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University of Rhode Island Student Senate
October 9th, 2024 General Assembly Meeting Minutes

Recording Secretary: Lynn Sawyer

Meeting Start Time: 6:39

A. CALL TO ORDER

B. ROLL CALL

Present: Acharya, Boucher, Cayer, Collins, Estes, Gonzalez, Hook, Hudson, Milner, Naidoo, Njende, Reyes, Sawyer, Santos, Small, Stadtman, Walding, Wentworth

Absent: Buono, Hailu, Hinrichs, McCloskey (excused), Reffelt, Rinne (excused), Small, Sorto-Justiniano (excused), Sundell, Williamson

Executive: Cronan, Goswami, Peckham

C. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Senator Gonzalez moves to approve the agenda, seconded by Senator Estes

D. READING AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Senator Walding moves to approve the minutes, seconded by Senator Cayer

E. PUBLIC FORUM

Thomas Cooley, Assistant Vice-President for Housing and Residential Life (HRL) and Student Development

- *What is the Goal that Unachieved? A dream!*
- *Real Goals and achievable goals*
- *Survey fall of 2023 - completed by almost 60% of the student*
- *Overall satisfaction - students are moderately satisfied with housing*
- *HRL scored lower than the mean on Room assignment*
- *91% of every dollar that comes in are from students on campus*
- *49% of financials spent by HRL is for dedicated expenses like utilities, overhead, and debt*
- *21% of expenses are on things that the student want*
- *Housing Strategic Plan*
- *Vision Statement:*
 - *Aspires to deliver unparalleled student living experiences, fostering a tight-knit community grounded in excellence with premier services and facilities. Through thoughtful engagement and collaboration*
- *Multipurpose room: Now has furniture in the rooms*
- *Pool tables now in everyone complex lounge*
- *New lounge furniture coming*
- *Outside spaces have now been put into place in Butterfield; cornhole and adirondack chairs; also Hillside now outside spaces: cornhole and adirondack chairs*
- **HOT OFF THE PRESS:**
 - *Conceptualization of som new housing*

- Two new upperclassmen residence halls
- 900 beds total for upperclassmen
- Graduate housing expansion
- Enthusiastic to move forward

Question responses:

- Senator Gonzalez: *I really appreciate the fact that you're updating the spaces, I want to ask a question about some spaces that the freshman usually occupy. I know in some of the freshman spaces that do have issues like mold and roaches, I'm concerned with the fact I didn't hear anything about updating old spaces?*
 - *We have for summer 26 planned, brand new bathrooms for some residents halls, part of the housing plan is for maintenance. The new building will have swing spaces so we can renovate the other buildings without losing housing for students.*
 - *Tucker got a brand new electrical feeding into the building and new water filter system in the building which is good for the modern standard that we need*
 - *Constantly addressing those housing need, when they are reported we address them so we will continue to address them when they come*
- Senator Sawyer: *Will the new building make housing prices rise?*
 - *Our most important thing is to keep rents low for the students*
- Senator Estes: *How often do you compare the prices of living on campus vs. living off campus?*
 - *We look at market rate, we look at our peers (other universities), as well as Narragansett, but there are services that we provide on campus that is not provided off campus which also is factored in*
- President Goswami: *What I'm hearing from the RA's is they feel dissatisfied with housing and dining. Are you guys working on creating a better plan?*
 - *Survey to the RAs was handed out last week*
 - *Focuses on RAs compensation*
 - *Looking at this aggressively*
 - *Looking at a cost model*
- Senator Naidoo: *Are the outdoor spaces being marketed to the students?*
 - *Looking at marketing on instagram*
 - *Meeting with a group of students on a monthly basis*
 - *Rely on Social media*

F. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

- Student Organizations Committee

Chair Hook

- *One bill on the agenda*

- Academic Affairs Committee

Chair Collins

- *Meeting with the director of first year programs on October 22nd during our regular committee meeting time at 5PM, other than that keep a lookout for a potential a tour of the library that is open to the entire senate, think it would be fun, if you are a college representative and did not get an email from me this morning please reach out to me!*

- External Affairs Committee

Vice-Chair Cayer

- *Sent an application for the 2100 foundation for off campus foundation*
- *Next weekend we have the URI fall housing fair next Wednesday from 1-4PM; We have a table, please let us know if you can go*

- Anything you think the first years should know please let us and know
- Resolution on the floor later tonight

Senator Naidoo: Do we have freebies for the fair?

- We talked about it, probably not going to happen by next week

Chair Collins: I don't know if any other committees have talked about it, but in the Academics committee we talked about it, knowing lots of people have ideas we should have a one time meeting where we talk about these things.

- Chair McCloskey is going to go to dollar tree for some things for the table

- Cultural Affairs Committee

Chair Reyes

- Bill on the floor later tonight

- Campus Affairs Committee

-No Report

G. REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH/CABINET

- Speaker of the Assembly

Speaker Peckham

- Reminder that our northwoods challenge course date is Saturday October 19th, 11AM-1PM
 - Please come :)
 - Carpool list in the group me
- Reach out to Peckham with any questions
- If you want to put into contact with anyone that comes and presents please contact me
 - Great resource
- Here for all of you!
- Student Body President

President Goswami

- Attended Leadership Without Limits, some senators were on the panel
- Looking forward to having it again
- Doing a couple of open houses in the next few weeks with different topics, for several weeks. Committees also are in these fields so reach out!
 - Student Body Vice President
- No report
 - Director of the Treasury

Director Cronan

- Freebies stuff that is not personalized can be done by next week
- Want something for the Wednesday booth come to me during my office hours tomorrow
 - Director of Communications
- Please do not keep texting me asking for headshots
- Headshot redos will be done after new senators get elected

H. REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES

-Elections Committee

Chair Walding:

- Voting will take place monday the 28th at noon till 5pm
- Tabling next week possibly
- Put my number in the group me if anyone need to text me

Senator Milner:

- What are we doing to advertise the Senate?

Chair Walding:

- Not a lot of representation for a lot of colleges besides political science, working on putting posters in the different colleges and tables with decoration packets so people can grab them! Creating connections could greatly benefit the senate

Senator Milner:

- Would it be helpful to do a URI 101, or go into a big lecture
- Still 2 and ½ weeks to advertise

Chair Walding:

- Invitation to come to our Zoom meeting on Sunday afternoons to discuss more

Vice Chair Cayer:

- Posters going up in Butterfield

Senator Santos:

- I'm a URI 101 mentor we meet up on Thursday at 5pm, I'll let them know that this is going on

I. REPORT OF THE COURT

J. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Advisor McDermott:

- Video wall is a great way to push that
- Student ambassador applications are up and live: due date is the 15th of October
- Decals and pens I have a company that we work with all the time, probably wont get them for next wednesday but definitely for other events we could get that

President Goswami:

- Bunch of committees need representatives from across campus

K. SPECIAL ORDERS

L. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

M. NEW BUSINESS

SS-24/25-10 – BILL CALLING FOR THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF “DUNGEONS AND RAMS” AS A SENATE-RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATION

Whereas, the “Dungeons and Rams ” mission statement is, “Provide a space for students to come together and engage in tabletop role-playing games, particularly Dungeons & Dragons. The club offers a community for fans of D&D and other role-playing games to explore creativity, teamwork, and storytelling. Members can participate in campaigns, learn how to play the game, develop skills in character building, and engage in immersive adventures. It also serves as a social outlet for students to meet others with similar interests in fantasy gaming and role-playing”, and

Whereas, Dungeons and Rams 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 Dungeons and Rams as a recognized organization, and be it

Resolved, that Dungeons and Rams 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:
DATE:
RECOMMENDATION:
EXPIRATION:
ACTION:

Chair Hook
October 9th, 2024
(4-0-0)
Valid Until Next Re-Recognition
Vote Tonight

Chair Hook:

- *This a club where they play dungeons and dragons they meet all the requirement*

*Senator Gonzalez moves to begin voting, seconded by Chair Collins
Vote passes with unanimous consent*

SS-24/25-11 – RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECENT INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT INVOLVING OFF-CAMPUS STUDENTS WITHIN LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES

Whereas, as representatives of the student body, the Student Senate does not condone the inappropriate events within our local communities in the past month involving students of the University of Rhode Island, and

Whereas, the Student Senate wants to reinforce the fact that the conduct of a select few does not represent the student body as a whole, and

Whereas, the actions of these students do not represent the greater off-campus URI community and the University as a whole, and

Whereas, the Student Senate hopes to continue to build strong bonds with local residents, law enforcement, and governments, now therefore be it

Resolved, that the Student Senate will continue to rebuild and repair community relations through civic engagement, community service, and the desire to maintain a strong community, and be it further,

Resolved, that the Student Senate recommends that the offending parties recognize their responsibility in repairing student/community relations, and has taken the time to review university conduct and behavior policies, and be it further,

Resolved, that the Student Senate will actively seek to promote appropriate conduct from students both on and off campus.

SPONSOR:
BILL HANDLER:
DATE:
EXPIRATION:
ACTION:

External Committee
Chair McCloskey
October 7, 2024
Valid Until Review
Vote Tonight

Vice Chair Cayer:

- *We don't do resolutions very often*
- *Emphasis the fact that it isn't just us saying this, some things that didn't reflect well on the URI community*
- *Pretty negative perceptions of college students already*

- *This put us all back at square one*
- *Emphasis that it is up to every student when they are off campus to represent and act accordingly*

Senator Stadtman:

- *What does this do exactly?*

Speaker Peckham:

- *Public announcement that we as a Student Senate condemn behavior like this*
- *Putting the vibes out there that this is not appropriate and we see this happening and recognize that it is wrong, does not align with URI values or our organization's values*

Senator Milner :

- *Not a condemnation of Greek life, or commuter population but that situation*

Senator Gonzalez:

- *More of a statement that this is wrong, why is it called a resolution?*

Speaker Peckham:

- *Any public statement we make is called a resolution*

Senator Cayer:

- *Proposition for the future decision*

Senator Stadtman:

- *While I agree that what we did is bad I feel as if we are kind of behind with this matter*

Senator Cayer:

- *That was one of the things that we look at, but we don't want this to happen again*

Speaker Peckham:

- *Better late than never!*

Senator Gonzalez:

- *Does external plan on making these resolutions sooner after the event in the future*

Senator Cayer:

- *We normally would*

*Senator Gonzalez moves to begin voting, seconded by Senator Naidoo
Vote passes (18-0-1)*

SS-24/25-12 – BILL CALLING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF EDC 203: MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID CERTIFICATION CLASS AS A GENERAL EDUCATION OUTCOME AND IMPLEMENTATION IN ALL URI 101 COURSES CURRICULUM

Whereas, the University of Rhode Island's Student Senate petitions Faculty Senate to establish EDC 203: Mental Health First Aid Certification class as a General Education Outcome and be included as one of the mental health resources discussed during all of URI 101 classes, and

Whereas, mental health is a critical issue across all college campuses including the University of Rhode Island college campus. According to a national research study conducted by the American College Health Association in 2023, around 76% of college students are affected by one of the many psychological disorders including anxiety and depression, and¹

Whereas, the Counseling Center at the University of Rhode Island is currently experiencing staffing shortages that hinder its ability to provide immediate assistance, leaving many students placed on waiting lists during critical times of need, and

Whereas, the students of the University of Rhode Island deserve accessible and timely mental health resources to support their well-being and academic success, and

Whereas, mental health education should be introduced to all students on a college campus including the University of Rhode Island campus, and

Whereas, the EDC 203: Mental Health First Aid Certification course is taught by trained and certified staff within the University of Rhode Island and can ensure proper education, and

Whereas, students at the University of Rhode Island can receive effective mental health education while also receiving 1 college credit and fulfilling general education outcomes, and

Whereas, the EDC 203 Mental Health First Aid Certification course fulfills two outcomes, C1 and C2 of the general education outcomes list, and

Whereas, outcome C1 refers to **Civic Knowledge and Responsibilities**- Develop and engage in civic knowledge and responsibilities, and

Whereas, outcome C2 refers to **Global Responsibilities**- Develop and exercise global responsibilities, and

Whereas, allowing students to fulfill general education outcomes for this class would increase the number of students that enroll in it, thus expanding mental health knowledge amongst more college students, and

¹ American College Health Association. American College Health Association-National College Health Assessment III: Undergraduate Student Reference Group Data Report Spring 2023. Silver Spring, MD: American College Health Association; 2023.

Whereas, introducing this course during URI 101 classes would help more incoming students know about it and help them be more educated on mental health from the start of their college journey

Whereas, increasing the number of mental health trained students on campus can help them as an individual and their fellow peers until professional help becomes available, and

Resolved, the University of Rhode Island Student Senate asks the University Faculty Senate to establish EDC 203 Mental Health First Aid Certification class as a General Education Outcome and implemented in all URI 101 classes as a mental health resource.

SPONSOR(S): Chairs Buono and McCloskey, Senators Sorto-Justiniano, Gonzalez and Hudson
BILL HANDLER: Chairwoman Reyes
DATE: October 9th, 2024
EXPIRATION: Valid Until Review
ACTION: Vote Tonight

Chair Reyes:

- All we ask is that this class is counted as a C1 outcome which is a civic outcome and C2 which refers to global responsibility.
- Taking action to educating yourself for situations for people that are having a mental health issue
- First year students could really use this class
- Ask for it to be brought up during URI 101
- Also educate themselves on how to help their fellow peers

Senator Naidoo:

- Is this class a requirement for any major?

Chair Reyes:

- Isn't required for any major
- Many within majors does count as C1 or C
- Really useful class and resource

Senator Sawyer moves to begin voting, seconded by Senator Hudson
Vote passes with unanimous consent

N. GENERAL DISCUSSION AND OPEN FORUM

- Senator Sawyer: I just wanted to make it a point that we discuss attendance, and people not showing up, because it is unfair to all of us
- Senator Cayer: We are now having a lot of vacancies because of people not showing up
- Senator Gonzalez: The people showing up are putting so much more time in because of the lack of time that others are putting in
- Speaker Peckham: I hear you and I see you and I agree. I know that attendance is an issue. A little bit of a disconnect because I don't understand why people are not coming, even when it is mandatory and so important to come to General Assembly. Thank you to the people that have reached out when they need to miss meetings. People who are consistently not showing up are going to get a court referral and their seat is going to be removed. Agreed that it is not fair to the people that are showing up
- Senator Gonzalez: Having a meeting, brainstorming meeting in why there is not longevity in senators coming and staying, addressed possibly barring people who have their seats removed from re-running again
- Senator Estes: The General rule of the 5 absences and then your seat gets stripped, if they really thought that they weren't going to attend meetings then they wouldn't come back. They would only re-run if they felt like they changed
- Senator Santos: Accountability is important, we need to come up with a plan for the five absences
- Speaker Peckham: We are in agreement that this is an issue and are going to be having our brainstorming session at our next general meeting during this time so we can find possible solutions for this problem

O. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting End Time: 8:13