



Memorial Student Union, Room 201 • 50 Lower College Road • Kingston, Rhode Island 02881 • T: 401.874.2261 • E: info@rhodysenate.org

URI STUDENT SENATE – GENERAL ASSEMBLY MINUTES March 8, 2023

A. CALL TO ORDER - Speaker Bove called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

B. ROLL CALL

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

Absent: Buono, James, Newman, Rathbun, Sutton.

Guests: Kiernan, Thiel, Stiles.

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 Montoyao motioned to approve the minutes. Seconded by Senator Piacentini.

Motion Passes.

E. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Summerson announced that it was International Women's day and Women's history month.

F. PUBLIC FORUM

Provost Barbara Wolfe and Vice Provost Anne Veeger

Provost Wolfe began by asking senators for a show of hands to indicate which academic college they are enrolled in. She then took a moment to address the safety threats made on YikYak earlier in the week.

Chair Summerson expressed her concerns about Professor's not being lenient with student attendance for those who did not feel comfortable attending classes on Monday due to the threats that were made. She also expressed her concerns about the university's response and lack of communication with students about the issue.

Provost Wolfe expressed that the safety of the URI community is her top priority, and asked senators how they think the university can more effectively communicate with students.

Senators proposed communication methods such as making use of the emergency text message system, sending

push notifications through the RhodyConnect App, adding a university alerts section to brightspace, greater use of social media, etc.

Provost Wolfe then moved to discuss President Parlange's proposed strategic plan for the university. And asked senators for their feedback.

Chair Montoya stated that URI is the only land-grant in the North East to have a "no aid" policy for international undergraduate students, and asked if plans can be made in the strategic plan to eliminate this policy.

Provost Wolfe replied that she will be looking into this.

Speaker Bove suggested that the Provost come back at a later date to present the Strategic Plan for the new Senate in April.

Chair Johnson asked how we as students could hold the faculty accountable to meet the goals stated in the strategic plan, and for consistent updates in regards to the execution of the Strategic Plan.

Provost Wolfe expressed that we will all be accountable to our community. She also expressed that all URI divisions are working on their Action Plans.

Speaker Bove, gladened by the mention of Faculty Senate, asked if the Provost appreciated the fact that Student Senate guarantees speaking time to their guests. He also expressed that we are mostly powerless as Student Senators but that the university expects much of our body, whilst Faculty Senate holds significant institutional power with very little expectations or accountability from the university. He expressed that it is unacceptable for a group like Faculty Senate to meet for two hours per month, and maintain the degree of institutional power that they currently hold. He concluded by stating that if Faculty Senate is consistently failing to complete their own agenda, then their power should be stripped from them and given to a body that will.

Provost Wolfe asked Speaker Bove if his comments were related to the attendance policy that Student Senate proposed.

Speaker Bove expressed that 9 times out of 10 that Student Senate tried to work with Faculty Senate they have either obstructed, ignored, or disregarded our attempts.

Provost Wolfe shared that it was important to keep trying to discuss issues with Faculty Senate, and not trying to force anyone's hand.

The Vice-Provost expressed that the problem Speaker Bove mentioned is real. The Vice-Provost is hoping to ask the Faculty Senate to adjust their bylaws so that critical business. Like the fact that the Director of the Honors Program has waited for more than two months to give their report.

Senator Dumas stated his appreciation for the presence of the Provost and Vice-Provost and expressed discomfort over the fact that the Director of the Honors Program has had to wait so long to give her report.

Chair Summerson, expressed her desire for more collaboration with future Academic Affairs Chairs. She shared that it is extremely difficult for her to get a response from Faculty Senate on important issues. She expressed that more communication is needed on all fronts.

Speaker Bove shared that he would greatly appreciate if the feeling of disrespect he and other members of the Student Senate has felt be conveyed to Faculty Senate.

G. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

- Student Organization Committee

Chair Johnson reported that important bills such as Re-Recognition and the FY24 Budget will be coming soon.

- Academic Affairs Committee

Chair Summerson stressed the importance of relaxing over Spring Break. She also reported that on Friday

March 24th from 1:00pm - 5:00pm in MU313 Senator Galiano will be hosting a professional headshot event, and March 27th 5pm - 6pm in MU314 Senator Galiano will host an in person exam preparedness workshop.

- External Affairs Committee

Chair Montoya, announced that there is going to be a voter registration drive held by the committee the week after spring break.

Speaker Bove suggested having the URI GOP and URI Dems work on this event.

- Cultural Affairs Committee

Chair Bailey, congratulated Senator Reyes on her dinner with the multicultural student organizations. She also reported that on March 30th Hillel will be hosting two Israeli Comedians as part of an event.

- Campus Affairs Committee

Chair Chadronet reported that President Parlange is currently working to secure a \$20M grant to replace pipes on campus, in an effort to eliminate the issue of brown drinking water in the Roger Williams Complex. He also reported that his top priority for the remaining weeks of the term will be to get Aunt Flow to be included as part of the university's budget.

- Executive Committee

President Kiernan reminded senators to wear sunscreen over Spring Break. She also reported that the Student Alumni Center on the Tuesday after Spring Break will be hosting a mentoring event at 6:30pm - 8:00pm. Additionally, she stated that Vice President Ellen Reynolds reached out about the new Student Affairs Student Advisory Council, and she is looking for one or two Student Senate representatives to serve a full year term. She asked interested senators to email her. She concluded by reminding everyone to sign up for RhodyThon and Pie a Senator.

Speaker Bove reported that he will officially be booking the venue and buses for the 2023 Student Senate Formal by the end of the week.

H. REPORT OF THE COURT

I. REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Elections Committee

Chair Summerson motioned to enter into executive session. Seconded by Chair Montoya.

Motion Passes.

Chair Summerson motioned to resume the public meeting, and to seal the minutes of the executive session. Seconded by Chair Montoya.

Motion Passes.

J. SPECIAL ORDERS

K. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

L. NEW BUSINESS

M. GENERAL DISCUSSION AND OPEN FORUM

Senator V.Johnson shared that anyone that has Title IX questions to please let her know.

President Kiernan shared information on Bill H5716, a bill that would supersede any town ordinances surrounding the number of students living in rental properties. She also reminded everyone to please keep the office clean.

Senator Small shared that he has received information that the Asbestos in the Will Theater is “mostly safe” as long as “no one touches it”. More testing will occur over spring break. There is also no dust collection process in the theater. The Industrial Physician Senator Small spoke with shared that the Will Theater will receive work. But Senator Small has not been able to corroborate those claims.

Dr. Stiles announced that the Student Senate Coordinator position has been offered and accepted by Amy White who will join us after Spring Break.

N. ADJOURNMENT - Speaker Bove adjourned the meeting at 7:42pm..