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## University of Rhode Island Student Senate

March 6, 2024 General Assembly Meeting Minutes

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### A. CALL TO ORDER

*Start time: 6:33PM (18:30)*

### B. ROLL CALL

**Present:** Buono, Cayer, China, Clyde, Collins, Cronan, DeLorenzo, Della Selva, Ebrahimipour, Hook, Hoover, Hudson, McCloskey, Mehorter, Newman, Njende, Peckham, Rudolph, Scola, Walding, Wentworth

**Absent:** Confessore, Corsi (Excused), Cruz (Excused), Emami (Excused), Hlaskova (Excused), Horowitz (Excused), Milner (Excused), Ndonye (Excused), Palmer (Excused), Reyes (Excused), Rinne (Excused), Sundell (Excused)

### C. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

*Chair Peckham moves to approve the agenda, seconded by Chair Hoover*

*Agenda passes unanimously*

### D. READING AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

*Chair Hoover moves to approve the minutes, seconded by Chair Clyde*

### E. ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Speaker Rudolph announces anything campaign related must wait until public forum*

*Speaker Rudolph announces Senator Newman shall be appointed as Speaker Pro Tempore for next meeting*

*Health Services is conducting their safe spring break event today until 8PM*

*Senator Cayer announces he will be meeting with someone to talk about changing the URI 101*

*curriculum (especially to make the curriculum for college-specific) on March 18th*

## **F. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

- Committee on Student Organizations  
*Deadline to submit re-recognition requests is March 8th (this friday)*
- Committee on Academic Affairs  
*Bracelet making fundraiser planned for March 27th 11:30-3:30*
- Committee on External Affairs  
*Tomorrow is the meeting at the State House at 4:30. URI students need to represent themselves in URI merch; please show up if you can!!!*
- Committee on Cultural Affairs  
*Narcan training on Monday went really well; Shoutout to Senator Walding for running it!  
Committee will have a booth on March 27th for national multilingualism day*
- Committee on Campus Affairs  
*Please fill out the spices form in the General Assembly group chat! We want to implement the spice shelf after spring break*

*If you're interested in Housing and Residential Life, please contact Chair Buono as Director Tom Cooley wants to choose 2 senators to serve on the Transportation and Parking Committee that was started this semester*

## **G. REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH/CABINET**

- Speaker of the Assembly  
*No report*
- President  
*No report*
- Vice President  
*No report*
- Director of the Treasury  
*No report*
- Director of Communications  
*No report*

## **H. REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

- Select Committee on Elections
- Select Committee on the 2024 Women's Summit

## **I. NEW BUSINESS**

### **SS-23/24-52 – BILL CALLING FOR AN ADDITION IN RESPONSIBILITY OF THE COMMITTEE ON STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS' CHAIR TO THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND STUDENT SENATE BYLAWS**

**Whereas**, in accordance with the bylaws, it is duty of the Committee on Student Organizations' Chair to assist student organizations in "carrying out their missions", as well as ensuring senate recognized student organizations are updating necessary information for prospective members and student involvement during the re-recognition period, and

**Whereas**, the website "URInvolved" is becoming increasingly popular among the undergraduate student body to gather information about senate recognized student organizations, and

**Whereas**, URInvolved is ran currently by an employee of the Office of Student Involvement, with the title of “Coordinator, Organization Advising & Systems Management”, and

**Whereas**, requiring a meeting between the appointed coordinator of URInvolved and the Committee on Student Organization Chair will enhance communication between the Student Senate and the Office of Student Involvement, as well as ease the duty of the Committee on Student Organizations Chair when relaying information about URInvolved to senate recognized organizations, now therefore be it,

**Resolved**, the amendment to the bylaws will appear in Article 2, Section 2, Part 1, as 2.15 and be it further,

**Resolved**, the amendment will read as follows, “The Chairperson of the Committee on Student Organization shall meet with the appointed ‘Coordinator, Organization Advising & Systems Management’ employee of the URI Student Involvement Office monthly to discuss URInvolved logistics, student organization concerns, and re-recognition when applicable”.

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| SPONSOR(S):   | Chair Cylde (For Herself, Speaker Rudolph, Chair Hoover, and Senators Collins, Hook, and Meherter.) |
| BILL HANDLER: | Chair Clyde   |
| DATE:         | 6 March, 2024   |
| ACTION:       | Vote Tonight  |

*Bill passes with unanimous consent*

**SS-23/24-53 – BILL CALLING FOR THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF “Lego Club” AS A SENATE-RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATION**

**Whereas**, the “Lego Club” mission statement is, “to endorse and explore students' sense of creativity. Lego is unique because there are so many themes and ways to build, and with each one comes different types of people to connect with. The club will use teamwork to create larger-than-life models, which we may eventually display around campus for students to see. We will host fundraisers, work with professors, as well as connect with Lego groups around the state to make these projects possible”, and

**Whereas**, the “Lego 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 the Lego Club as a recognized organization, and be it further

**Resolved**, that the “Lego Club” is provided with the first-year financial benefits package of \$75 which is to be paid out over the course of the 2023-2024 fiscal year.

|                 |                                    |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| SPONSOR(S):     | Committee on Student Organizations |
| BILL HANDLER:   | Chair Clyde                        |
| DATE:           | 6 March, 2024                      |
| RECOMMENDATION: | (4-0-0)                            |
| EXPIRATION:     | Valid Until Next Re-Recognition    |
| ACTION:         | Vote Tonight                       |

*Bill passes with unanimous consent*

**SS-23/24-54 – BILL CALLING FOR THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF “URI Water Polo Club” AS A SENATE-RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATION**

**Whereas**, the “URI Water Polo Club” mission statement is, “Provide students a chance to learn how to play water polo. Allow members to learn team working skills, trust, and friendships. Creates an unique club on campus as water polo is not common in the New England area. Gives an opportunity to workout in a group, promoting healthy fitness”, and

**Whereas**, the “URI Water Polo 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 the URI Water Polo Club as a recognized organization, and be it further

**Resolved**, that the “URI Water Polo Club” is provided with the first-year financial benefits package of \$75 which is to be paid out over the course of the 2023-2024 fiscal year.

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|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| SPONSOR(S):     | Committee on Student Organizations |
| BILL HANDLER:   | Chair Clyde                        |
| DATE:           | 6 March, 2024                      |
| RECOMMENDATION: | (1-0-0)                            |
| EXPIRATION:     | Valid Until Next Re-Recognition    |
| ACTION:         | Vote Tonight                       |

*Bill passes with unanimous consent*

**SS-23/24-55 – BILL CALLING FOR THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF “Israel Culture Club” AS A SENATE-RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATION**

**Whereas**, the “Israel Culture Club” mission statement is, “to welcomes individuals with ties to Israel or an interest in its culture, providing students with an Israeli community that embraces diverse backgrounds beyond solely religious affiliations. We aim to foster a relaxed yet meaningful environment where students can forge deep connections with each other and Israel. Particularly in the face of rising Antisemitism and Anti-Zionism, students require a safe space among supportive peers”, and

**Whereas**, the “Israel Culture 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 the Israel Culture Club as a recognized organization, and be it further

**Resolved**, that the “Israel Culture Club” is provided with the first-year financial benefits package of \$75 which is to be paid out over the course of the 2023-2024 fiscal year.

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|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| SPONSOR(S):     | Committee on Student Organizations |
| BILL HANDLER:   | Chair Clyde                        |
| DATE:           | 6 March, 2024                      |
| RECOMMENDATION: | (1-0-0)                            |
| EXPIRATION:     | Valid Until Next Re-Recognition    |
| ACTION:         | Vote Tonight                       |

*Senator Scola moves to vote on the bill next meeting; seconded by Senator Hook*

## **J. GENERAL DISCUSSION AND OPEN FORUM**

*Student speaker, Ethan, asking what we mean by Israel culture -- had to strike through the use of a slur in discussion -- Israeli culture is:*

*(paraphrase) Discrimination of jews of color, Israel only has European descendent prime ministers, Arab and jewish culture makes the illusion that we are all indigenous to Palestine despite the majority being from America, making all jews fit under. Zioninists conflate Judaism with zionism. Maybe Israeli culture is about a brutal apartheid regime. Is killing children and bombing hospitals a great new Jewish value. Rhetoric of settler fundamentalism, Auschwitz survivor disturbed by similarities between the Holocaust and genocide in Palestine. Finishes with a quote that the Israeli government cannot speak for all Jews*

*(paraphrase) What is meant by Israeli culture in the midst of a genocide in Gaza?*

*Senator Newman asking for clarification: (paraphrase) the bill is a safe space for peers in the face of rising anti-semitism and anti-zionism, need a safe space for their peers*

*Ethan's response: (paraphrase) how can you create a safe space when only 3-5% of the area is non-jewish without hurting the non local Jewish population*

*Director Feroz discusses the disturbing timing of the bill, BBC reported 30,000 Palestinians dead since Oct. 7th. Timing of bill, from a humanitarian perspective, is hurtful calling for recognition of an Israeli club at URI. Please consider: why is this club being recognized when it implicitly intends to recognize an ideology that is recognized as an extremist ideology based on the ethnic cleansing of other people? We are going against URI's cornerstone of rejecting intolerance. What is the need to have this club when Hillel exists? Hillel already supports Israeli culture and Jewish students. Has Hillel not established a safe space for students? Please be more considerate and not recognize this club because it challenges Hillel directly and goes against URI's mission statement.*

*Chair Buono understands significance of issue, not so much a matter of pushing it off to when we'll meet again and have discussion until after spring break, more of a matter of procedure and the bill on the floor has already motioned to after spring break, senate procedure of how we have to run the meetings and when public forum can be*

*Argha Goswami and Sanah Feroz speaking to the senate about their campaign. Discussing about running for their presidential campaign, and discussing how the head of the Elections committee has endorsed an opposing candidate creates bias and favoritism for the other candidates in the election.*

*(Paraphrase) The Chair of the Elections committee cannot pick sides regardless of what you believe is correct. Not maintaining neutrality and compromising the elections committee.*

*Senator Newman discusses using the RhodySenate instagram to like comments on their own candidacy page/site. (paraphrase) Using a RhodySenate account to like comments on things you posted but nothing that were posted.*

*Senator Mehorter: (paraphrase) as long as his opinion doesn't interfere with his job as Elections chair, should be able to endorse who he believes is correct.*

*Director Feroz disagrees with Senator Mehorter and says that the Chair of the Elections Committee is meant to be neutral and by endorsing an individual did not stay neutral.*

## **K. ADJOURNMENT**

*End time: 7:14PM (19:14)*