



**Faculty Senate
Minutes
Monday, February 23, 2026
4:00 – 5:30 PM, on TEAMS**

The meeting was called to order by Faculty Senate President Abigail McGowan at 4:00 PM

Senators in Attendance: 68

Absent: 12 Senators: Agriculture, Landscape, and Environment (Tracy), Anesthesiology Rep2 (Hart), Biomedical & Health Sciences (Allen), CCCC Chair (Scollins), Communication Sciences & disorders (Curran), Emergency Medicine Rep1 (Schlein), Emergency Medicine Rep2 (Pellet), Family Medicine Rep2 (Berns), Mathematics & Statistics Rep2 (Julianelle), Orthopaedics & Rehabilitation (Shafritz), Radiology Rep1 (vacant), Surgery Rep1 (Tranmer)

1. Faculty Senate President's Welcome Remarks – Abigail McGowan made the following remarks:

- Abby thanked community members for their ongoing efforts to support colleagues and students who are feeling vulnerable or anxious, and noted the high level of participation in conversations and meetings aimed at mutual support. Abby emphasized the value of speaking up during challenging times, while also listening and engaging with others rather than speaking for them, noting the need for continued awareness of the varied perspectives and experiences people bring to campus discussions.
- The University's strategic plan has been approved by the Board of Trustees. Congratulations to everyone involved in drafting the plan, especially Dean Katie Shepherd. Implementation now shifts to individual units. Faculty are encouraged to participate in unit-level planning to ensure their voices are represented.
- Nominations are being accepted for the faculty panel that will select representatives for the Provost Search Committee. The nomination window will close on Wednesday, February 25 at 5 PM.
- The remaining three meetings of the Faculty Senate for the Academic Year will be held in person, in Waterman Memorial Lounge. The March agenda will include updates on workload implications of the 10% effort-per-course shift. The April meeting will include an update from VP for Research Kirk Dombrowski on R1 status progress one-year after designation.

2. Call for Nominations

The nomination period for two Faculty Senate elected roles has opened:

- A. President-Elect: A one-year term beginning July 1, 2026, followed by a two-year term as President of the Faculty Senate (July 2027-June 2029). Abigail McGowan will not stand for re-election. Amy Trubek, current Vice President has been nominated.
- B. Executive Council Member At-Large: Two seats, each with a two-year term running July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2028. Nominees must be sitting senators. Current nominees include Lizzy Pope (CALs, Nutrition and Food Sciences), Abby Crocker (CEMS) Mathematics and Statistics, and Nels Olson (LCOM) Pathology and Laboratory Medicine.

Additional nominations are encouraged and may be submitted to the Faculty Senate Office (faculty.senate@uvm.edu) by Tuesday, February 24th. The election ballot will be distributed during the first week of March and remain open for seven calendar days. Uncontested races will be decided by acclamation.

3. **Consent Agenda** – The following items were presented as a consent agenda:

- A. The minutes of the January 2026 Senate meeting
- B. Curricular Affairs
 - 1. Minor in Emergency Management (CALs)
 - 2. CGS in Specialized Literacy Studies (CESS)
 - 3. MCGS in Biomedical Innovation (CEMS)
 - 4. MCGS in Sustainability Reporting (GSB)
 - 5. Minor in Exercise Science (CNHS)

Motion: Abigail McGowan stated that the consent agenda came to the Senate moved and seconded by the Executive Council.

Vote: 60 approve, 0 oppose, 0 abstain. The motion carried.

4. **Resolution in Memoriam**

- A. George Wellman, Professor of Pharmacology, presented a Resolution in Memoriam for John J. “Jack” McCormack, Jr, Emeritus Professor of Pharmacology. The resolution is attached to these minutes.

Motion: George Wellman moved to inscribe the resolution in memoriam for Jack McCormack in the minutes of the Faculty Senate and have a copy sent to the family.

- B. Katie Gough, Professor, College of Arts and Sciences, presented a Resolution in Memoriam for Sidney B. Poger, Emeritus Professor of English. The resolution is attached to these minutes.

Motion: Katie Gough moved to inscribe the resolution in memoriam for Sidney Poger in the minutes of the Faculty Senate and have a copy sent to the family.

Abigail McGowan called a vote on the Resolutions in Memoriam for Jack McCormack and Sid Poger.

Vote: 56 approve, 0 oppose, 0 abstain. **The motion carried.**

5. Update on University Financials

Alicia Estey, VP for Finance, Administration, & Human Resources. Chief Financial Officer (see slides)

Alicia Estey provided an overview of the University's financial position across three fiscal years. The presentation slides are attached to these minutes.

FY25 ended stronger than expected: although the Board approved use of \$12M in reserves to offset significant healthcare cost volatility, the funds were not needed and the university ended the year on budget with some additional revenue.

In FY26, no reserve use was planned and the University is projected to finish with a balanced budget. Savings came from approximately \$1.9-\$2.2M in reductions to support centers through vacant-position eliminations, operating cuts, and reduced travel/professional development. Cuts varied by unit. Some departments – particularly custodial services- remain strained; hiring-freeze exceptions are being used to maintain adequate service levels.

The FY27 budget is planned as a structurally balanced budget without reserve use.

Factors for planning for FY27 include: tuition increase of 2% in-state, 4.5% out-of-state; a requested 3% rise in State appropriation; support centers were asked to model 1.0%, 1.25%, and 1.5% cut scenarios; fringe rate will drop to 44.6%; operating budgets are expected to increase by ~7% including \$3M for strategic investments, and utilities will increase by 4.3%.

Estey also noted that Vermont's annual appropriation represents roughly 6% of general fund revenue and is unlikely to grow substantially. Deferred maintenance needs are estimated between \$450-\$750M, requiring future increased investment and potential debt issuance. The Board recently approved refunding older bonds, generating an anticipated \$20M in savings.

Additional updates included: (1) support center and academic unit budget timelines running through May; (2) an ongoing IBB health check recommending renewed transparency and governance structures; (3) ERP bids closing, with selection and subsequent implementation-partner RFP expected in the coming weeks; (4) development of a six-year capital plan and updated housing assessment; and (5) progress on the Chief Human Resources Officer search, with finalists anticipated later in the spring.

Discussion topics included ERP software cost and implementation; Priority and timing of ERP replacement; Health insurance cost planning; and Deferred Maintenance.

6. Student Affairs Committee Resolution to Revise the Attendance Policy Related to Intercollegiate and Academic Competitions

The members of the UVM Faculty Senate Student Affairs Committee (SAC) recommend revision to the Attendance Policy related to Intercollegiate and Academic Competitions. *Whereas* the students, faculty, and administrators identified a need to review the current policy;

Whereas the current policy did not specify that reasonable assistance must be provided to the student missing a lab;

Whereas the current policy lacks clarity regarding the question of dropping the lowest grade as reasonable assistance to students with excused absences;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Attendance Policy related to Intercollegiate and Academic Competitions be revised as presented.

PROPOSED CHANGES:

Attendance Policy related to Intercollegiate and Academic Competitions

CURRENT POLICY: Students who represent the University of Vermont in official intercollegiate varsity athletic or academic program-sponsored competitions should plan their schedules with special care, recognizing the primary importance of their academic responsibilities. It is the responsibility of the student to avoid signing up for a course or section whose scheduled meetings consistently conflict with the intercollegiate competition and travel schedule. If travel for such intercollegiate competition requires absences from a class, it is also the student's responsibility to provide the instructor with documentation of anticipated absences and to meet with the instructor regarding the missed course work and instruction. Provided a student has submitted documentation for absences due to participation in official intercollegiate competitions, an instructor must excuse the absences and should provide reasonable assistance to the student concerning missed instruction, assignments, and exams, including final exams. Any conflicts between student and instructor may be presented for resolution to the course department chair or college dean's office.

NEW POLICY (changes in bold): Students who represent the University of Vermont in official intercollegiate varsity athletic or academic program-sponsored competitions should plan their schedules with special care, recognizing the primary importance of their academic responsibilities. It is the responsibility of the student to avoid signing up for a course or section whose scheduled meetings consistently conflict with the intercollegiate competition and travel schedule. If travel for such intercollegiate competition requires absences from a class, it is also the student's responsibility to provide the instructor with documentation of anticipated absences and to meet with the instructor regarding the missed course work and instruction. Provided a student has submitted documentation for absences due to participation in official intercollegiate competitions, an instructor must excuse the absences and should provide reasonable assistance to the student concerning missed instruction, assignments, **labs**, and exams, including final exams. **Class policies which allow students to drop the lowest grade(s) in a grade category do not alone constitute reasonable assistance in this instance; students must be allowed the opportunity to make up the work (exam, lab, etc.)** Any conflicts between student and instructor may be presented for resolution to the course department chair or college dean's office.

Discussion included clarified that the policy does **not** require replicating missed clinical or simulation experiences, only that instructors provide *reasonable assistance* so students with UVM-sanctioned absences—especially athletes—are not unfairly penalized. The

broader discussion also highlighted equity issues and the need for consistent interpretation of “reasonable assistance” across departments.

Motion: Abigail McGowan called a vote on the resolution

Vote: 46 approve, 6 oppose, 10 abstain. The resolution was approved.

7. Reports that do not require a Senate vote:

- a) Curricular Affairs Committee (CAC) Report – Academic Program Review (APR) for Communication Sciences and Disorders program in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences.
- b) Catamount Core Committee (CCCC) Report – support for the Office of Community-Engaged Learning (CELO) proposal for Revised course Designations for Community-Engaged Learning

8. New Business - none

Without objection, the meeting adjourned at 5:25 PM.

**Resolution in Memoriam
John J. “Jack” McCormack Jr.
Emeritus Professor of Pharmacology
1938-2025**

**Presented by George C. Wellman
Professor of Pharmacology
February 23, 2026**

On behalf of the Department of Pharmacology, it is my honor to present the resolution in memoriam for John J. “Jack” McCormack. Jack was born in 1938 in Boston and grew up in Brookline Massachusetts. He attended Boston College, graduating with a B.S. in Chemistry in 1959. He then earned a Ph.D. in Pharmacology from Yale University in 1964. After completing a two-year post-doctoral fellowship in the Department of Medicinal Chemistry at the Australian National University in Canberra, Australia, Jack accepted a position as Assistant Professor of Pharmacology here at UVM in 1966.

Jack remained at UVM for the rest of his distinguished career. His research interests included medicinal chemistry, analytical chemistry, drug metabolism, and novel approaches to treat cancers. Jack published over 80 peer-reviewed papers, served on numerous Faculty Senate Committees, and was acting Director of the Vermont Regional Cancer Center from 1983-1984. His honors include a General Motors Undergraduate Scholarship, being named University Scholar in the Medical Sciences (1987–88), and being elected Fellow of the Vermont Academy of Arts and Sciences in June 2004. After becoming Professor Emeritus of Pharmacology in 2003, Jack continued to contribute to the UVM community through teaching, the UVM Choral Union, and serving as President of the UVM Retired Faculty and Administrative Officers Organization from 2008-2019.

Jack was predeceased by his beloved wife, Grace, and is survived by his four children, twelve grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren. Jack was truly devoted to his family and loved spending time with them. He was a great teacher, mentor, colleague, and a role model to many. He will be remembered for his generosity, quick wit, and his passion for music, sports, and family.

Resolution in Memoriam
Sidney B. Poger
Professor Emeritus of English
1935-2025
Presented by Katie Gough
Professor, College of Arts and Sciences
February 23, 2026

The English Department is saddened to report that our beloved colleague and friend, Dr. Sidney Poger, Emeritus Professor of English, passed away on May 17, 2025, at the age of 90. Born in Everett, Massachusetts in 1935, Poger was educated at Tufts University and Columbia University, the latter granting him a Ph.D. in 1965.

In 1962, he was hired at the University of Vermont and spent the length of his career, 38 years, teaching courses in Irish Literature—co-directing an Irish Studies program at UVM—Modern Poetry, and American Literature. While not a poet himself, Poger was an expert reader and interpreter of poetry, particularly the work of twentieth century poets. Additionally, in the second half of his career, he engaged in research and teaching courses in Detective Fiction, culminating in the publication of *Poe's Children*, a comprehensive study that linked the influence of Edgar Allan Poe to the evolution of the detective genre, that Poger co-authored with his colleague, UVM professor Tony Magistrale.

Throughout his years at UVM, Poger was a visible and vital presence on the fourth-floor hallway of Old Mill. His office colleagues recall often being serenaded by various songs, none of them contemporary, as Sid made his way from one end of the hallway to the other. Further, he was quick to remind us all to set aside work in our offices whenever he announced it was time for “Lunch!”

His students remember Sid as a kind and generous mentor. His knowledge of Poe and detective authors was encyclopedic, and Poger freely shared his specialization in published articles and in his always oversubscribed UVM class, *Poe's Children*, which he taught to undergraduates for many years. The English Department officially retired that class, alongside Poger's jersey, when he retired from the university in 2003.

Budget Update

Alicia Estey, Vice President for Finance, Administration and Human Resources



FY25 Performance and FY26 Projections

- Revenues, *excluding use of reserves*, exceeded budget.
- Although the use of reserves was budgeted and transferred, the University would have ended the fiscal year with a positive balance without it.
- For FY26, general fund revenue and expenses are projected to meet budget.

Revenue (\$000)	FY2025 Budget	FY2025 Actuals	Variance
Net Undergraduate Tuition	233,000	238,400	5,400
Net Graduate Tuition	24,727	23,373	(1,354)
Other Net Tuition	45,604	44,835	(769)
State Appropriations	55,707	55,707	-
Cost Recovery	5,025	5,568	543
Other Income	76,070	87,183	11,113
Use of Reserves	11,655	11,655	-
Total Revenue	451,787	466,720	14,933
Expenses (\$000)			
Administrative Units	234,072	237,381	3,309
Academic Units	217,715	215,987	(1,728)
Total Expenses	451,787	453,368	1,581
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	-	13,352	13,352
Use of Reserves		(11,655)	(11,655)
Margin		1,698	1,698

FY26 Support Center Budget Actions

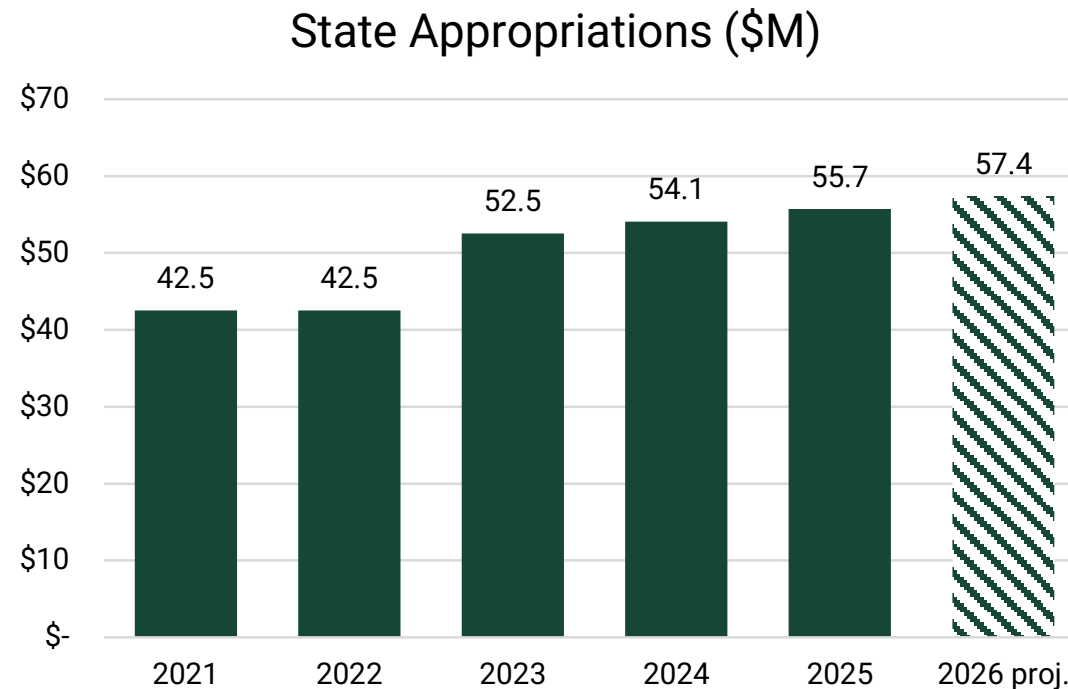
Reporting Unit	Percent Reduction	Amount Reduction	Approved FY26 budget increase
Athletics	2%	247,767	
Audit	3%	24,781	
CIO/ETS	0%	-	
Div. Human Resource Services	3%	172,590	
Div. Safety & Compliance	2%	152,343	
Grad College	0%	-	141,169
Honors College	3%	46,098	
Libraries	0%	-	
PACE	3%	201,071	
Sr. VP & Provost	3%	140,723	98,800
Strategic Comms	2%	77,747	
VP Div. Incl. Excellence	3%	84,297	
VP Enrollment Management	0%	-	780,000
VP Faculty Affairs	1%	12,797	
VP Finance & Administration	3%	1,508,245	
VP Legal	0%	-	6,700
VP Research	1%	85,243	
VP Student Affairs	3%	61,630	
VPAASS	3%	127,026	
OIE	1%	12,581	
Univ. Relations	0%		
President's Office	N/A	41,862	
total		2,942,357	1,026,669

FY 2027 Budget Planning: Key Factors

- In-state tuition increase of 2%; out-of-state tuition increase 4.5%
- Requested 3% increase in state appropriation (*not approved until May 2026*)
- Operating investment income budgeted flat
- Support centers submitted *potential* budget reduction scenarios of 1%, 1.25% and 1.5%
- Estimated fringe rate for full-time employees is 44.6%; 11% reduction year-over-year
- Operating expenses budget increased by 7% including \$3M for strategic investments
- Utility budget (natural gas, oil, and electricity) increased by 4.3%
- **The FY27 budget is projected to be structurally balanced without reserves**

State Appropriations

- General fund appropriations are approved annually and paid to UVM in equal monthly installments over the year
- The state typically commits \$1M-\$1.5M to capital budget annually
- FY27 request was for a 3% increase to base



Other Updates

- Support center budgets will be set in mid-March; academic units will submit their plans by the end of March/early April
- Academic unit budgets finalized at the end of April/early May
- Board meeting to approve FY27 budget May 15
- IBB health check
- ERP update
- Deferred maintenance
 - Six-Year Capital Plan
- Debt refunding and financing
- CHRO search

Questions?