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University of Rhode Island Student Senate
November 13th, 2024 General Assembly Meeting Minutes

Recording Secretary: Matthew Cayer

Meeting Start Time: 6:31 pm

A. CALL TO ORDER

B. ROLL CALL

C. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

- *Senator Hudson moves to amend the agenda to remove nominations for Campus Affairs Chair, seconded by Chair McCloskey*
- *Agenda is approved as amended.*

D. READING AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

- *Chair Reyes moves to approve the minutes from last meeting, seconded by Chair Collins*

E. PUBLIC FORUM

Paige Ramsdell, Assistant Dean of Students for Accessibility and Inclusion and Director of the Disability, Access, and Inclusion (DAI) Office

- *Introduces new DAI team. Currently able to have same week appointments for students.*
- *“DAI’s mission is to collaborate with the URI community to create equitable access by design.”*
- *States misconceptions about DAI’s role on campus: DAI works to make accommodations for students with disabilities and advocate for them; does not have a role in physical campus accessibility, cannot alter course requirements, or manage the admissions process.*
- *Goes over the accommodations process, how to reach out, how to schedule meetings, and what each meeting entails.*
- *States that accommodations change each semester with new course schedules.*
- *Goes over data showing an overall increase in students with accommodations and appointments with DAI. Approved accommodations also increase.*
- *Explains what neurodiversity is.*
- *Highlights student-led DAI resources to increase student representation.*
- *Asks the Senate if they have any questions or ideas.*

- *Chair Reyes: Have there been struggles with professors about gaining accommodations?*
 - *Answer: DAI has access to resources and policies that*
- *Chair Reyes: Student Senate should advertise information to the students about DAI/What do you want the Student Senate to do for DAI?*
 - *Answer: Make it aware to students that there are resources available.*
- *Senator Hinrichs: Do you have examples of how neurodivergent students can connect with other students?*
 - *Answer: Have an open mind when interacting with each other. Be Nice.*
- *Senator Njende: How accessible are these resources for students from poor financial backgrounds?*
 - *Answer: DAI partners with other resources in order to increase accessibility to these resources.*
- *Senator Gonzalez: Is there a solution to gain accommodation in buildings that lack resources like elevators.*
 - *Answer: When buildings get built or renovated, they are required to be made up to code which includes those accommodations.*
- *Senator Sorto-Justiniano: How does DAI make sure they are supported by their case managers and how do they communicate if they do not feel supported by them?*
 - *Answer: These situations are internally reviewed and can always request a new case manager.*
- *President Goswami: Responds to Senator Gonzalez that the Campus Comprehension Plan includes plans to make buildings more accessible.*
- *Senator Hailu: Are there accommodations from DAI that can extend into a student's work environment.*
 - *Answer: There are collaboration attempts to increase accessibility in the workplace.*

Senator Kiersten Sundell and Dylan Murdock, Vice-President and President of Student Action for Sustainability

- *States that there is no center for sustainability efforts on campus. Needs to gain administrative and student support. Worked over the past two years to plan for a new centralized effort for sustainability on campus.*
- *Shows examples of URI successful efforts to increase sustainability. Much of these successes went towards students to use towards their efforts. Thousands of pounds of food have been diverted into other uses as a result. Emphasizes that this was done by students and urges the need for a sustainability center.*
- *Goes over first steps and future plans to make this happen. (create jobs for sustainability efforts)*
- *Mentions why this effort positively affects URI and Rhode Island as a whole.*
- *Cites how this initiative fits into university goals.*
- *Chair Hook: Asks if the center is a physical space or a network.*
 - *A: It depends on what the administration can do.*
- *Vice President Feroz: Says thank you for the presentation and prioritizing sustainability.*

F. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Student Organizations Committee

- *Chair Hook is back.*
- *There is one bill on the floor.*

- *Nominations for new chair later tonight.*

Academic Affairs Committee

- *Reminds the Senate to take care of themselves.*
- *Meeting with the Library Director on Tuesday, December 3rd at 5:00 pm.*

External Affairs Committee

- *Doing a food, clothing, and donation drive for the Johnnycakes Center.*

Cultural Affairs Committee

- *Met with President Parlange last week about multicultural organizations on campus and went better than expected.*
- *Pushing for a new D9 liaison on campus.*

Campus Affairs Committee

- *Blue light walk availability form sent out to faculty and will decide a time after. Everyone should come if available.*
- *Housing sent out a survey.*
- *Senator Sundell will be the new sustainability liaison.*

G. REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH/CABINET

Speaker of the Assembly

- *Lucas Dewitt will be taking over as the Senate advisor for the rest of the semester.*
- *Talked to the Board of Trustees asking for a member to show up and told no.*

Student Body President

- *Reminds the Senate about the "Do you Feel Heard" meetings.*
- *Going to the Faculty Senate tomorrow with Chair Collins and Senator Cayer.*
- *Asks questions to the Senate to increase internal communication.*
- *Wants to do an end of year event with the Senate.*
- *Asks Senate if they feel heard.*

Student Body Vice President

- *Met with TaP director to make sure the shuttle services work. Talked about bi-directional shuttle services to increase routes. Working on a survey for the students concerning the shuttles.*
- *Meeting with dining services to have dietary restrictions made accessible. Current process for specific restrictions is long.*

Director of the Treasury

- *"Treat everyday like it's National Kindness Day."*

H. REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Elections Committee

- *Wants an informal mentorship program for older senators to meet with new senators.*
- *Shows "how to" flyers made by Speaker Peckham and advises new senators to use them.*

I. REPORT OF THE COURT

J. ANNOUNCEMENTS

K. SPECIAL ORDERS

Nominations for Student Organizations Committee Chair

- *Senator Milner nominated by Speaker Peckham, seconded by Chair Collins.*
- *Senator Milner is certified as the Student Organizations Committee Chair.*
- *Interim chairs can be appointed by the President; Senator Hudson is officially appointed as interim Chair.*

L. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

M. NEW BUSINESS

- *Speaker Peckham moves to amend the title of SS-22/23-16 to SS-24/25-16, seconded by Senator Cayer*

SS-24/25-16 – RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SUSTAINABILITY CENTER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

Whereas, the University of Rhode Island (URI) currently lacks a centralized network to support and coordinate sustainable projects across URI Kingston campus, resulting in fragmented efforts and missed opportunities for collaboration, and

Whereas, over 115 professors at URI are working on sustainable research projects, with 50+ programs and labs dedicated to sustainability, their efforts are not coordinated, limiting the potential for inter-college collaboration and impeding URI's progress towards sustainable goals for the university, and

Whereas, student organizations like Student Action for Sustainability have successfully initiated projects such as post-consumer composting, demonstrating the demand and potential for sustainability initiatives on URI Kingston campus, and

Whereas, the establishment of a Sustainability Center would support URI's four core priorities: broadening impact, enhancing student achievement, fostering an inclusive culture, and powering the university of the future,

Whereas, a faculty proposal for the Institute of Food Systems and Sustainability has been brought before the University of Rhode Island Faculty Senate, and a student proposal for the Center for Sustainability has been brought before the President's Executive Council, now therefore be it,

Resolved, that the University of Rhode Island Student Senate supports all current efforts in establishing a Sustainability Center on URI Kingston campus, and

Resolved, that the Student Senate urges university administration to reference all current proposals and consider establishing a multidisciplinary Sustainability Center to coordinate sustainability efforts across URI Kingston campus, and

Resolved, that this center should be led by a Sustainability Director (or equivalent position) to serve as a central point of contact for sustainability initiatives, research, and collaborations, furthering URI's mission of enhancing student achievement and creating an equitable environment for future generations.

SPONSOR: Senators Sawyer, Estes, Gonzalez, Wentworth, Chair Hudson
BILL HANDLER: Senator Sundell
DATE: November 13th, 2024
ACTION: Vote Tonight

- *Senator Gonzalez moves to being voting, seconded by Senator Hinrichs.*
- *Bill passes unanimously.*

SS-24/25-17 – BILL CALLING FOR THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF “OCD MIND WARRIORS” AS A SENATE-RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATION

Whereas, the “OCD Mind Warriors” mission statement is, “Benefit the URI campus by spreading awareness on mental illness and giving support for those who are struggling”, and

Whereas, OCD Mind Warriors 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 OCD Mind Warriors as a recognized organization, and be it

Resolved, that OCD Mind Warriors 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:	November 13th, 2024
RECOMMENDATION:	(4-0-0)
EXPIRATION:	Valid Until Next Re-Recognition
ACTION:	Vote Tonight

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

N. GENERAL DISCUSSION AND OPEN FORUM

- *Chair Milner asks SoC Committee to meet after adjournment.*

O. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting End Time: 8:03