-recognized student organization,

Resolved, that the University of Rhode Island Student Senate acknowledges Multicultural Student Athlete Club as a recognized organization, and be it

Resolved, that Multicultural Student Athlete Club will keep the financial status of Minority Student Athlete Crew.

SPONSOR:	Student Organizations Committee
BILL HANDLER:	Chairman Hook
DATE:	October 30th, 2024
RECOMMENDATION:	(4-0-0)
EXPIRATION:	Valid Until Next Re-Recognition
ACTION:	Vote Tonight

*Chair Reyes moves to begin voting, seconded by Senator Hinrichs.
Vote Passes with unanimous consent.*

N. GENERAL DISCUSSION AND OPEN FORUM

URI Administrative Policy Development Proposed Regulations Discussion

*Speaker Peckham moves to enter executive session, seconded by Senator Sawyer.
Senator Cayer moves to suspend the rules so the Senate executive branch can remain in the room, seconded by Senator Gonzalez*

Senator Sawyer moves to end executive session, seconded by Senator Milner

- *Counseling Center Representative:*
 - *Don't want to get into the specifics of the policy. American civil liberties union lawyers responded to the policy. Unfair degree of limits on student speech,*

students being arrested, faculty being fired and pay docked. University could bend this policy to their will. Threat to our first amendment rights. Nature of protest is disruptive. Protest cause we are not heard. Feels intimidating and attempts to limit the speech of marginalized people especially. Oppose the policy fully.

O. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting End Time: 8:23