

Committee on Student Life

2022-2023 report submitted on May 3, 2023

Members: Eric Hall (Chair), Amy Mackenzie, Lisaury Dias, Loraine Quintero, Rosalind Sibielski, Pegah Rahmanian, Katherine Peralta, Cindy Kozil

The committee met 3 times during the academic year with very limited faculty participation but with some good discussion and ideas for the re-invigoration of this important committee. We submitted a draft proposal (attached) of a possible new mechanism to attempt to meet the charge of the council bylaws . Committee members attended the Presidents Town Hall meeting with undergraduate students as well as a focus group meeting of the Resident Student Association.

Both of these meetings were very informative but truly emphasized the observation that the bylaws for this committee are woefully outdated. It was noted that:

1. The office of student success has been charged with many of the tasks assigned to the Committee on Student Life and is in a much better position to communicate with all of the student-centered offices on campus.
2. Although incredibly concerned and interested, faculty do not have the time to replicate the contacts and communication possible by the Office of Student Success.
3. Attending student group focus groups is incredibly valuable, however, for the most part the information gained from attending multiple focus group meetings will be highly redundant and simply replicate information already imparted to the Office of Student Success.
4. It will be more productive and informative to the council if the bylaws for this committee are revised to shift its efforts from gathering data on student life to acting as a faculty advisory committee to the Office of Student Success and Council.

Given the insightful but somewhat frustrating efforts to meet the charges of the Bylaws, I propose that we convene a small group during the summer to draft a proposal for a re-write of the Bylaws of the Council Committee on Student Life to be considered and possibly implemented by Council during the 2023-2024 academic year.

Respectfully submitted, Eric Hall, Chair of the Committee on Student Life

Draft proposal submitted on 2/16/2023

RIC Council Committee on Student Life

Proposal for remainder of the academic year

From the Bylaws of the Rhode Island Council:

“A. Powers and Duties

1. The Committee shall:

- a. Develop and administer a regular process for monitoring the quality of student life at Rhode Island College and make recommendations as appropriate.
- b. Review the goals and objectives of those College agencies which affect the quality of student life.
- c. Recommend regulations concerning conduct of students while on campus or when representing the College; codify and publish such regulations as soon as is practicable.
- d. Have the authority to delegate responsibility to Student Community Government, Inc., residence hall councils, or other appropriate entities. Decisions on matters so delegated shall be subject to the approval of the Committee.”

This is a very difficult time for students which we have all seen in one capacity or the other. As a campus community, we need to be able to assess the most important issues and attempt to mitigate them. This is critical for student success, retention and most importantly for student mental health.

There are multiple organizations and administrative offices on campus which strive to serve the student body and optimize the educational experience of our students. The faculty, administrative support offices, student community government/organizations and students themselves should be actively engaged this process. However, the committee which should be of paramount importance in informing the campus of such efforts has not responded well to the exigencies of the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath.

It is hoped that with some changes in direction, this committee can fulfill the charge listed above and become a lively and dynamic mechanism to tie the faculty, administration and student body together. How?

That is what we need to work on as a committee for the remainder of this academic year. I think (you may disagree) that surveys are ineffectual and impersonal at a time when students need to feel appreciated. In addition, Student Community Government is planning a survey for students this semester. I was originally thinking about scheduling monthly meetings with

various administrative offices dealing with student issues such as health services, student success, financial aid, etc. However, after discussion with Cindy, I think we need to get closer to the students. To this end, the initial thought is to schedule meetings of this committee with student groups such as SCG, students in the residence halls, students in nursing, science majors, psychology majors, L4L, PEP or by topics/themes. Any groups willing to meet with us can be included. We should discuss the possible structure of the meetings and possibly procure funding to offer refreshments.

The basis of these meetings could be informed, at least in part, by the questions/issues that are raised at the Student Town Hall on March 1. By attending this town hall and encouraging student input, we can take these questions/issues and develop strategies for addressing these themes.

We will need to establish how this information is packaged for presentation to Council with consideration for the Powers and Duties as outlined in the Council By-Laws. We also need to keep in mind that with the current revisions to the Student Conduct committee, this committee has a responsibility to review such policies and agencies as well as recommend such regulations in the future.