

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

February 11, 2026

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, Alison Pechenick, Mara Saule

Absent: Takamura Ashikaga, Beth Mintz

Call to Order: Chair Michael Gurdon called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM

Approval of the Minutes of January 21, 2026.

Minutes were approved.

Faculty Senate Report (submitted by Mara Saule)

The faculty Senate first meeting of the spring semester was January 26, 2026 via Teams online. It was attended by approximately 160 faculty and others.

- I. Faculty Senate President Abigail McGowan started the meeting as always with her president's remarks. There are currently several positions open on the Executive Council, including President-elect and two seats for Executive Council member-at-large. Elections will be held early in March. In addition, the proposed revisions to the attendance policy are now being reviewed by the Student Affairs Committee.
- II. After conferral of degrees, there was a discussion and presentation by President Marlene Tromp and Strategic Planning Committee chair Dean Katie Shepherd of the final University of Vermont Strategic Plan. The plan includes updated mission and vision statements, and is organized around four pillars: student success; teaching, research, and innovation; engagement and partnerships; and university infrastructure and people. Dean Shepherd informed the Senate that the university Board of Trustees would discuss and vote on the final draft at its February 6-7 meetings [Note: The plan was, in fact, passed by the Board at its February meeting]. The plan and its attendant materials are available via the UVM President's website.
- III. Michael Gurdon, Professor Emeritus of Business Administration, presented a resolution in memoriam for Malcolm Severance, Professor Emeritus of Business Administration. The resolution is attached to the Faculty Senate's own meeting minutes. Professor Gurdon's resolution captured beautifully the long, engaged, and impactful life of Professor Severance.
- IV. Several Faculty Senate committee chairs presented reports on their committee activities: the Educational and Research Technologies Committee, the Faculty Affairs Committee, and the Curricular Affairs Committee (routine written report only)
- V. The next meeting of the Faculty Senate will be held on February 23 via Teams and will include the annual budget update from Alicia Esty, the Chief Financial Officer and VP for Finance, Administration, and Human Resources.

Update on United Academics (submitted by Alison Pechenick)

The grievance statement drafted by Tim O'Brien and Ron Frey was filed on Nov. 24 and VLB suggested in response that we try to develop a letter of understanding with UVM before VLRB weighs in further. But

it remains an active case. The collective bargaining agreement (CBA) also has details on benefits for retirees.

President Gurdon has made a request that the line of communication of RFAO with UVM be via the Provost's office and this has been agreed. It was suggested that RFAO might have regular periodic meetings with the Provost. Of note, it was just announced that a search for a new Provost has been initiated.

UBAC activities (submitted by Ruth Farrell)

UBAC has not met since the last RFAO meeting. Next meeting is 2/19/26.

Current state of the Medicare plan transition

Most are now seeing their HRA reimbursements from UVM appearing in their bank accounts. Alison noted that prescription mail order costs can be more than pharmacy pickup costs.

The billing for office visit has two parts (doctor visit and facilities use).

Important that your physician not use the term "annual physical" because this is not covered by Medicare. Rather, it should be called "wellness exam". Also, the next wellness exam must be 365+ days since the last one or it will not be covered by Medicare.

Ruth noted that HR says we are now down to only 30 retirees who have not converted to the new plan.

Still some miscommunication for those who have chosen the VT BCBS plan, as VIA seems to not always understand this is offered. Caitlyn knows the person at VIA who understands this.

Some retirees do not realize that they need to submit their bank information to both the insurance company for automatic payment as well as to VIA for HRA reimbursement.

Available and desired communication resources for retirees

Judy and Rachel are developing a list of URL links that retirees would like to have to keep informed of UVM events, such as the President's Lecture Series. These will eventually be posted on the RFAO website.

Dwight noted that he and Gary Derr will talk with UVM Communications to get retirees back on the general UVM email list. Rachel has also had discussions with UVM Communications about this.

"Women of UVM" is actually not officially affiliated with UVM (it was originally founded by the wives of UVM faculty). Membership for new members is open each fall. This following email was received by Rachel from Jane Smith, the Women of UVM president:

Hello Rachel,

Thank you for your interest in The Women of UVM.

We do have a website, but it is for members only.

This page, however, does provide some information about us:

<https://www.womenofuvm.com/newmemberregistration/>

Our membership totals 1,113 at the moment and everything is led by volunteers.

Membership is open to anyone, although we love getting women with ties to the school to join us. About 46% of our members have some relationship to the school, mostly as graduates and retired staff/faculty.

New members can join during the first two weeks of Sept. every year, and that's when current members must renew, as well.

The fee is \$25. The registration process is all done online. If you read to the end of that page, you will see that it says registration has expired for this year. That is the url one would go to between Sept. 1 and 15 to register. A new form will be posted on that page. The Sept. 15 deadline is hard and fast.

Most of our members are retired, as most of the interest groups are held during the day, Monday through Friday. A few book groups are the exception and are held in the evening. I will say that many of our interest groups are full, but a member can start a new group at any time, with guidance from our interest group chair, who sits on the Board.

Given that we are run by volunteers, we do not advertise ourselves anywhere, and our website does not come up in a Google search. We are not trying to be exclusive, by any means. Our membership has grown by leaps and bounds in the past few years.

If you have any other questions, don't hesitate to email me.

Thanks again for your interest.

-Jane

For upcoming speakers, Wolfgang Mieder will be spring speaker. President Marlene Tromp has been suggested as speaker for the November 2026 meeting. President Gurdon has also reached out to President Tromp's office to meet with the RFAO Board, which has been a tradition with new UVM presidents.

Also suggested that retirees that receive scholarship awards from RFAO should give some type of brief presentation that could be recorded and made available to retirees on the RFAO website.

Spring luncheon plans and ideas for other possible presentations

The plan is for a late spring/early summer RFAO luncheon, perhaps in early June, and need to determine location and cost since retirees do pay for this event. Separately is the annual President's luncheon with retirees, usually in August.

Other business

Suggested that we update the information sheet we put together for navigating the VIA website so that it can be available to future retirees.

The Lane series offers discount prices for retirees. That could be placed on the website.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:57 PM.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 18, 2026 and will be virtual.

Respectfully submitted, Ralph Budd