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URI STUDENT SENATE – GENERAL ASSEMBLY MINUTES

February 22, 2023

A. CALL TO ORDER - Speaker Bove called the meeting to order at 6:33pm.

B. ROLL CALL

Present: Bailey, Barbosa, Bose, Bove, Buono, Chadronet, Collins, Confessore, Cronan, DeLorenzo, Dumas, Galliano, Goswami, James, Johnson N, Johnson V, Mehorter, Mayers, Milner, Montoya, Peckham, Reyes, Rudolph, Sama, Scotti, Stahl, Summerson

Absent: Breene (excused), Newman, Palmer (excused), Piacentini, (excused), Rathbun, Small (excused), Sutton

Guests: Kiernan, Gamache, Hoover, Stiles, Reynolds, St-Germain

C. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Chair Montoya motioned to approve the agenda. Seconded by Senator Peckham.

Motion Passes.

D. READING AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Chair Montoya motioned to approve the minutes. Seconded by Senator Milner.

Motion Passes.

E. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vice President Gamache announced that Rhodython will be held on March 25th. She stated she will be sending out a link to sign up. She also announced that she will be sending out sign up sheets for the upcoming Welcome Days which will be held in the Ryan Center throughout March and April.

F. PUBLIC FORUM

Director of Dining Services Pierre St-Germain

Director St-Germain gave a detailed presentation on Dining Services plans for the upcoming semester. As part of these plans, Director St-Germain expressed his goals for expanded hours at most dining locations, including both campus dining halls, and the Rams Den. He also reported that Dining Services intends to open the Brookside Bistro and Pizza Express seven days a week, with the Rams Den and Pizza Express even accepting biometric swipes for students with residential meal plans on the weekends. He reported that these plans are contingent on Dining Services hiring an additional 40 - 50 staff members, but that he is optimistic this will happen due to a new advertising campaign the department is working on. He also unveiled the details of the 2023 - 2024 dining plans,

which feature a return to Ram Account allotments, and also changes dining dollar allocations to being on a semesterly basis rather than a weekly one. He concluded by reporting that Dining Services will be offering a "Taste of Africa" in coordination with SAWA on Friday evening in the Mainfare Dining Hall.

Speaker Bove stated that he is thrilled with the work Dining Services is doing, and that he thinks the new meal plans are great. He commented that he is in awe of the growth Dining Services has done in the last year, and he is very pleased to see such a focus on student feedback and concerns being reflected in the new meal plans.

Chair Montoya stated that due to a change in transition times in Mainfare Dining Hall, there is now a thirty minute window between 3:30pm and 4:00pm where students cannot eat anywhere on campus with a basic residential meal plan, and asked if it would be possible to adjust meal transition times to make them staggered to ensure there is at least one dining hall open.

Director St-Germain replied that he would discuss it with his team.

Senator Mayers stated that while Pizza Express is supposed to close until 10:00pm, it often closes at 8:30pm, and asked why that is occurring.

Director St-Germain replied that should not be happening and asked anyone to let him know if that continues to be an issue.

Senator Mayers asked of the Corner Store is part of Dining Services, to which Director St-Germain replied that it is. Senator Mayers then asked why items are often sold in the Corner Store at significantly higher prices than in the Emporium which is made up of for profit stores.

Director St-Germain replied that Dining Services evaluates the market every year to see what business are charging for items, and evaluates pricing in the Corner Store accordingly, he also said that he would check when the next study is set to be conducted.

Senator James expressed her frustration with a lack of consistency in quality of the offerings at the Pizza Express and in the Rams Den, and asked what Dining Services can do to ensure better quality control and consistency.

Director St-Germain replied that students should use the RhodyConnect App to submit comments about unsatisfactory experiences with Dining Services locations.

Speaker Bove suggested that Dining Services look into using GrubHub as a means to solicit student feedback on each GrabNGo order made at dining locations.

Senator V. Johnson asked what would happen if Dining Services failed to find the additional 40 - 50 staff members they need to achieve their goals for next semester.

Director St-Germain replied that it would depend on the severity of the labor shortage, and stated that in a worst case scenario Dining Services might undergo a complete reorganization.

Senator V. Johnson asked if Dining Services would be interested in partnering with more student organizations for special events.

Director St-Germain replied that they would be very open to that.

Chair Chadronet expressed his concerns with the refrigerators in the Corner Store, and replied that he recently bought some items that had gone bad due to improper refrigeration. He asked who he should contact about his concerns.

Director St-Germain recommended that he contact Robin Forman, the Corner Store's general manager.

Senator Mayers asked if it would be possible for students placing orders on GrubHub for premade items such as chips, to be served before students ordering items like latte's that need to be custom made.

Director St-Germain replied that he could set up express pages for locations such as the Daily Grind and the Brookside Bistro.

Senator Peckham asked if it would be possible for unused dining dollars to be rolled over to the next academic year rather than expiring at the end of the semester.

Director St-Germain replied that it was not possible, but he is looking in to allowing students to donate their unused dining dollars to the Rhody Outpost pantry so as not to waste the, /

President Kiernan asked why Butterfield's soft serve ice cream machine was removed.

Director St-Germain replied that it was due to staffing issues.

Dr. Stiles recommended that Chair Chadronet meet monthly with Director St-Germain.

G. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

- Student Organization Committee

Chair Johnson urged all senators to support his committee's bill on the floor.

- Academic Affairs Committee

Chair Summerson reminded everyone that midterms are coming up and to make sure they are prepared. She also reported that she will be sending out emails to all female identifying senators soon in regards to the Women's Summit.

- External Affairs Committee

No report.

- Cultural Affairs Committee

Chair Bailey reported that the Cultural Committee has launched their online cultural complaint form where students can report any DEI issues at URI. She also told any senator looking to help diversify the dining options on campus to reach out to her.

- Campus Affairs Committee

Chair Chadronet reported that he recently met with Vice President Reynolds to discuss getting the university to fund the Aunt Flow program. He also stated that addressing the brown water issues in residence halls will be one of the committee's top priorities for the remainder of the senate term.

- Executive Committee

President Kiernan stated her goals to improve voter turnout for spring elections, and asked everyone to help spread the word that elections are taking place next week. She also reminded senators to sign up for Rhodython, and stated that she is looking to plan a fundraiser in the next few weeks.

Senator Collins suggested setting up an informational booth to try and spread the word about elections in order to boost voter turnout.

Director Hoover reported that his budget proposal will be made public after Spring Break, and that he, Senator Bose, and Senator Cronan will be holding several discussion forums about the budget in the next few weeks.

Speaker Bove apologized for accidentally not including a SOC bill on the agenda. He also reminded the Senate that he will be missing next week's meeting and that Chair Chadronet will be presiding in his absence.

H. REPORT OF THE COURT

I. REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES

-Elections Committee

Chair Summerson reported that the committee will be meeting after adjournment.

J. SPECIAL ORDERS

Nominations and Elections for Off Campus Representative (6)

Nominations and Elections for On Campus Representative (1)

Nominations and Elections for At-Large Representative (1)

Nominations and Elections for College of Nursing Representative (1)

Nominations and Elections for College of Health Sciences Representative (1)

K. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

SS-22/23-37 Bill Calling for the Fourth Amendment to the University of Rhode Island Student Senate Constitution

Whereas, the Constitution of the University of Rhode Island Student Senate requires that students must pay the Student Activities Tax in order to serve as a member of any branch of the Student Senate, and

Whereas, because students who are enrolled part time pay a pro-rated Student Activities Tax based on the number of credits they are taking in a given semester, part time students have been deemed ineligible to serve in the Student Senate, and

Whereas, the University Registrars Office estimates that there are a total of 778 degree seeking part time undergraduate students enrolled in at least six credits for the Spring 2023 semester, and

Whereas, part time students are disproportionately Pell Grant recipients, first generation college students, students with children, etc., and

Whereas, the Student Senate recognizes that these groups are underrepresented and deserve a voice in student government, and

Whereas, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Speaker of the Assembly took on a much larger role in the functions of the Senate and the legislative process, and

Whereas, the constitution of the Student Senate currently allows for the Speaker of the Assembly to be a non member of the Assembly, and

Whereas, given the Speaker's expanded role in the legislative process, it would be beneficial to the Student Senate to ensure that the Speaker is elected from amongst the voting members of the General Assembly, and

Whereas, it is unlikely that anyone from outside of the Assembly would be elected to the Speakership in its current form, now therefore be it,

Resolved, that the following text be added to Article IV of the University of Rhode Island Student Senate

Constitution, "Degree-seeking undergraduate students who are enrolled part time in at least six credits, who have paid a pro-rated Student Activities Tax, may serve as representatives from that at-large and college constituencies, or in any office of the cabinet or court provided that they meet all other eligibility requirements outlined in this document.", and be it further,

Resolved, that the text within Article V, Section D, Part 5, of the University of Rhode Island Student Senate Constitution be amended to read as follows, "The Speaker of the Assembly chairs all meetings of the Assembly. The Speaker also appoints and removes the members of the Assembly's standing committees; removals are subject to the approval of the committee's chair. The Speaker of the Assembly is nominated and elected by and from the Assembly. Any officials duly appointed by The Speaker will serve as ex-officio non-voting members of the Assembly. The Speaker shall clearly communicate the instructions of the Assembly to the Cabinet. The Speaker may speak on behalf of the Assembly.", and be it further,

Resolved, that Article V, Section D, Part 2 of the University of Rhode Island Student Senate Constitution be struck in its entirety and that remaining sections of Section D be renumbered accordingly, and be it further,

Resolved, that the text within Article V, Section D, Part 1 be amended to read as follows, "The Director of Communications facilitates open communication and dialogue between the Senate and its constituents. The Director of Communications also maintains the Senate's instruments of organization, records and reports, and responds to requests for information regarding the proceedings and history of the Senate."

Resolved, that Article V, Section D, Part 3 of the University of Rhode Island Student Senate Constitution be struck in its entirety, and that all remaining parts of Section D be renumbered accordingly, and be it further,

Resolved, that the text within Article V, Section D, Part 4 of the University of Rhode Island Student Senate Constitution be amended to read as follows, "The Director of Treasury maintains and is a signatory of monies and assets controlled by the Senate, as well as its internal accounts, and ensures the enforcement of the Senate's financial policy.", and be it further,

Resolved, that the Elections Committee is instructed to place a referendum question on the adoption of this amendment on the ballots as part of the Spring 2023 General Elections.

SPONSORS: Speaker Bove, Chairs Montoya and Chadronet, Senators Cronan and Barbosa.

BILL HANDLER: Speaker Bove

DATE: February 1, 2023

RECOMMENDATION: (5 – 0 – 0)

EXPIRATION: Valid Until Reviewed

ACTION: Vote Tonight

Speaker Bove called for a roll call vote.

Ayes: Bailey, Barbosa, Bose, Bove, Buono, Chadronet, Collins, Confessore, Cronan, DeLorenzo, Dumas, Galliano, James, Johnson N, Johnson V, Mehorter, Mayers, Milner, Montoya, Peckham, Reyes, Rudolph, Sama, Scotti, Stahl, Summerson

Nayes: None

Absentions: None

Bill Passes.

L. NEW BUSINESS

SS-22/23-42 – BILL CALLING FOR THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF “URI Judo and Jiu Jitsu Club” AS A SENATE-RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATION

Whereas, the “ URI Judo and Jiu Jitsu Club” mission statement is, “For the URI Judo and Jiu Jitsu Club to provide opportunities for students to practice Judo and Jiu Jitsu and meet students who share similar interests in the hobby”, and

Whereas, URI Judo and Jiu Jitsu Club meets the requirements to be a senate-recognized student organization, and Whereas, it is custom for the senate to do so, now therefore be it,

Resolved, that the University of Rhode Island Student Senate acknowledges URI Judo and Jiu Jitsu Club as a recognized organization, and be it further,

Resolved, that URI Judo and Jiu Jitsu Club is provided with the first-year financial benefits package of \$75 which is to be paid out over the course of the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

SPONSOR: Student Organizations Committee

BILL HANDLER: Chairman Johnson

DATE: February 22, 2023

RECOMMENDATION: (5 - 0 - 0)

EXPIRATION: Valid Until Next Re-Recognition

ACTION: Vote Next Week

Chair Johnson motioned to immediately consider. Seconded by Chair Montoya.

Motion Passes.

Bill Passes.

SS-22/23-43 – BILL CALLING FOR THE ALLOCATION OF TWO \$3,000 GRANTS OUT OF THE GENERAL CONTINGENCY FUND TO THE STUDENT ALLIANCE FOR THE WELFARE OF AFRICA AND THE CAPE VERDEAN STUDENT ASSOCIATION

Whereas, both Student Organizations, the Student Alliance for the Welfare of Africa (SAWA) and the Cape Verdean Student Association (CVSA) had their budgets cut to \$250 for the ‘22/’23 fiscal year due to the fact that both organizations had not submitted their budget paperwork

Whereas, during the week of Monday February 13th, both SAWA and CVSA met with Director Hoover to explain their reasoning for not submitting budgets for the ‘22/’23 year,

Whereas, Director Hoover determined that it was not a lack of due diligence that these clubs did not participate in the budget process, but that instead the COVID-19 pandemic made it very difficult for these organizations to retain full e-boards/members, hold the events that they once held, and made it very difficult for the two clubs to continue to carry out their missions around campus. This ultimately led to Director Hoover determining that these two organizations had extenuating circumstances,

Whereas, both SAWA and CVSA are prominent, long-standing, multicultural clubs on campus who create a sense of belonging on campus for those who do not feel the latter, and ultimately make a substantial positive impact for and on this campus, now therefore be it,

Resolved, that the Student Alliance for the Welfare of Africa receive a \$3,000 grant from the general contingency fund, to help cover the costs for the proposed events presented to the DOT. SAWA will not be required to fundraise a portion of this amount, as they have already been using their own personal funds to cover costs for their proposed events, and be it further,

Resolved, that the Cape Verdean Student Association receive a \$3,000 grant from the general contingency fund, to help cover the costs for the proposed events presented to the DOT. CVSA will be required to fundraise 10% of this amount (\$300) by May 1st of 2024

SPONSORS: Treasury Committee
BILL HANDLER: VDOT Bose (Director Hoover)
DATE: February 22, 2023
RECOMMENDATION: (2 - 0 - 0)
EXPIRATION: Valid Until Reviewed
ACTION: Vote Next Week

Chair Montoya motioned to immediately consider. Seconded by Senator Barbosa.

Motion Passes.

Bill Passes.

M. GENERAL DISCUSSION AND OPEN FORUM

Chair Summerson mentioned that SAWA would be having its hair fashion show on April 8, which is expected to focus on diversifying hairstyles in professionalism.

Director Hoover expressed the importance of going to club events

President Kiernan told everyone to take some time to relax and breathe.

Speaker Bove that he and Senator Dumas will be attending tomorrow's Faculty Senate meeting.

Senator Peckham reported that the Academic Affairs Committee is working on an exam preparedness event.

N. ADJOURNMENT - Speaker Bove adjourned the meeting at 7:50pm.