

## **EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING**

**November 19, 2025**

Video Conference on Microsoft Teams

### **MINUTES**

**Present:** Jay Ashman, Ralph Budd, Claire Burlingham, Gary Derr, Ruth Farrell, Alan Gotlieb, Michael Gurdon, Judith Van Houten, Rachel Johnson, Dwight Matthews, Beth Mintz, Alison Pechenick, Mara Saule

**Absent:** Takamura Ashikaga

**Call to Order:** Chair Michael Gurdon called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM

#### **Introduction of our newly elected members-at-large**

Results of elections for 2-year terms:

1. Officers:
  - a. Michael Gurdon, President
  - b. Beth Mintz, Vice-President
  - c. Ralph Budd, Secretary-Treasurer
2. At Large Executive Board Members:
  - a. Jay Ashman, Claire Burlingham, Gary Derr, Alan Gotlieb, Alison Pechenick

#### **Approval of the Minutes of October 15<sup>th</sup> and annual meeting of November 14<sup>th</sup>**

Minutes were approved.

#### **Faculty Senate Report (submitted by Mara Saule)**

There have been two Faculty Senate meetings since our last Exec Board meeting (Oct 15)

Faculty Senate meeting October 27, 2025 (in person, Memorial Lounge with a full house):

1. After the routine Senate President's remarks, degree conferrals, and approval of minutes, two resolutions in memoriam were read for Prof. Ted B. Flanagan, professor of Chemistry, and Prof. Jackson JW Clemmons, professor of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine.
2. Bettyjo Bouchey, Chief Officer for Professional and Continuing Education (PACE), gave an initial overview of a proposal for Credit for Prior Learning that would grant graduate students credit for skills and knowledge gained outside of academic settings, largely through portfolio assessment and prior credential. The presentation highlighted various means of assessing such credit and cited national trends in this direction.
3. Discussion of the implications of standardizing teaching/advising workload effort of faculty to 10% per course. There was much engaged discussion of this move by faculty attendees and student guests, a move for which the Senate is advisory and not determinative. The motivation for this is new federal compliance regulations for uniform charging frameworks on grants across departments and disciplines which need to be consistent with non-grant-funded faculty. There are several faculty working groups in different colleges further exploring implications on workload and on different faculty cohorts (tenure track and non-tenure track) and across varying disciplines.

4. Finally, President McGowan lead the faculty in an online poll regarding how the current political climate is affecting research. While this poll focused on impact on research, there will be continuing discussion in the Senate to gather information on the impact on teaching and classroom practices.

Faculty Senate meeting November 17, 2025 (virtual, on Teams with approx. 80 attendees):

1. In her introductory remarks, President McGowan highlighted two important initiatives emerging during the current and upcoming semesters: an Artificial Intelligence Task Force, and the Catamount LEAP project which aims to identify potential efficiencies across different functional areas of the University (such as in technology).
2. The Curricular Affairs Committee and the Student Affairs Committee gave general overviews of their work and processes.
3. The two frameworks for Credit for Prior Learning for graduate courses (by portfolio and credential) were approved.
4. Artificial Intelligence Task Force member Prof. Susanmarie Harrington presented the proposed draft Framework and Guiding Principles for use of AI in research and pedagogy. She presented draft principles, including a focus on ethics, integrity, and literacy and the responsible use of AI. Details of the AI Task Force's current work can be found at [go.uvm.edu/guiding-ai-principles](https://go.uvm.edu/guiding-ai-principles)
5. Regarding the survey of faculty regarding impact of the current political climate on research, results from the October meeting were shared and additional input gathered at this meeting (via online poll).
6. The Curricular Affairs Committee reported that it had completed the Academic Program Review process for the Economics program, and the Senate Executive Council reported updates governing the review of changes to administrative structure (largely involving committee membership).

As always, detailed minutes and materials are available on the Faculty Senate website. The next Senate meeting is December 15 via Teams starting at 3 pm instead of 4 pm.

#### **Update on United Academics (Beth Mintz)**

UA apologizes about being unclear about the dependent audit. About 100 dropped dependent coverage. Question raised whether HR is following up with these individuals. It was unclear whether they had taken any action on this.

Faculty morale is at a significant low. A dividing issue is that administration is pushing for a standardized credit for courses taught. This is believed to help in equalizing teaching load. Administration says this is federally mandated, particularly for grants. There is concern this could lead to increased course loads.

UA is pushing to have a faculty representative on the UVM Board. UA has filed a grievance to obtain information regarding health insurance for retired faculty.

A separate grievance is being filed by some retired faculty regarding the new health insurance plan. It was offered that clarification of exactly what the grievance is would be helpful. UA attorney feels the group should have a lawyer involved when they go to the Vermont Labor Relations Board. Point was raised that RFAO could help re-establish the precedent that a grievance process for retired faculty was

established several years ago and signed off by Faculty Senate and the administration. Some retirees have found a cheaper health insurance plan outside VIA despite even losing the UVM contribution. Point was raised that if rates increase significantly next year, UVM will need to raise their contribution. Concern was raised about getting information on this topic to retired staff.

### **Review of the Annual General Meeting**

There was a widespread sentiment that the keynote speaker was excellent and that the overall event went well.

### **Assessment of the status of the Medicare insurance transition**

Sentiment raised that the VIA enrollment period has been a highly dysfunctional experience and whether UVM should cancel contract earlier than 5 years currently planned. But any separation must be made with considerably more lead time than we have experienced recently. However, in future years there will be far fewer retirees needing to sign up, limited to just the new retirees.

Concern raised about helping retirees with cognitive problems and how RFAO might assist them. We should request weekly updates on what percentage of retirees have signed up and what the HR plans are for reaching out to those who have not signed up.

Alan had issues getting information to Humana and is working with higher level VIA staff on this. Michael reminded us that HR has committed to “no retiree left behind.” Possibility raised of having “peer-to-peer” counseling in which retirees help one another. Could get a classroom with several computers and have someone teach it to get remaining retirees enrolled.

### **Other business**

Michael expressed his appreciation to Alan, Lee, Taka and Kieran Killeen for their work on the Retired Scholars Award Program review committee. As a result, six applications received funding.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 PM.

The next meeting is scheduled for December 17, 2025.

Respectfully submitted, Ralph Budd