

Report (2024/2025)
Research, Scholarship and the Creative Arts Committee
UVM Faculty Senate
April 24, 2025

Membership of the Committee:

Bikki Trans Smith (Nursing and Health Science; Co-Chair), Jennifer Hurley (CESS; Co-Chair), Stephan Keller (CALS), Vicki Brennan (CAS), Paula Higa (CAS), Rob Shimko (CAS), Raju Badireddy (CEMS), Chun Zhang (GBS), Aaron Nichols (LIB), Daniel Weiss (LCOM), Mary Cushman (LCOM), Beverly Wemple (Rubenstein), Rachelle Gould (RSENr), Thomas Borchert (Faculty Senate President) and Lakelyn Tayler (PostDoc).

The committee met 8 times, the first being on September 9, 2024 and the last being May 8, 2025.

CHARGE OF THE RSCA

This committee is responsible for matters relating to research activities, scholarly work, and creative and performing arts carried out at the University, including graduate education and items referred to in Sections 1.1c, 1.2b, 1.2g, and 1.2k in the Faculty Senate bylaws. The RSCA reviews, recommends, and participates in the formulation of policy with respect to resources related to these activities, including physical facilities and allocation of appurtenant space, library resources and resources for graduate programs, and makes recommendations to assure effective use of these resources. The RSCA serves as liaison between the Senate and the administration on such matters as, but not limited to the broad role of the University in advancing knowledge through research, scholarship, and the performing arts; external and internal support for encouraging these activities, including graduate and undergraduate research; intellectual property, and technology transfer; ethical issues and issues affecting the academic environment as these arise in research or scholarly work. The RSCA consults frequently with other University and collegiate committees that are charged to initiate, maintain, and monitor institutional support programs for research, scholarship, the creative arts, and graduate education, as well as maintains close liaison with appropriate administrative offices in its areas of responsibility.

KEY RSCA ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Meeting Topics:

Reviewed and updated RSCA Operating Procedures.

The committee reviewed the bylaws and added two additional duties to the Chair role to match the Chair expectations and current practices: a) The Chair shall attend the President and Provost meetings and b) The Chair shall serve on the Lecture Committee. These changes were submitted to the Faculty Senate for approval.

Discussed open access with Dean Bryn Geffert and Peter Suber.

Peter Suber, Harvard University, and Dean Geffert visited the RSCA on multiple occasions between September and January to discuss open access, share an *Open Access Resolution Draft for UVM* and to answer questions. An RSCA sub-committee met again with Peter Suber and Dean Geffert to discuss concerns with the Open Access Resolution Draft and “in collaboration with the libraries” was added to the following statement in the draft, “The Office of the Provost *in collaboration with the libraries* will be responsible for interpreting this policy, resolving disputes concerning its interpretation and application, and recommending changes to the Faculty from time to time.” The goal was to share the draft and have more conversation with faculty across UVM’s colleges but due to the changing political climate of the 2024-2025 academic year, it was decided to table the conversation about open access until things are less turbulent.

OVPR, Vice President of Research, Kirk Dombrowski.

Kirk Dombrowski, Vice President for Research, was invited to speak with the RSCA on multiple occasions about the UVM’s research infrastructure and supports. The items discussed included research funding, NSF career awards, philanthropic gifts, new institutes and R1 status. During his visit to the March RSCA meeting, , we discussed:

- F&A rates,
- international research and
- cost sharing on grants.

Graduate College Update, Dean Holger Hoock.

Dean Hoock went over the 2024-2029 Strategic plan with the committee. You can find the plan on the UVM Graduate College website. Dean Hoock answered a variety of questions from the committee regarding growth, funding, plan for graduate faculty, enrollment of students, the cost of Ph.D. students, online education growth and space considerations.

Proposal for the University of Vermont Center for Community News, Meg Little Reilly (Managing Director) and Richard Watts (Director).

Meg Little Reilly and Richard Watts gave a presentation to the committee. The committee discussed the proposal including the following:

- This will be housed in the Provost’s Office and not in OVPR.
- How moving the Center to the Provost’s Office will impact CAS.
- How this will help get the stories of all the things that are happening at UVM to the public and the need to include LCOM in these stories.
- The budget and sustainability.
- Space and how this will be managed.

The RSCA approved the proposal and sent a recommendation for the Center for Community News to the Faculty Senate for review.

Proposal for Food Systems Research Institute, Polly Ericksen (Director, Food Systems Research Center).

Polly Ericksen shared a proposal and visited the committee to discuss a transition of the current Food Systems Research Center into an Institute and moving the institute's location from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALs) to the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR).

The RSCA Committee members raised questions about:

- how the transition to OVPR would impact CALS
- funding sustainability given cuts to government offices with the current administration
- the potential for overlapping with other centers and institutes and
- the governance of the proposed Institute

These questions were answered by Polly Ericksen, input from CALS faculty, and by closer inspection of the proposal. The RSCA Committee approved the proposal and sent a recommendation for the Food Systems Research Institute to the Faculty Senate for review.

Review of RSCA and OVPR policy for Institute 3-year preliminary reports and 5-year reports with full senate review.

Beverly Wemple, Director of the Water Institute and member of the RSCA, started the conversation by proposing a process that could be used to organize the reviews Kirk Dombrowski visited the RSCA to discuss a structure and policy that can be used moving forward for the 3- and 5-year institute reviews that need to be reviewed by both the OVPR and the RSCA. We discussed how the reviews would be coordinated between the RSCA and the OVPR. The details of this arrangement are still being determined in a collaborative effort with the OVPR.