

\*\*\*\*\*

(Revised September 22, 2009)

**Constitution and Bylaws of the University of Rhode Island Student Senate, Inc.**

**Article I. NAME**

The name of this organization shall be the “University of Rhode Island Student Senate, Inc.,” hereafter referred to as the “Senate”.

**Article II. PURPOSE, POWER, AND SCOPE**

Section A. Purpose

We, the undergraduate students of the University of Rhode Island, in order to provide an official and representative student government, to investigate student problems and take appropriate action, to provide the official voice through which student opinion may be expressed, to encourage the development of responsible student participation in the overall policy and decision making process of the university community, to foster an awareness of the students’ role in the academic community, to enhance the quality and scope of education at the University, to participate in University and Faculty committees, and to provide means for responsible and effective participation in the organization of student affairs, do ordain and establish this constitution and bylaws for the Student Senate of the University of Rhode Island.

Section B. Republican Form of Government

The Senate shall be the representative student government of the University of Rhode Island, deriving its power and legitimacy from the consent of the governed. The University of Rhode Island Student Senate shall always, without exception, maintain its corporation status with the Rhode Island Secretary of State for the explicit purpose of protecting the executive members and senators of the URI Student Senate from any and all questions of liability, and also to ensure that the URI Student Senate remains a separate and distinct entity from the University of Rhode Island and all underlying affiliates.

Section C. Student Leadership

As the representative voice of the undergraduate student body of the University of Rhode Island, the Senate shall be obligated to discuss any matters brought before the senate by a member of the URI community that affect students directly or indirectly as students or as citizens. When it is deemed necessary to fulfill that obligation, the Student Senate shall pass resolutions upon them in the name of the student body, circulate petitions, distribute leaflets, and take other action respecting such matters.

#### Section D. Power

The Senate shall have power to establish, recognize, and promote educational, social, and cultural activities for the enhancement of student life. The Senate shall, upon request, have the power to grant status as a recognized organization and to administer and expend the Student Activities Tax. Acts of the Senate shall take precedence over those of any other student organization, and acceptance of this provision shall be a necessary condition for obtaining recognized status.

The Senate shall have power to ensure effective student participation in the affairs and administration of the University of Rhode Island, and shall have all power necessary and proper to ensure appropriate undergraduate student representation in all university affairs.

### **Article III. MEMBERSHIP**

#### Section A. Composition

In addition to its officers, the Senate shall be composed of forty-five (45) popularly-elected voting representatives, distributed as follows:

The undergraduate degree-granting colleges of the University of Rhode Island, enumerated as the colleges of Arts & Sciences, Business, Engineering, Nursing, Pharmacy, Human Sciences and Services, and Environmental and Life Sciences, as well as University College, shall each be represented by one (1) representative elected by and from the student population of the corresponding college, and shall be referred to as College Representatives for the purposes of enumerated duties, and as Senators for all other purposes. Non-matriculating students paying the Student Activities Tax shall be considered to be a member of the University College constituency for all purposes.

Twenty (20) seats shall be distributed proportionally according to population between the Commuter Resident Group and Campus Resident Group, to be elected by and from the student population of each group, and members elected shall be referred to as Housing Representatives for the purposes of enumerated duties, and as Senators for all other purposes. The Campus Resident Group shall be defined as those student who live in any capacity on the URI Kingston campus,

including but not limited to two seats each for residence hall, on-campus apartment, Greek houses, and special academic program housing. All other students are defined as being members of the Commuter Residence Group.

Five (5) seats shall be reserved to be elected in the annual Fall election by and from students of Freshman standing. Members elected shall be referred to as Senators for all purposes.

Twelve (12) seats shall be elected by and from students at-large in the general undergraduate student population. Members elected shall be referred to as Senators for all purposes. Any full-time or part-time undergraduate student who pays the Student Activities Tax shall be considered a constituent of the Student Body at-large for all purposes.

#### Section B. Rights, Privileges and Obligations

Each person who is an officer or representative in the Senate, excluding the President, Vice-President, and Executive Officers appointed by the President of the Senate, shall for the purposes of this section be termed a 'Senator.' Senators shall have the right and the obligation to be present for the duration of all the general meetings of the Senate, to serve as a member of at least one (1) standing committee by attending and participating for the duration of all its general meetings, and to post and maintain at least one (1) office hour per week unless a higher minimum is indicated under the section regarding specific duties of that particular member.

Senators shall have the right to engage in commentary, debate, make and second motions, and vote, in the general body as well as appointed committee, in conformance with the general form and structure of the rules of order the Senate has adopted (see Article XI) as adjudicated by the Chair of the Senate. The person occupying the Chair of the Senate shall, regardless of other position or contrary language, not enjoy the ability to engage in commentary, debate, make and second motions, nor vote.

Senators shall not be restrained nor fear retribution from expressing themselves according to the dictates of their conscience, in speech or print, so long as their utterances are in accord with state and federal law; any legislation which would seek to remove privileges from a member in response to such an utterance is void. This section shall not be construed so as to grant the President's exclusive power to represent the duly established positions of the Senate to any other member without the President's prior expressed consent.

Each member who is termed a College Representative shall, in addition to the right, privileges, and obligations enumerated above for Senators, be required and empowered to act as the formal liaison to the college to which they belong, second in priority only to the President of the Senate, and shall be charged with

informing the general Senate regarding issues and concerns particular to the constituents of their college, and shall additionally work directly with the Dean of the corresponding college and his/her subordinates in pursuit of the fulfillment of that duty. (Article V, Section D, Part 1, subpart a)

Each member who is termed a Housing Representative shall, in addition to the rights, privileges, and obligations enumerated above for Senators, be required to caucus with Housing Representatives of their Resident Group, to select amongst themselves by ballot a member to serve as the formal liaison to each Resident Group, no later than two (2) weeks after the Annual Meeting, nor later than two (2) weeks after the position has for any reason become vacant. This caucus shall in no way be inferred to act nor actually act as a policy-making body, and does not have the power to sponsor legislation. Following the selection of the liaison, the caucus shall dissolve, and reform only at such time as is necessary to select a liaison.

The Campus Housing Liaison shall be required and empowered to act as the formal liaison to the Office of Housing the Residential Life, second in priority only to the President of the Senate, and shall be charged with informing the general Senate regarding issues particular to their residential constituents, and shall be assisted in this task by other Housing Representatives of their Resident Group, and shall additionally work directly with the Director of Housing and Residential Life and his/her subordinates in pursuit of that duty. (Article V, Section D, Part 1, subpart b)

The Commuter Housing Liaison shall be required and empowered to serve as the formal liaison to the Commuter Housing Office, second in priority only to the President of the Senate, and shall be charged with informing the general Senate regarding issues particular to their residential constituents, and shall be assisted in this task by other Housing Representatives of their Resident Group, and shall additionally work directly with the Vice President of Student Affairs and his/her subordinates in pursuit of that duty. (Article V, Section D, Part 1, subpart b)

### Section C. Attendance

Each person who is an officer or representative in the Senate, except officers listed specifically herein shall have a duty to attend each general meeting of the Senate. Attendance shall be defined as being present at both roll calls. Presence at only one roll-call in a given meeting shall constitute a half-absence and shall accrue in the same manner as full absences. A request to be excused from a meeting must be presented to the Vice President before Noon on the day of the meeting. Each senator will be allowed two excused and one unexcused absence. The criteria for excused absences are as follows:

1. An exam scheduled during a general Senate meeting.

2. A religious holiday.
3. A serious illness and/or death in a family.

Upon exhausting the three attendance excuses, senators will be required to present their additional excuses to the Rules and Ethics Committee, or where there is a conflict of interest to the Executive Committee, whereupon the committee will issue a decision of the validity of the excuse. If no excuses are presented to the Rules and Ethics Committee shall remove the person from Senate.

With regard to the missing of meetings of standing committees, the penalty shall be written warning from the chairperson of the committee upon the first offense, and written warning upon the second offense, and removal from Senate upon the third offense. At this time, the person shall be given one week to appeal this to the Rules and Ethics Committee.

The Rules and Ethics Committee in accordance with their procedures shall handle the removal of any member of the Senate.

#### Section D. Eligibility

No person other than a full- or part-time undergraduate student of the University of Rhode Island who pays the Student Activities Tax may be a representative or officer in the Senate. In order to be eligible to serve as either a Student Senator or a Student Senate Executive Officer, the candidate shall be required, upon request, to furnish written proof that he or she has not been in poor academic standing (below a 2.0/4.0 cumulative G.P.A) for greater than two consecutive semesters to the Vice President of the Senate. A letter from the Office of the Registrar will serve this purpose. No other eligibility requirement shall be imposed which requires examination or release of academic, disciplinary, or other private records protected under the law.

#### Section E. Leave of Absence

In the event that an officer of the Senate finds him or herself in a circumstances where they may not fulfill one or more basic job requirements, but has a reasonable belief that the circumstance is temporary may, instead of resigning, request an extended leave of absence according to the following procedure:

1. The officer submits a written petition of a leave of absence to the Rules and Ethics Committee, including at minimum of the following information:
  - a. The reason the officer cannot fulfill his/her basic job requirements
  - b. The basis for the officer's belief that the reason can be resolved in a short period
  - c. The expected period of absence, which in no case may be more

than eight (8) weeks

- d. Their recommendation as to a qualified member who will serve as their interim replacement during their leave of absence
2. Rules & Ethics Committee deliberates on the legitimacy of the request and by majority vote either grants or declines it. There is no appeal.
3. If approved, the request is forwarded to the Executive Committee, who appoints by majority vote a member to serve in the vacated position. This person shall be termed an 'interim officer' and shall enjoy all rights, privileges, duties, obligations, and restrictions as are indicated by the position vacated.
4. At the conclusion of the term of absence, the officer on leave immediately and automatically reclaims all rights, privileges, duties, obligations, and restrictions of the position vacated. The interim officer abdicates the position and resumes their normal duties. It is incumbent upon the interim officer to prepare a report for the officer on leave detailing the activities of the committee during their absence.

Under no circumstances shall the provisions of this section apply to the offices of the President or Vice President of the Student Body.

## **Article IV. MEETINGS**

### **Section A. Regular Meetings**

Regular meetings of the Senate shall be held in the Senate Chambers of the University of Rhode Island Memorial Union at 6:30 p.m. every Wednesday on which classes are held from September to May, inclusive, unless otherwise ordered in an exceptional situation by the Senate or by the Executive Committee. The following is to be considered an exceptional situation: The URI Student Senate will not meet on the Wednesday prior to Thanksgiving.

### **Section B. Annual Meeting**

The first regular meeting after Spring Break shall be known as the Annual Meeting and shall be for the purpose of swearing in newly elected representatives, the newly elected President and Vice President, the submission of the presidential executive committee nominations to the Senate, and for any other business that may arise.

### **Section C. Summer Recess**

The President, Vice President, Finance Chair, and two members elected by the Senate at the final meeting of the academic year, shall have all power necessary

and proper to dutifully conduct the business of Senate during the summer recess, except for amendments to the constitution and bylaws. These decisions shall be binding upon the confirmation of the Senate at the second meeting of the academic year. They should also foster open communication with all Senators and student organizations.

In the event that any required member can not serve, the Senate shall nominate replacements. If no officer with signatory power remains one shall be appointed by the president.

#### Section D. Special Meetings

Special meetings of the Senate may be called by the President or by the written request of seven (7) senators, which shall be submitted to the Vice President. The purpose of the meeting shall be stated in the call, and no business may be transacted except that mentioned in the call. If the special meeting is requested while school is in session for a day when classes meet, then at least two (2) days notice shall be given. If school is not in session then at least ten (10) days notice shall be given. Quorum must be confirmed before binding business can be conducted. Scheduled class attendance shall be considered an excuse for absence at a special meeting in addition to the excuses listed as acceptable under Article III, Section C.

If at any time, the offices of Student Body President and Vice President are vacant simultaneously, a special meeting of the Senate shall be called to internally elect a new President. The internal election shall be held in accordance with policies regarding the internal election of officers mentioned later in this document.

#### Section E. Quorum

A majority of the persons eligible to participate in the proceedings of the Senate as voting senators shall constitute a quorum.

#### Section F. Open Meetings

The Senate is a public body bound by the open meeting laws of the state (**RIGL 42-46-1 to RIGL 42-46-14 inclusive**), except insofar as financial penalties may be concerned or as such laws may conflict with the provisions contained herein.

#### Section G. Closed Meetings

1. Any standing committee or the Senate as a whole may hold a meeting closed to the public upon an affirmative vote of the majority of its members, if the business transacted meets one of the following conditions:

- a. Any discussion of job performance, character, or physical or mental health of a person or persons, provided that such person or persons affected are notified prior to the action and may require that the discussion be held at an open meeting.
  - b. Any investigation proceedings regarding allegations of misconduct, either civil or criminal.
2. The minutes of a closed meeting shall be made available to committee or Senate members at the next regularly scheduled meeting unless the body votes to keep the minutes closed. If the minutes remain closed, only members of the body that closed the meeting who were present when the meeting was closed may access them.
3. All Rules & Ethics Committee members are required to excuse themselves from any closed meetings except if they are managing a complaint, bill, or impeachment proceedings.
4. If any of the preceding four conditions are not met, the meeting shall be considered “open”, and the minutes of that meeting shall be accessible to the public.
6. If the meeting is to be closed, those making such accusations must be present before any business may be conducted.

## **Article V. OFFICERS**

### Section A. Popularly Elected Executive Officers

The popularly elected officers of the Senate shall be President of the Student Body and Vice President of the Student Body. All popularly elected officers shall be elected as prescribed to serve for one year term, or until their successor takes office. They shall post and maintain a minimum of 5 office hours a week. Their term of office shall normally begin at the annual meeting each year and shall end at the Annual Meeting of the legislative term in which they presided.

#### Part 1. President of the Student Body

##### Subpart a. Responsibilities and Powers

The President of the Student Body shall generally provide leadership to the Senate and shall have all powers necessary and proper to:

1. Approve or veto legislation.

- a. After a bill is passed by the senate, the President shall have 48 hours from the time a bill is passed to determine whether to sign or veto the bill. If the bill is signed it goes into effect immediately.
  - b. If a bill is vetoed, it is automatically referred back to its sponsor(s). If the bill is reintroduced, it must be introduced in its original form and requires a 2/3 vote in favor to pass. A reintroduced bill may not be vetoed.
  - c. If the President fails to either sign or veto a bill and 48 hours have passed, the bill immediately goes into effect at the conclusion of the 48 hour period.
2. Serve *ex officio* as chairperson of the Executive Committee.
  3. Appoint student representatives to university boards, committees, and agencies, unless objected upon by the Executive committee.
  4. Hold signatory power jointly with the Treasurer of the Senate over the internal accounts of the Senate.
  5. Hold signatory power jointly with the Finance Chairperson of the Student Body over all Student Activities Tax revenues and such other accounts as are necessary for the management of the Student Activities Tax
  6. Temporarily withhold stipends until Senate can consider such a decision.
  7. Act as the official representative of the Senate in executing its acts and instructions.
  8. Serve *ex officio* as the Chief Executive Officer of the Student Body.
  9. Facilitate an open line of communication between the Administration of the University and the Student Senate.
  10. Nominate the appointed members of the executive committee according to the following procedure:
    - a. At the annual meeting of each year, the Newly Elected President shall make one nomination of a member of the student body for each of the following executive positions: Secretary, Treasurer, Director of Communications.
    - b. No nominee shall take office until he/she has received a confirmation from the Senate. A confirmation shall be defined as majority vote of the senate in favor of the candidate taking office. If a nominee fails to receive confirmation by the Senate, the President shall make a second nomination for that position. If a second presidential nominee for any one position fails to receive confirmation by the Senate, the position shall be opened to an internal election by the full senate, to be held following the guidelines governing internal elections of officers.
    - c. No confirmation may be sought for any nominee whose nomination has not been announced during a regular Senate Meeting.

- d. No nominee may seek confirmation in the same meeting as his/her nomination has been announced.
- e. Upon the vacancy of any of the aforementioned positions, the President shall as soon as possible, nominate a member of the Student Body to fill the vacant position following the nomination procedure outlined above in steps a-c.

#### Subpart b. Eligibility

The offices of the President of the Student Body may not be held concurrently with any other office or representative seat neither within the Senate, nor with any other executive position on any other Student Senate recognized organization.

#### Subpart c. Vacancy

In the event that the office of the President of the Student Body becomes vacant as a result of death, resignation, or other cause, the Vice President of the Student Body shall succeed to the office for the remainder of the term.

At that time, the new President shall nominate another member of the student body to serve the remainder of the term as Vice President. Before that nominee can take office, the Senate shall confirm his/her nomination by secret ballot with a simple majority vote. Should a nominee fail to receive confirmation from the Senate, the President shall nominate another member of the student body whose nomination shall also be subject to Senate confirmation. This process continues until a new Vice President is chosen.

### Part 2. Vice President of the Student Body

#### Subpart a. Responsibilities and Powers

The Vice President of the Student Body shall assist the President of the Student Body and shall have all powers necessary and proper to:

1. Participate in the proceedings of the Senate as the moderator of the meeting.
2. Manage the attendance records of the general Senate Meetings.
3. Serve *ex officio* as a voting member of the Executive Committee.
4. Act as President of the Student Body in the temporary absence of that officer, the moderator of the meeting shall be appointed by the Executive Committee during the absence.
5. Speak on behalf of the President in his/her absence.
6. Serve as the organizer of the Senior Week Committee.

7. Serve as the organizer of the committee for the selection of the Senior Speaker.
8. Develop and conduct Senate Orientation, Recruitment, Retreats and Social events.
9. Appoint and remove members of the standing committees, except the chairpersons of those committees. This power does not extend over the Executive Committee, nor over the Rules and Ethics Committee.
10. Mandate the Senate's compliance with the bylaws.
11. Review Committee minutes and Attendance.
12. Advise the Senate on when elections are supposed to be held.
13. Maintain internal group dynamics and mediate informal internal disputes.

#### Subpart b. Eligibility

The offices of the Vice President of the Student Body may not be held concurrently with any other office or representative seat within the Senate, nor with any other executive position on any other Student Senate recognized organization.

#### Subpart c. Vacancy

In the event that the office of Vice President of the Student Body becomes vacant as a result of death, resignation, succession to the office of President of the Student Body, or other cause, the President shall nominate another member of the student body to serve the remainder of the term as Vice President. Before that nominee can take office, the Senate shall confirm his/her nomination with a simple majority vote. Should a nominee fail to receive confirmation from the Senate, the President shall nominate another member of the student body whose nomination shall also be subject to Senate confirmation. This process shall continue until a new Vice President is chosen.

### Section B. Internally Elected Executive Officers

The internally elected officers of the Senate shall be the Chairperson of the Finance Committee, the Academic Affairs Committee, the External Affairs Committee, the Campus Affairs Committee, the Cultural Affairs Committee, and the Student Organization Advisory and Review Committee (herein referred to as SOARC). All internally elected officers shall be elected by a majority vote of the Senate through secret ballot. Both the Chairperson of the Finance Committee and the Chairperson of SOARC shall abide by the General Responsibilities and Powers of Standing Committee Chairpersons as provided in Article V, Section C, Part 1, subpart a. They both shall also abide by the Terms of Eligibility for standing committee chairpersons as outlined in Article V, Section C, Part 1, subpart b.

## Part 1. Special Responsibilities and Powers

### Subpart a. The Chairperson of the Finance Committee

1. The term of the Chairperson of the Finance Committee will begin at the final meeting of the academic year and be for one year.
2. The Chairperson of the Finance Committee shall additionally have powers necessary and proper to:
  - a. Serve *ex officio* as Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer of the Student Body and be functionally responsible for investing and managing Student Activities Tax Revenues.
  - b. Serve *ex officio* as a voting member of the Student Senate.
  - c. Hold signatory power jointly with the President of the Student Body over all Student Activities Tax revenues and such other accounts as necessary for the management of the Student Activities Tax. Furthermore, shall have the power to freeze funds and/or accounts that are in violation of established financial policies and procedures on a temporary basis.
  - d. Attend the monthly organizations meeting.
  - e. Shall post and maintain a minimum of 5 office hours a week.
  - f. Oversee the budgeting process of the Student Activities Tax, and to call and conduct special meetings of the finance committee for that purpose.
  - g. Develop, maintain, construe and publish The Finance Handbook of financial procedures, which shall be binding upon all recognized student organizations, provided that all changes shall require the formal advice and consent of the Senate. Consent shall consist of approval of a majority of the Senate.
3. The office of Chairperson of the Finance Committee may not be held concurrently with any other representative seat, nor may the Chairperson of the Finance Committee be an executive member of any other Senate recognized organization.

### Subpart b. The Chairperson of SOARC

1. The term of the Chairperson of the SOARC Committee will begin at the final meeting of the academic year and be for one year.
2. The Chairperson of SOARC shall additionally have powers necessary and proper to:
  - a. The Chairperson of SOARC shall also have the authority to act as an impartial arbiter of conflicts that result involving student organizations.
  - b. Serve *ex officio* as a voting member of the Senate.

- c. Act as or designate a moderator for the monthly organizations meeting.
3. The office of Chairperson of SOARC may not be held concurrently with any other representative seat, nor may the Chairperson of SOARC be an executive member of any other Senate recognized organization.

#### Subpart c. Standing Committee Chairpersons

##### 1. General Responsibilities and Powers

The chairperson of each standing committee shall have all powers necessary and proper to:

1. Chair, call, and conduct all meetings of the committee.
2. Oversee all activities of the committee.
3. Ordinarily act as reporting member of the committee on the Senate floor.
4. Act as the official representative of the committee in discharging its responsibilities.
5. Participate in the proceedings of the Senate as a voting member.
6. Serve *ex officio* as a voting member of the Executive Committee.
7. Participate as a voting member of their committee.
8. Maintain accurate attendance records of the senators seated on their committees.
9. Upon the election of a new President, present to the new president, in writing, a recommendation for a successor.

##### 2. Eligibility:

The office of chairperson of a standing committee, other than the Executive Committee, may not be held concurrently with any other representative seat.

##### 3. Term:

The term of the chairpersons of standing committees will begin at the meeting following the annual meeting, upon confirmation by the full Senate, and continue until the forthcoming annual meeting or until confirmation of a successor.

#### Section C. Executive Officers Nominated by the President

The following positions shall be nominated by the President of the Student Body as outlined in Article V, Section A, Part 1, Subpart a. Executive officers so nominated, in view of their non-representative nature, shall neither vote in the

Senate nor be counted in the quorum of the Senate. These officers shall not participate as a voting member in the finance or SOARC committees unless specifically mentioned in their descriptions or by specific legislative exception in the case of special committees created by the Senate. Notwithstanding specific provisions to the contrary, it is the duty of each person holding a presidentially appointed position to attend full Senate meetings; presidential appointees are bound by the same attendance policy as general Senators.

## Part 1. Secretary of the Senate

### Subpart a. Responsibilities and Powers

The Secretary of the Senate shall have all powers necessary and proper to:

1. Serve *ex officio* as a voting member of the Executive Committee.
2. Shall be responsible for the recording of minutes at the general meetings of the Senate.
3. Shall be responsible for the management of the weekly agendas and prepare them for all meetings of the general Senate.

### Subpart b. Eligibility

The office of Secretary of the Senate may not be held concurrently with any representative seat, nor with any other office of the Student Senate.

### Subpart c. Term

The term of the Secretary of the Senate shall begin one week after his or her confirmation by the Senate. In the case of a mid-year vacancy, the term shall begin upon confirmation.

## Part 2. Treasurer of the Senate

### Subpart a. Responsibilities and Powers

The Treasurer of the Senate shall have all powers necessary and proper to:

1. Have responsibility for, administer and record the internal accounts of the Senate
2. Annually prepare and present the internal budget of the Senate
3. Hold signatory power jointly with the President of the Student Body over the internal accounts of the Senate
4. Shall be excluded from serving as a member of the Finance Committee
5. Serve *ex officio* as a voting member of the Executive Committee

### Subpart b. Eligibility

The office of Treasurer of the Senate may not be held concurrently with any representative seat, nor with any other officer of the Student Senate.

#### Subpart c. Term

The term of the Treasurer of the Senate shall begin one week after his or her confirmation by the Senate. In the case of a mid-year vacancy, the term shall begin upon confirmation.

### Part 3. Director of Communications

#### Subpart a. Responsibilities and Powers

The Director of Communications (DoC) of the Senate shall have all powers necessary and proper to:

1. Serve as an *ex officio* voting member of the Executive Committee.
2. Shall have the responsibility to oversee the dissemination of information regarding the functions and activities of the Senate to the campus community and all relevant external parties including but not limited to a newsletter, produced no less than once a semester, informing the university community about the current and future projects of the Senate.
3. Shall report to the full Senate on any and all matters related to its pending decisions.
4. Maintain a running record of and promote completing of committee goals/projects.

#### Subpart b. Term

The term of the Director of Communications of the Senate shall begin one week after his or her confirmation by the Senate. In the case of a mid-year vacancy, the term shall begin upon confirmation.

#### Subpart c. Conflict of Interest

The office of Director of Communications may not be held concurrently with any representative seat, or with any other office of the Student Senate. The Director of Communications shall never vote in the Senate nor be counted in the quorum of the Senate.

### Section D. General Officers

General officerships, conferred through processes outlined in this section, may be held concurrently with any representative seat of the Senate except those seats who are ex officio voting members of the Executive Committee, though this should not be understood as a prerequisite of the officership unless otherwise explicitly indicated.

If the officership is held simultaneously with any representative seat, the status of general officer shall not interfere with any of the rights, privileges and obligations conferred by Article III, Section B.

If the officership is not held simultaneously with any representative seat, the officer, in view of their non-representative status, shall neither vote in the Senate nor be counted in the quorum of the Senate. These officers shall not participate as a voting member in the finance or SOARC committees, unless specifically mentioned in their descriptions or by specific legislative exception in the case of special committees created by the Senate.

#### Part 1. Liaisons

Liaisons serve as the primary mode of communication between their assigned group or body and the Senate. To this end, Liaisons shall have all powers necessary and proper to:

1. Act to refer messages from their assigned group or body to the Senate.
2. Act, with the permission of the President, to confer messages to their assigned group or body regarding the positions and acts of the Senate.
3. Produce a written report regarding the general status of and specific concerns pertinent to the group or body to which they are assigned, to be submitted to the President during the last meeting of each month that the Senate is in session.
4. As needed, report to any standing committee and the Senate as a whole to act as an information resource regarding their assigned group or body and to indicate to the appropriate legislative committee when issues in that group or body require the committee's attention.

The Senate may, by legislation, directly confer instructions to a specific liaison concerning any of their duties. Instructions so conferred shall have priority over all other instructions.

#### Subpart a. College Liaisons

College Representatives are, *ex officio*, the Liaison to the office of the Dean of the college under which they were elected, as well as the Liaison to that college's constituency generally. These two roles shall be jointly considered and indivisible, and shall for all purposes be considered one officership, which shall be hereafter referred to as the College Liaison.

College Liaisons shall normally serve from the Annual Meeting in which they were confirmed until the following Annual Meeting. In cases of vacancy where it would be impossible or impractical to immediately hold an internal election to replace the College Representative, a College Liaison may be appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate, following the general procedures outlined in Article V, Section A, Part 1, Subpart a. Any such appointee must be a member of the college to which they would act as Liaison, and shall serve only until the corresponding College Representative seat is filled.

#### Subpart b. Housing Liaisons

Housing Representatives are empowered, *ex officio*, to select by ballot amongst themselves one (1) representative from each housing constituency who shall serve as the Liaison to the appropriate Housing Office, as well as to the appropriate housing constituency generally. These two roles shall be jointly considered and indivisible, and shall for all purposes be considered one officership, which shall be hereafter referred to as Housing Liaison.

Housing Liaisons shall normally serve from the time in which they are elected by the relevant caucus (Article III, Section B) until the following Annual Meeting. In cases of vacancy the relevant caucus shall select a new Liaison (Article III, Section B). In cases where there are no representatives of that housing constituency available, and it would be impossible or impractical to immediately hold an internal election to replace a Housing Representative, a Housing Liaison may be appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate, following the general procedures outlined in Article V, Section A, Part 1, Subpart a. Any such appointee must be a member of the residence group to which they would act as Liaison, and shall serve only until a Housing Representative seat is filled.

#### Subpart c. Special Liaisons Appointed by the President

The following Special Liaisons, being expressly for the purpose of representing general student body opinions and interest to specific governing bodies and collecting objective information relating to their operation, shall be appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate, following the general procedures outlined in Article V, Section A, Part 1, Subpart a, immediately following the establishment of the Executive Committee: Faculty Senate Liaison, Multicultural Center Liaison, Interfraternity Council Liaison, Panhellenic Council Liaison, Club Sports Association Liaison.

In addition to the general powers listed under Article V, Section D. Part 1, special liaisons shall additionally have the power to:

1. Observe the legislative and executive actions of their appointed governmental body and advise that body regarding the Student Body's interests generally.
2. Negotiate on behalf of the Student Body with their appointed governmental body on matters affecting the Student Body's interests generally, within the confines of the collective Acts of the Senate and the express instructions of the President of the Student Body.

In addition to the qualifications and restrictions listed under Article V, Section D for general officers, a special liaison must not be a constituent of the body to which they are appointed. In such cases where, during the course of service, a special liaison becomes such a constituent, he/she is required to immediately resign as liaison and the President shall appoint a replacement following the general procedures outlined in Article V, Section A, Part 1, Subpart a.

## **Article VI. STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

### Section A. Standing Committees

The standing committees of the Senate shall be the Executive Committee, the Finance Committee, the Student Organization Advisory and Review Committee, the Committee on Campus Affairs, the Committee on Academic Affairs, the Committee on External Affairs, and the Committee on Cultural Affairs. Each standing committee shall propose and consider legislation relevant to the charge of the committee, and shall report all such legislation to the Senate together with recommendations for passage, failure, or amendment. The Senate shall supervise its committees, and no action by a committee with power shall conflict with the acts and instructions of the Senate. Each standing committee shall meet at least once each week during which the Senate holds a regular meeting. No standing committee may meet while the Senate is meeting. A majority of the voting members of each standing committee shall constitute its quorum.

#### Part 1. General Committees

##### Subpart a. Voting Privileges

Members will gain voting privileges at the second meeting they attend, at the first meeting of the semester, or the first meeting after being elected.

##### Subpart b. Vice Chairperson Charge and Powers

1. Shall be appointed by the chair of the committee and approved by the executive committee.
2. May run meetings in the absence of the chairperson.
3. Maintain the portfolio of the committee which shall include:
  - a. Minutes
  - b. Agenda
  - c. Pending and Past Work

#### Subpart c. Procedures

1. Quorum is needed to make a binding decision.
2. The chair may be overruled on any matter with a three-fourths ( $\frac{3}{4}$ ) vote of the committee.
3. A Recommendation for action upon legislation shall be determined by a majority vote of the committee.

### Part 2. Executive Committee

#### Subpart a. Charge and Powers

The Executive Committee shall act as a steering committee for the Senate, assisting the President of the Student Body in the administration of student government, and shall have all power necessary and proper to:

1. Refer legislation to the appropriate standing committee.
2. Propose legislation in regards to the constitution and bylaws.
3. Members of the Executive Committee each shall post and maintain a minimum of three (3) office hours in the Student Senate office between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. weekdays with the exception of the Finance Chair. No member of the Rules and Ethics Committee may serve on the Executive Committee.

#### Subpart b. Composition

The officers of the Senate, (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and DoC) and all other standing committee chairs shall constitute the Executive Committee. Each person who is an officer shall have one (1) vote in the Executive Committee. The President of the Student Body shall serve ex-officio as chairperson of the Executive Committee.

#### Subpart c. Conflict of Interest

Members of the Executive Committee may serve on the Finance Committee and SOARC provided they follow all rules with regard to conflicts of interest, specific restrictions otherwise listed herein and in addition, the Executive Committee members must constitute less than a majority of those committees' members.

### Part 3. Finance Committee

#### Subpart a. Charge and Powers

The Finance Committee shall propose and review all legislation of a financial nature, including annual budgets and other requests for allocations from the Student Activities Tax, and shall have all power necessary and proper to:

1. Establish, audit and control the finances and accounting procedures of all recognized student organizations and Senate.
2. By three-fourths ( $\frac{3}{4}$ ) majority vote freeze, or unfreeze accounts that are in violation of established financial policies and procedures on a temporary basis until it can be reviewed by the Senate. This vote shall override the power of the Finance Committee Chairperson to freeze or unfreeze accounts.
3. Maintain the inventory records and oversee the contracts between Student Organization Presidents and the Senate to ensure proper purchasing and disposal of inventory.

#### Subpart b. Membership

Only Senators may serve on the Finance Committee. During summer recess, the Finance Committee shall consist of the Finance Committee Chairperson and the Student Senate Secretary Treasurer (ex-officio) unless other members are duly appointed. Only members of the Student Senate may serve on the Finance Committee. Before obtaining voting rights on the Finance Committee, a senator must attend one meeting of the committee as a nonvoting member.

### Part 4. Student Organization Advisory and Review Committee (SOARC)

#### Subpart a. Charge and Powers

The Student Organization Advisory and Review Committee shall have all powers necessary and proper to:

1. Construe and enforce the instruments of all recognized student organizations.

2. Develop, maintain, and publish the Model Constitution, which shall be binding upon all recognized student organizations, provided that all changes shall require the formal advice and consent of the Senate.
3. Review each organization applying for recognition in order to recommend to the Senate whether the organization meets the applicable criteria for recognition and, if eligible for recognition, whether the organization meets the applicable criteria for eligibility for funding by budget.
4. Review each recognized student organization at least annually in order to recommend to the Senate whether the organization meets the applicable criteria for recognition and, if eligible for recognition, whether the organization meets the applicable criteria for eligibility for funding by budget.
5. Oversee the operations and integrity of and arbitrate disputes involving recognized student organizations.
6. Continually examine and advise all student organizations to ensure they are operating with in their purpose.
7. Organize and attend the-monthly organizations meeting.
8. Represent the interests of student organizations in all matters related to Senate and the University.

#### Subpart b. Membership

Only Senators may serve on SOARC.

#### Part 5. Committee on Campus Affairs

The Committee on Campus Affairs shall be concerned with student life of a non-academic nature, including but not limited to student rights, campus security and parking, student services, financial aid, student employment, auxiliary fees, living conditions, health and safety, and intercollegiate varsity athletics.

#### Part 6. Committee on Academic Affairs

The Committee on Academic Affairs shall be concerned with student life of an academic nature, including but not limited to educational standards and requirements, course availability, registration procedures, library services, grading, tuition, and faculty evaluation.

#### Part 7. Committee on External Affairs

The Committee on External Affairs shall be concerned with persons or entities outside the university, including but not limited to local, state, or national governmental issues, other colleges and universities, admissions and recruitment, alumni relations, and budgetary concerns.

## Part 8. Committee on Cultural Affairs

The Committee on Cultural Affairs shall be concerned with cultural issues, including but not limited to building and maintaining a unified and inclusive campus community, creating university traditions, promoting multiculturalism, and ensuring equal opportunity.

## Part 9. Committee on Rules and Ethics

### Subpart a. Charge and Powers

This non-policy making committee shall have the sole responsibility over and all powers necessary to:

1. Construe and upon request make rulings regarding the existing instruments (constitution and bylaws) of the Student Senate, with the understanding that it should be the duty of each Senator to have a working knowledge of the bylaws and further this power should be utilized solely to resolve conflicts.
2. Conduct a preliminary inquiry and render a recommendation in regards to any properly constituted letter of complaint, and manage bills resulting from such a recommendation on the floor of the Senate. A properly constituted letter of complaint must state the charge, the applicable section of bylaws or law, requested course of action, no fewer than one student and the VP. In the event of an unavoidable conflict of interest, one member of the executive committee of the Student Senate shall suffice.
3. Procedures for the impeachment process, general complaints or concerns regarding performance are as follows:
  - a. Receive a properly constituted letter of complaint.
  - b. Upon receipt, the Rules and Ethics Committee will meet to determine validity of complaint, and investigate the charge or complaint submitted.
  - c. Rules and Ethics Committee will hold separate meetings with both the complainant and defendant and this meeting will be followed by a joint meeting with both parties.
  - d. Rules and Ethics Committee will make a final recommendation and, in the case that the requested course of action was impeachment, the charge will go to the full Senate floor for a trial regardless of the final recommendation. In all other cases, the Rules & Ethics Committee's final legislative recommendation

4. Make non-binding recommendations to any member of the Senate or to the Senate as a whole regarding questions of bylaws interpretation.
5. Receive and rule upon official requests for bylaws interpretation using the following procedure:
  - a. The official request (the petition) must be in a written form and signed by a student, who will be referred to hereafter as the petitioner.
  - b. The request must include the particular questions the petitioner wants answered, the bylaws section(s) in question, and any other information the petitioner feels is pertinent. The Rules and Ethics Committee is bound to rule only upon the stated questions set in the petition.
  - c. An open meeting is called within two (2) weeks of the petitioner's request, wherein the petitioner may explain the rationale for the request and the Committee may seek testimony of other relevant parties.
  - d. The Committee then by majority vote makes a ruling. The ruling is binding upon the Senate. If a senator wishes to challenge the ruling, the challenge must be in bill form and signed by five (5) senators. The bill is submitted under New Business. The threshold for passage of such a bill is majority.
6. Review and rule upon petitions for leaves of absence from the Senate.

#### Subpart b. Composition

This committee will be comprised of five (5) Senators, all of whom shall be elected internally by the Senate immediately following the formation of the new Executive Committee. Members of this committee will be prohibited from serving concurrently as a member of the Executive Committee. The Rules and Ethics Committee shall elect their own Speaker who will report to the full Senate.

### Section B. Special Committees

#### Part 1. Committee on Elections

##### Subpart a. Charge

The Committee on Elections shall be formed at the last meeting of the academic year for the Freshman Elections, at the first meeting in December for the Spring Elections, or for special elections to conduct, supervise, and tabulate the results of all popular elections and referenda. When the results of a particular series of elections, for which the committee may have been formed are accepted by Senate, the committee shall be discharged.

1. Shall have the power to propose legislation to call elections, certify results and report these results to the Senate with a recommendation regarding validation.
2. Shall have the power to reapportion Representative seats annually with the consent of the Senate.
3. Shall have the power to interpret and enforce the election rules.
4. May disqualify candidates who have violated the election rules (appeals shall be directed to the Rules and Ethics Committee and follow the procedures outlined in Article VII).

#### Subpart b. Composition

This committee will be comprised of five (5) Senators, all of whom shall be elected internally by the Senate. The committee members at the first elections meeting shall elect their own chairperson. No person who is a declared candidate or a member of Rules and Ethics Committee may serve as a member of the Committee on Elections for that specific election.

#### Subpart c. Conflict of Interest

In the event of a conflict of interest involving any person otherwise elected to serve as a member of the Committee on Elections, the person shall be excused from serving, and the Senate shall elect a replacement senator.

### Part 2. Additional Special Committees

The Senate may through legislation create any special committees, which it deems necessary or advantageous, provided that no special committee shall be created whose charge interferes with that of any other Senate committee. Such legislation must specify the charge and term of the committee, and may specify the members of the committee and the manner in which it will be discharged or the manner in which members are to be chosen, provided that the Executive Committee shall appoint the members unless another method is explicitly stated in the legislation. One representative from each special committee must sit on the Executive Committee, as a non-voting member, for the duration of the committee's existence.

## **Article VII. ELECTIONS AND REFERENDA**

### **Section A. Popular Election**

#### **Part 1. Qualifications of Voters**

Each undergraduate student of the University of Rhode Island who is required to pay the Student Activities Tax shall have the right to vote in all elections of popularly elected officers and referenda. Such students shall have the right to vote for representatives from the academic college, which administers the program of the student and from the residence group where the student is listed with the registrar. Double major or double degree students in programs administered by different academic colleges may vote for representatives from only one, but may choose which, and such choice shall not be a binding precedent for any later election.

#### **Part 2. Qualifications for Candidacy**

Each undergraduate student shall be eligible for any office or representative seat for which the student is a qualified voter, provided that student is a member of the academic college or resident grouping which the student wants to represent by or on the day of sign-up. The penalty for running under a false constituency shall result in a voided candidacy. No candidate may appear on more than one ballot in the same election. There shall be no limit to the number of times a person may be elected to any position.

#### **Part 3. Time of Elections**

##### **Subpart a. Representatives**

The annual election for academic college representatives shall be held within the first three weeks of the second semester, and the annual election for residence group representatives shall be held at least two weeks later but shall be completed by no later than the Friday prior to Spring Break. The annual election for Freshman Representatives shall be held as early as practical each autumn.

##### **Subpart b. Popularly Elected Officers**

The annual election for popularly elected officers shall be held at the same time as the annual election for residence group representatives. If there are more than two candidates or tickets for any popularly elected office, a primary election shall be held at the same time as the annual election for academic college representatives, and the two candidates or tickets receiving the largest number of votes in this primary election shall appear

on the ballot in the annual election for the office, regardless of the number of votes received in the primary election. A primary shall not be presumed to fill two vacancies, and each voter may cast only one vote for each office.

#### Subpart c. Special Elections

The Senate may by legislation call a special election at any time for the filling of any vacant representative seat or the placing of any referendum question. Internal elections to fill vacant representative seats shall be opened in the fall, at five (5) weeks after the freshmen elections. The only exception to this is if the total number of senators falls below 40, in which case special elections will be opened when advertising requirements are filled.

#### Subpart d. Extenuating Circumstances

In the case where the elections cannot be held upon the designated day, the election shall be held the day immediately following the next full class day. If the gap between election dates created by this change is larger than two days, then that set of elections shall be voided and a new election must be called.

### Part 4. Declaration

Each candidate seeking to be listed on the ballot must declare in writing the full name, address, and telephone number of the candidate, the form of the name to appear on the ballot, the position sought, that the candidate expects to remain a student for the full term for which election is sought, and that the candidate has read and agrees to adhere to the provisions of the Senate Bylaws. The rules of the Senate shall be equally binding upon all persons participating in its elections, regardless of whether they may have formally declared.

### Part 5. System of Voting

#### Subpart a. Procedures

All popular elections and referenda shall be decided by secret ballot. Voters must appear in person at the polls and satisfy the election officers of their identity and eligibility. The Committee on Elections shall designate persons to work at the polls, and it shall be the duty of each senator who is not a candidate or a member of a candidate's active campaign staff to work at least one hour at each election. No person who is a candidate shall be permitted to work at the polls. The polls shall be open on at least two consecutive class days from at least 9:00 a.m. to 5:00

p.m. on one of the two days and from at least 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on the other day. The Chairperson of the Elections Committee or the Elections Committee may, in an emergency situation, appoint the Administrative Coordinator and/or Secretary worker of the Student Senate and/or any member of a Senate Standing Committee to work at the polls.

#### Subpart b. Numerical Procedures

Regardless of the number of declared candidates, each voter may cast as many votes as the number of vacancies for any position, but not more. No voter may cast more than one vote for a single candidate. Write-in votes shall be provided for all elections, and shall be deemed valid if the intention to vote for a specific candidate for a specific position is clear. Popular elections shall be decided by plurality. In the event of a tie vote between candidates, the Senate shall internally elect persons to fill these vacancies from among the candidates involved in the tie.

### Part 7. Certification

#### Subpart a.

The Committee on Elections shall publish the numerical results of all elections and referenda as soon as possible after the close of the polls, marking this report “Unofficial: Subject to Challenge.”

#### Subpart b.

Challenges may be filed within three (3) days after the unofficial results are published to the Committee on Elections for initial interpretation and action. Any appeals to such interpretations must be filed within three (3) days to the Rules and Ethics Committee, which shall review the challenge and make a recommendation to the full Senate. Any provision to the contrary notwithstanding, the Senate shall be the final judge of its own elections.

### Part 8. Withdrawal

Any declared candidate or ticket may withdraw as a matter of right until the deadline for declaration of candidacy, and thereafter only with the consent of the Committee on Elections, which shall consider whether enough time remains for modification of any ballots already prepared or for reprogramming of the machines. If a candidate or ticket receives a sufficient number of votes for election and then declines to be sworn in or is disqualified, the un-elected candidate with the next greatest amount of votes shall fill whatever vacancy has been created.

## Part 9. Tickets

No party mark or designation shall appear on the ballots for Senate elections, provided that candidates for President of the Student Body and Vice President of the Student Body shall run on an indivisible ticket as if a single candidate. In the event that one of the persons on such a ticket withdraws or is disqualified after the deadline for declarations of candidacy has passed, the ticket itself must withdraw or be disqualified. Elections for the President and Vice President must be completed by the Spring Break of the academic year.

## Part 10. Campaigning

There shall be no limit to what amount a candidate may spend on campaigning. No Student Activities Tax funds may be used to attempt to influence the results of an election, provided that the Committee on Elections may offer, equally to all persons, office supplies and the like, at cost, for use in campaigning. No person may campaign in the building where the polls are located while the polls are open. No person may post notices or advertisements within 25 feet of said building(s). No discussion of issues or candidates shall be allowed at the polls.

## Part 11. Platforms

The Committee on Elections shall provide, equally to all candidates for each position, an opportunity to publish without charge a short, unedited platform which shall be sent to the media for reprinting and shall be maintained for inspection at the polls. Presidential/Vice Presidential Tickets shall be allowed 125 words and all other candidates shall be allowed 75 words. The responsibility for the content of such platforms shall rest entirely with their authors.

## Part 12. Referenda

The Senate may by legislation place referenda on any issue before the voters at any election. In the event that the winning side carries more than five percent (5%) of the eligible voters, the result shall be binding upon the Senate

## Section B. Internal Election

### Part 1. Time

The outgoing Senate at the last meeting before the annual meeting shall internally elect officers, in the case of the Chairpersons of the Finance

Committee and the Student Organization Advisory and Review Committee. Internal elections shall also be held as may be necessary to fill vacancies or resolve ties in popular elections.

## Part 2. Nominations

Except in cases where the procedure of internal election is used to resolve a tie vote in a popular election, nominations shall be opened at the Senate meeting immediately preceding the meeting where the election is to be held, and must be made and seconded by members of the Senate, provided that no election may be held unless nominations have been open for at least one week. In the case of elections to fill vacant representative seats, nominations may not be opened unless the vacancies have been advertised to the student body at least two days in advance. In the case of elections to fill vacant representative seats, nominations may not be opened unless the vacancies have been advertised to the student body at least two days in advance. If no candidate has been nominated by the time of the election, nominations shall be held open until the next meeting, when an election shall be scheduled.

## Part 3. Deliberation

At the election, all candidates for a position may speak and answer questions on the Senate floor in the order in which they were nominated. The members having made and seconded the nominations may then speak on the Senate floor in the order in which the nominations were made and seconded. The Senate floor shall then be open to debate on the election. All deliberations shall be open in a public session, and no person may be excluded.

## Part 4. Election

At the conclusion of debate, the Senate shall vote by secret ballots to be tallied by the Moderator of the Senate, each member having one (1) vote, and the count shall be announced. If no candidate receives a majority, debate shall be reopened and additional ballots taken until some candidate receives a majority.

## Section C. Apportionment

### Part 1. Classification

Senate seats shall be annually reapportioned in accordance with campus demography. The official source for information on the total number of students enrolled at the university and in each academic program shall be the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The official source for information on the number of students in the Greek Housing residence group shall be the Office of Student Life. The official source for information on the

number of students in the dormitory residence group shall be the Office of Residential Life. Any person enrolled at the university who is neither in the Greek Housing nor dormitory residence group shall be defined to be in the commuter residence group.

## Part 2. Formulae

The error for each constituency shall be defined to be the absolute value of the difference between the whole number of seats apportioned and the exact fractional number of seats to which the constituency is mathematically entitled. The total error shall be defined to be the sum of the errors from all constituencies. The number of seats apportioned to each constituency shall be determined from the exact fractional number of seats in the way, which minimizes total error.

## **Article VIII. IMPEACHMENT AND DISCIPLINE**

### Section A. Definitions

For the purposes of this section, the following definitions shall be used as guidelines for the determination of courses of action.

1. A 'conflict of interest' shall be any situation in which a member of the Senate has an external duty or interest which calls into substantial question their ability to execute their official duties in the best interests of the Student Body.
2. 'Gross misconduct' shall be any non-speech conduct which
  - a.) can be shown to have caused, or by gross negligence created grave risk to have caused, harm to the Student Body, the Senate, its members, or its property  
or
  - b.) shocks the conscience to the extent that the member cannot claim to be a representative of the URI student community's values

In any case of gross misconduct it shall be the burden of the Senate to demonstrate actual harm.

### Section B. Grounds for Impeachment

The Senate for crimes, dereliction of duty, conflict of interest, or other gross misconduct may discipline each person who is a representative or officer in the Senate. In the event that evidence possibly warranting disciplinary action is

obtained, such evidence shall be made available to the Rules & Ethics Committee which shall then carry out as thorough an investigation as possible. If the accused is a member of the Rules & Ethics Committee, the accused may not participate as a member of the Rules & Ethics Committee in its proceedings.

#### Section C. Referral of Charges

Charges may be referred against a senator only in legislation sponsored by the Executive Committee or jointly by five (5) or more senators. The accused shall then have written notice of the charges and specifications, and may continue to exercise all rights as a senator, including the right to vote, until final disposition of the charges.

#### Section D. Trial and Verdict

At a meeting of least one week after the meeting where legislation is introduced preferring charges, the Senate shall conduct a trial. The sponsors of the legislation shall select the trial manager for the Senate. The accused shall have the opportunity to confront and cross-examine adverse witnesses, and to present additional witnesses. The accused shall be entitled to assistance of counsel. A conviction shall occur if the accused concedes the charges, or if the accused denies the charges and the Senate, upon trial, finds them valid by majority vote.

#### Section E. Sentence

Upon conviction, the Senate shall determine an appropriate penalty. The conviction and the penalty may be made public, but the Senate may not prohibit the convicted person from seeking reelection. Removal of any rights as a senator, including expulsion from the Senate, shall require three-fourths ( $\frac{3}{4}$ ) vote. Censure, reprimand, and resolutions of a similar kind shall require a majority vote. The accused may not vote in determining the penalty.

#### Section F. Removal of Stipends

A bill may be introduced by five (5) Senators, along with a valid rationale based on the failure to complete basic job requirements, to request the withholding of a said amount of any stipend not yet paid to a member of the Senate that receives a stipend. This bill will be submitted to the Student Senate Rules and Ethics Committee for a recommendation. Following the review of the bill, the committee will report to the full Senate for a vote. Such a bill will require a three-fourths majority of the senators present at the time of said vote to pass.

### **Article IX. STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS**

## Section A. Recognition

### Part 1. Definition

The Senate shall have the sole power to recognize student organizations through legislation enacted by majority vote, and no person, group, or organization shall claim to represent or act for the undergraduate students of the University unless so recognized, provided that the Senate itself may function as if inherently recognized. In addition to the right to claim affiliation with and use the name of the students of the university, recognized student organizations may use university facilities and services at no or reduced cost and receive mail at the Senate office. Outside affiliation shall not necessarily preclude recognition, as long as it is an open affiliation.

### Part 2. Requirements

Executive Board members of Senate recognized organizations shall be elected as established by way of each organization's individual constitution. In the event of a discrepancy between the group's individual constitution and the legally accepted rules for recognition, SOARC shall have the right to default to the appropriate section of the Model Constitution. Categories R, A, M, and S organizations shall hold their annual meetings before April 1 unless special permission has been granted by the SOARC Committee. In order to become an elected officer of any organization, the candidate may be requested to furnish written proof that he or she has not been in poor academic standing (below a 2.0/4.0 cumulative G.P.A.) for greater than two consecutive semesters to the Chairperson of SOARC. A letter from the Office of the Registrar will serve this purpose.

#### Subpart a. Basic Filings

Any organization may apply for recognition by filing with the Student Organization Advisory and Review Committee a list with at least the minimum number of required members for the intended level of recognition, with first and last names and local phone numbers, e-mail addresses, and a copy of its written purpose and model constitution as well as recent and planned activities. Each recognized student organization must apply for renewal of recognition annually on a date which falls during the first week of October by filing lists of current officers and members as described above, and a brief description of recent and planned activities, and by filing a copy of its written instruments of organization in alternate years or as may be more frequently requested. The descriptions of the four categories of recognition are as follows:

- Category R: A group which exists solely for the advancement and growth of its immediate membership and provides a community of

- Category A: A group which meets the basic requirements of a URI Student Senate organization; however, is not eligible for funding for reasons including but not limited to... receive academic department funding, or organizations whose main purpose is philanthropic. Not eligible for funding by means, but are eligible to be co-sponsored for events with other Student Senate recognized groups.
- Category M: A group which provides an indispensable social service to the student body, and/or student organizations through government or media and demonstrates to SOARC a need for an annual budget.
- Category S: A group which provides individual benefits to members of the student body outside the group's immediate membership, and/or demonstrates to SOARC a need for an annual budget. Eligible for funding by annual budget, contingency, and financial benefits package.

All organizations will have a minimum membership of ten members. (See guidelines for the Model Constitution.)

If at anytime membership drops below the required level, there will be a one-month grace period to meet membership requirements. If by the second month the requirements are not met the group will be reassessed.

#### Subpart b. Changes in Filings

Each recognized student organization shall file copies of any amendments to its written instruments of organization after approval by its members, and such amendments shall take effect only upon approval by the Student Organization Advisory and Review Committee, or by the Senate.

### Part 3. Criteria

#### Subpart a. Undergraduate Membership

No organization shall be recognized unless its voting membership is composed of at least a majority of undergraduate students, provided that the Senate may enter into an agreement with the Graduate Student Association for recognition of organizations whose voting membership is composed of at least a majority of undergraduate and graduate students combined.

#### Subpart b. Non-Discrimination

No organization shall be recognized which fails to provide a specific non-discrimination clause in its written instruments of organization. No recognized student organization shall discriminate or in any way impede equal opportunity on the basis of race, color, sex, gender, sexual orientation, disability, national origin, age, marital status, nor religious affiliation nor any other non-merit factor.

#### Subpart c. Presumption

Recognition shall be granted solely on the grounds of compatibility with the revisions herein, with the Model Constitution and Bylaws, and with other applicable laws and regulations, and there shall be a presumption of compliance unless disproved. No organization may be denied recognition on the basis of political or philosophical views expressed by the organization or its members.

### Section B. Funds

#### Part 1. Taxation

Subject to applicable state and federal laws, the power to lay, collect, administer, and allocate taxes upon the undergraduate students of the university shall be reserved to the Senate, and shall not be delegated to any other person, group, or organization. In order to raise or lower the Student Activities Tax, the question must be put before the student body in the form of a binding referendum, and the consent of the Rhode Island Board of Governors for Higher Education must be given.

#### Part 2. Accounting

All funds held or controlled by any recognized student organization shall be deposited with the Student Accounting System. If a recognized student organization demonstrates a specific need, outside accounts may be established by a three-fourths vote in favor by the Finance Committee, or by the Senate. All Student Activities Tax receipts shall be deposited in the Tax Apportionment Account, and no funds shall be drawn from this account except through legislation enacted by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Senate describing the categories or purposes for the allocation.

#### Subpart a. Signatory Power

No check shall be written on a Student Senate, Inc. account, except on receipt of a Payment Order bearing at least two signatures. Of these two signatures, at least one must be that of the President or the Treasurer of the applicable student organization, provided that the Finance Committee

Chair or Student Body President may provide the student signature in the absence of the organization President and Treasurer.

The above requirement shall not apply under the following circumstances:

1. Regularly scheduled spring and fall semester classes are not in session.
2. An emergency situation exists which requires that an immediate payment be made to avoid severe consequences, and repeated attempts to locate all students with signatory power over the relevant account have failed. Under these circumstances, the organization in question must be notified of any action taken in a timely manner.

If the above circumstances exist, the authorized administrative signatures will be the Director of Student Involvement, the Assistant Director of Student Involvement, the Assistant Director of Finance, and the Assistant Vice President for Student Life.

### Part 3. Purpose of Expenditures

No student activities tax fund may be distributed to organizations to be expended for such purposes which shall include but are not limited to:

1. Worship services and/or events held in a place of worship.
2. Activities that actively attempt to convert participants to a particular religion.
3. Activities that directly support a particular candidate running for any political office, or directly support a political party.

### Part 4. Grants

The Senate may by majority vote make occasional contingency grants of Student Activities Tax funds to any student organization at Categories R, M, or S. Such grants shall be used for the providing of services or benefits to the student body, and may be accompanied by any restrictions or limitations that may be enacted.

### Part 5. Eligibility for Funding by Budget

#### Subpart a. Definition

The Senate may by two-thirds (2/3) vote enact legislation granting eligibility for funding by budget Categories R, M, and S, provided that the Senate itself may function as if inherently eligible for funding by budget. In order to be granted a budget, the Finance Committee must receive a list of names with the appropriate number of undergraduate members from groups wishing to apply for a budget, following the same guidelines as

required by initial recognition. An organization granted eligibility for funding by budget may annually prepare and file a budget request for the next fiscal year, showing the total amount needed and a detailed breakdown by such categories as may be defined by the Finance Committee, and may expend allocated funds without other approval by the Senate, or where explicitly stated in the Finance Handbook.

#### Subpart b. Criteria

1. No organization may be granted eligibility for funding by annual budget, contingency or financial benefit package if it refuses membership to any undergraduate student who can meet objective and relevant requirements.
2. No organization may be granted eligibility for funding by annual budget, contingency, or financial benefit package unless its purpose is to provide a public service or benefit to the campus community or its members.
3. No organization may be granted eligibility for funding by budget if it supplements intercollegiate athletic activity. Intercollegiate athletics shall be distinguished from club sports competition against other colleges and universities by the use of professional coaches and trainers, and by the absence of student control of the program.
4. No organization may be granted eligibility for funding by budget if it is affiliated with and receives funds from an organization external to the Student Senate, and a regular flow of funds shall be itself evidence of affiliation, provided that shall not be construed to prohibit receipt of occasional donations and contributions from organizations with which there is no formal affiliation.
5. Eligibility for funding by budget shall be granted on the grounds of compatibility with the provisions herein, and with other applicable laws and regulations, but the burden shall be placed upon the organization applying to show that there is a substantial public interest and benefit associated with the organization.

### Part 6. Budget Allocation

#### Subpart a. Budget Requests

Each organization filing a budget request shall receive an initial recommendation from the Finance Committee, which it may accept or argue before the Finance Committee at a hearing. After a hearing has been held or waived at the option of the organization, its budget request shall be reported to the Senate by the Finance Committee and shall be separately registered. No organization budget shall be combined with another for voting purposes. Budget requests may be amended, recommitted, and otherwise treated as ordinary legislation,

but shall require two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Senate for final enactment. Budget allocation legislation may also be accompanied by additional restrictions or limitations upon the organization, except in the case of category transfers, amendment of a previously adopted budget shall require two-thirds (2/3) vote.

The Finance Committee shall determine allocations based on the following provisions:

1. Budget determination is grounded in merit factors of the organization without the Finance Committee's knowledge of overall budget restrictions for the following fiscal year.
2. When funded organizations have been given a preliminary allocation, the Finance Committee will introduce a reasonable estimate of the following year's total budget and adjust all organizations through the use of a percentage change graduated according to the following tiers:
  - a. Student Senate and Affiliates
  - b. Groups whose 2<sup>nd</sup> recommendation total is greater than \$50,000
  - c. Groups whose 2<sup>nd</sup> recommendation total is between \$10,000 and \$49,999
  - d. Groups whose 2<sup>nd</sup> recommendation total is between \$1,000 and \$9,999
  - e. Groups whose 2<sup>nd</sup> recommendation total is under \$999

All groups within a particular tier must be cut by the same percentage. The tiers are graduated such that the cut percentage allocated for any tier may not be higher than the cut percentage for the tier above it (e.g. the cut percentage for Student Senate and affiliates will always be larger than the cut percentage for any other group, the cut percentage for groups whose 2<sup>nd</sup> recommendation total is greater than \$50,000 will always be higher than that of groups whose 2<sup>nd</sup> recommendation total is between \$10,000 and \$49,999, etc.). It is the responsibility of the Finance Committee to calculate the relative cut percentages so as to preserve as much functionality as possible in the largest number of groups, regardless of level.

3. Costs of a group may be deemed exceptional. Exceptional costs are costs determined by the Finance Committee to be fixed due to contractual or legal obligations, or costs determined by the Senate to be critically essential for the continued existence of the group.
4. These exceptional costs will not be subject to the graduated percentage cut.

## Part 7. Category Transfers

The Senate may by majority vote enact legislation transferring funds in the amount of \$1000.01 and over, held in a category of an organization budget for the purpose of allowing flexibility in handling unforeseen or unexpected situations. The Finance Committee, by majority vote, may approve these category transfers between the amount of \$100.01 and \$1000 and the Finance Chair may approve these transfers of \$100 or less. The Finance Chair must report all category transfers that were approved by the Chair or Committee during the weekly report in front of the full Senate.

## Part 8. Stipends

Any student organization eligible to receive a budget may, after showing cause to the SOARC and the Finance Committee and gaining both committees' consent, establish elected student-held positions to be paid by stipend to compensate for time spent executing duties on the organization's behalf. Each position so created may be paid in either of the two following schedules:

1. Monthly -- The final Tuesday that classes are held during the following months: September, October, November, December, January, February, March, April.
2. Semesterly -- The final Tuesday that classes are held during the following months: November, March.

The amount of each payment and the schedule for each payment must be established with the Finance Committee during the annual budget process; it may not be changed without the Finance Committee's explicit consent. Any dispute regarding the payment amount or schedule shall be handled by the Finance Committee in a manner consistent with any other organizational complaint.

Each position so created shall have clearly stated in that organization's Bylaws the duties expected of the position holder. Any failure to complete these explicit requirements are proper grounds by the group to withhold or remove any stipend not yet paid to that officer, so long as such disciplinary action is consistent with the procedures outlined in the Senate Bylaws, the organization's Bylaws, and the Model Constitution.

This section shall in no way apply to positions, student or otherwise whose payment schedule is determined by contract, per hour, or per diem.

## Section C. Revocation

In addition to the powers of the committees of the Senate in protecting the interests of the student body and the integrity of student government, the Senate may by two-thirds (2/3) vote enact legislation revoking recognition and eligibility for funding by budget. Such action may be taken for any illegal or improper actions, such as fraud, failure to keep accurate financial records, failure to use only authorized depositories, gross mismanagement, or willful and knowing violation of the Senate Bylaws or rules, or violations of state and federal law. Such legislation must originate from the appropriate committee with jurisdiction (i.e. SOARC or Finance).

#### Section D. Conflict of Interest

Any member of the Senate may serve in any capacity within the Senate provided they abstain from deliberating and/or voting on any issue that relates to an organization of which they are an executive member, with the exception of those regulations governing service on the Rules & Ethics Committee.

#### Section E. Appeals

1. All appeals must be handed in, in writing, to the moderator of the Student Senate by no later than two weeks following SOARC and Finance's decision.
2. The written statement must identify a summary of the grievance and a reason for appealing SOARC and Finance's decision.
3. The SOARC and Finance chairperson will be required to submit the written decision of SOARC and Finance to the moderator of the Student Senate.
4. The executive committee of the Student Senate must vote to determine whether or not the full Senate should hear the appeal. The Chairperson of SOARC and Finance will not vote on this issue.
5. If the vote is "nay" in the majority, SOARC and Finance's decision is upheld.
6. If the executive committee votes "aye" in the majority, a date for the hearing will be scheduled by the moderator of the Student Senate by no later than two weeks from the date of the meeting of the executive committee.
7. The appeals process shall take place under "New Business" on the Senate agenda.
8. The moderator of the Senate shall be chairman of this appeal. Each side will be allotted ten (10) minutes for discussion. Student Senators will be allowed to ask questions after each side has been heard.
9. Following the completion of questioning the Senate will deliberate. When deliberation is complete, the moderator will call for a vote.

The vote will be taken by secret ballot and a two-thirds (2/3) majority is required to overrule SOARC and Finance's decision.

#### Section F. Organization Responsibilities

All Student Senate recognized organizations are required to abide by the following stipulations:

1. Minutes must be kept from all meetings and submitted to the SOARC chair at the monthly president's meeting. If two consecutive months are missed the organization may forfeit recognition pending a ruling from SOARC.
2. SOARC may require all recognized student organizations to participate in periodic membership drives from time to time, provided that two weeks (fourteen days) prior notice is given to the organizations.
3. All organizations are required to attend a monthly meeting that will be held on the first Monday of each month, September through May (excluding January) at 7pm. In addition to attending the meeting, organizations must fill out a monthly report form. Failure to attend a meeting will result in the following:

Warnings for missing two meetings; revocation of recognition upon the third missed meeting in the same academic year.

1. First Absence: Written Warning
2. Second Absence: Organization's budget (if applicable) shall be frozen until the organization attends a SOARC meeting to submit an excuse for their absence. The organizations will be notified in writing that their budget has been frozen. The SOARC committee will then determine the length of time that the budget remain frozen, but in any case not to exceed (4) weeks. If the organization does not have a budget, they will receive a second written warning.
3. Third Absence: Permanent revocation of recognition for no less than the remainder of the current academic year.

## **Article X. AFFILIATES**

### Section A. Definition

The Senate shall, when necessary, create, maintain, and fund permanent student-run organizations whose primary function is supplementary to the governmental purposes and functions of the Senate. Such organizations, hereafter referred to as affiliates, shall be considered a part of the Senate for purposes of budgeting. Such affiliates may exist in collaboration with URI administrative or academic departments only so long as primary control of the affiliate remains with the student membership of the affiliate.

## Section B. General Provisions

### Part 1. Establishment

The Senate may establish affiliates only by an amendment to this document, and shall be independently and exhaustively listed under Section C of this article.

### Part 2. Organization

Affiliates shall establish and maintain their own bylaws which explicitly state their purpose, membership requirements and limitations, methods of officer election, and affiliations with the University of Rhode Island and its constituent departments.

All affiliates must abide by the Student Senate's Non-Discrimination Clause regarding eligibility for membership (Article IX, Section A, Part 3, subpart b).

### Part 3. Supremacy

Affiliates shall consider all acts of the Senate as binding upon them, and the acts of the Senate shall take precedence over all other acts. The Executive Committee of the Senate shall have all powers necessary and proper for the general management of affiliates, and shall serve as the primary committee for instructions to affiliates, and all review and appeals proceeding from them. The Executive Committee may see fit to delegate this power to any other standing committee of the Senate.

Any change to the bylaws of an affiliate must be approved by majority vote of the student membership of that affiliate, and also by majority vote of the Senate before they may go into effect.

## Section C. Standing Affiliates

### Part 1. Student Organization Leadership Consultants

The Student Organization Leadership Consultants (SOLC) shall be concerned with providing leadership instruction and guidance to student organizations. To that end, SOLC shall collaborate with SOARC and the URI Center for Student Leadership to maintain accessibility to professional quality leadership consulting services.

## **Article XI. PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE**

### **Section A. Legislation**

All legislation must be typed and submitted to the Moderator of the Senate for registration, and shall be considered to be introduced when read or placed on the agenda at any meeting for advance distribution to the members of the Senate. Legislation shall not be considered until at least one week after it has been introduced, provided that the Senate may, with the concurrence of three-fourths ( $\frac{3}{4}$ ), immediately consider any legislation except bylaws amendments or impeachments. Any individual Senator may sponsor legislation, unless sponsored by a committee. All legislation shall be introduced under New Business and referred to the appropriate committee or committees, and may not be considered until reported out of committee, provided that the Senate may discharge any matter for committee by majority vote.

Either the original sponsor of the bill or the committee to which it was assigned will manage all legislation on the floor of the Senate. This is with the understanding that the original sponsor has the first option to manage the legislation on the floor.

Any five (5) senators may bring a bill to the floor of the senate independent of any committee.

All legislation submitted through the Senate with the exception of the annual budgets shall have the following form:

SS – Current School Year/Bill Number – Bill Title

All “whereas” clauses necessary to explain the cause for the bill

All “resolved” clauses necessary to describe the bill action

Sponsor:

Bill Handler:

Recommendation: (to include the Committee vote: Aye/Nay/Abstain)

Date Introduced:

Date Expires:

Action:

### **Section B. Debate**

No person may speak for longer than ten (10) minutes consecutively on a single question without permission from the Senate by majority vote. There shall be no limitation on the number of times a person may speak in debate, provided that persons not having spoken on a question will be given preference in obtaining the

floor over those who have spoken and over non-members of the Senate. No member may yield to another person after using the floor to argue.

#### Section C. Voting

All members of the Senate except the person in the chair of the Senate may vote except as otherwise provided herein, and shall have one (1) vote on questions before the Senate. No member may vote except in person. Except where secret ballot is explicitly provided for herein, the Senate shall vote by roll call whenever any member eligible to vote so requests. The vote of each member during a roll call shall be recorded in the minutes. Each member shall answer the roll call by “aye” when in favor, or by “nay” when opposed, or by “present” or “abstain” when choosing to express no opinion and to have no effect on the result.

#### Section D. Reports and Records

All written committee reports and other documents dealing with Senate business shall be placed on file. Such information, together with Senate minutes of all meetings, shall be available at all times for examination by members of the Senate. Others may examine the Senate records in the presence of a senator. Confidential materials shall be placed in a confidential file.

#### Section E. Oath of Office

The oath of office for all members of the Senate shall be: “I, [name], in full realization of the duties and responsibilities of [position], assume these responsibilities in complete good faith and promise to discharge to the best of my ability these duties of [position] of the University of Rhode Island Student Senate and swear to uphold the laws of the state of Rhode Island and of the United States of America.”

#### Section F. Friendly Amendments

An amendment made to a bill by a vote of  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority of the Senate cannot be overridden via a friendly amendment, but rather can only be overridden by another  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority vote by the Senate.

#### Section G. Meaning of an Aye/Nay Votes

Regardless of the recommendation from a committee on a bill, a vote of ‘Aye’ on any piece of legislation shall mean a vote in favor of passing that legislation. Similarly, a vote of ‘Nay’ shall mean a vote against passing that legislation.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Section H. Order of Business

Regular meetings of the Senate shall proceed according to the following order of business; provided that the Senate may deviate from it on occasion with the concurrence of two-thirds (2/3) vote. Public Forum: members of the URI community are required to sign up in the Senate office (MU 201) by 12:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting if they wish to speak to the Senate. Persons are given five (5) minutes to speak, unless otherwise voted by the Senate. No more than twenty (20) minutes are devoted to the Public Forum.

- A. Call to Order
- B. Roll Call
- C. Approval of Agenda
- D. Reading and Approval of the Minutes
- E. Announcements
- F. Public Forum
- G. Reports of Standing Committees
  - Finance
  - Student Organization Advisory and Review Committee (SOARC)
  - Academic Affairs
  - External Affairs
  - Cultural Affairs
  - Campus Affairs
  - Rules and Ethics
  - Executive
    - a. Director of Communications
    - b. Secretary
    - c. Treasurer
    - d. Vice President
    - e. President
- H. Reports of Special Committees
  - 1. Elections
  - 2. Other committees that have reports
- I. Special Orders
- J. Unfinished Business

- K. New Business
- L. General Discussion and Open Forum
- M. Roll Call
- N. Adjournment

#### Section I. Advisor

The Executive Committee, subject to the advice and consent of the Senate, shall appoint an Advisor to the Senate, who shall sign all checks drawn from the Senate Accounting System. This Advisor must be a faculty member or administrator of the university, shall have no vote in any Senate or committee decisions, and may be removed for refusing to sign checks that are not of a fraudulent nature.

#### Section J. Parliamentary Authority

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the Senate and its committees in all cases to which they are applicable and not inconsistent with the provisions contained herein or any special rules of order that the Senate may adopt.

#### Section K. Presiding Officer

The President of the Student Body shall ordinarily serve as presiding officer of the Senate, provided that the Moderator of the Senate shall preside when any question subject to debate or vote is under consideration. In the temporary absence of the Moderator, the President shall appoint a Moderator Pro Tempore, subject to the advice and consent of the Senate.

### **Article XII. METHOD OF AMENDMENT**

These Bylaws may be amended through legislation enacted by three-fourths ( $\frac{3}{4}$ ) vote of the Senate at any regular meeting, provided that the amendment has been introduced at least one week earlier.

December 2006