

**Annual Report (AY 2025/2026)**  
**Research, Scholarship and the Creative Arts Committee**  
UVM Faculty Senate  
April 27, 2026

Membership of the Committee:

Bikki Tran Smith (CNHS; Chair), Abby McGowan (Faculty Senate President), Stephan Keller (CALs), Raju Badireddy (CEMS), Brit Williams (CESS), Chun Zhang (GSB), Aaron Nichols (LIB), Donna O'Malley (LIB) Mary Cushman (LCOM), Christian Pulcini (LCOM), Nicole Phelps (CAS), Robert Shimko (CAS), Vicki Brennan (CAS), Beverly Wemple (RSENr), Rachelle Gould (RSENr), Emmanuel Abah (PostDoc), Rebecca Torres (SGA).

The committee met 9 times, the first being on September 11, 2025 and the last being May 14, 2026.

### 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 Updated Operating Procedures.**

In September, the RSCA discussed its latest operating procedures with updated Senate bylaws information. Committee members voted to approve the updates.

## **Process for Reviewing Institutes**

During the 2024-2025 academic year, a guide for reviewing the progress of institutes was drafted by a member of the RSCA. During our October meeting, we picked up on this conversation once more to solidify the type of report we want from the institutes. We did not want to make the process onerous or duplicate the OVPR review process. We proposed keeping the report simple and informal and invite institute directors to give us an update starting the end of their 3<sup>rd</sup> year of operation about their progress and needs and identify ways that the RSCA may support the success of the institutes.

## **Collaborating with FOUR with Melissa Parr.**

Although we have had a collaborative relationship with FOUR in the past, it was more than a year since our last meeting. Despite multiple efforts to reach out during that time, we received no response and thus wanted to know if FOUR still wanted to work with us. Melissa Parr, Assistant Director for Undergraduate Research, responded during Fall 2025 to express continued interest in working together. She visited with the RSCA in December to discuss the work done at FOUR and potential ways of collaborating to facilitate mutual support. The RSCA made the following suggestions to FOUR:

- Have a sign-up process to get more people involved in the application review process
- Mentoring students and compensating for that effort
- Supporting training undergraduates in non-class ways to take the pressure off mentors
- Involving postdoctoral fellows in the mentorship process

In addition, an updated MOU with FOUR was drafted based on the last version from 2018. The updated MOU was sent to Ann Kroll Lerner, Director of Undergraduate Research, and Melissa for review and approval.

## **AI Taskforce Efforts with Mike Austin, Melanie Locher, Darcy Pientka, Alexa Woodward, and Andrew Zehner.**

Members of the AI Taskforce visited with the RSCA in November to provide us with an update on the AI Taskforce's efforts. Chairs of the different working groups within the AI Taskforce each shared their current efforts to tackle the impact of AI and its applicability and integration. Issues discussed included:

- Available resources and information
- AI Innovation Fund
- Co-Pilot availability, use, and training.
- Data protection and security with Co-Pilot
- Articulate a pathway to opt out of AI.
- Tools to help faculty who do not want to use tools such as Co-Pilot that are automatically integrated into systems.
- Policies for use of platforms not licensed by UVM

- AI use in research

We concluded with discussion of collaborating with Alexa Woodward, Chair of the Research and Innovation Working Group, and Bettyjo Bouchey, Chair of the Workforce Development Working Group in planning the AI Summit.

### **Open Access Resolution Discussion with Dean Bryn Geffert.**

Dean Geffert visited the RSCA to discuss open access, reshare an *Open Access Resolution Draft for UVM* and to answer questions, once more. This meeting was the third time that the RSCA has met with Dean Geffert to discuss open access as the conversation was tabled at the end of the 2024-2025 academic year due to the turbulence caused by the changing political climate. The RSCA met Dean Geffert in January to discuss concerns with the Open Access Resolution draft. Some of the language in the resolution was considered problematic and in potential conflict with the CBA. The RSCA recommended that Dean Geffert:

- Replace the word “will” in the line, “Each Faculty member will provide an electronic copy of the accepted author manuscript (AAM)” to “may.”
- Develop a one-page open access primer document that explains the proposed resolution and answers to common questions about it
- Meet with union representatives to discuss more suitable wording

The RSCA opted not to vote on the Open Access Resolution draft until the issue is addressed.

### **OVPR Operations Update with Kirk Dombrowski and Core Facilities Overview with Kate Tracey.**

Kirk Dombrowski, Vice President for Research, and Senior Associate Dean of Research at LCOM, Kate Tracey were invited to speak with the RSCA in February. Kirk provided a detailed account of OVPR operations, including finances and applications. During his visit we discussed:

- Awards terminated in the last year
- Maintaining R1 status
- Recruitment of and funding support for doctoral students
- Potential shift in types of applications researchers apply for
- An update on Foundation funding

Kate provided an overview of the Research Cores and how they are utilized at UVM. We discussed:

- Core facility locations
- Cost and payment for Core usage by non-affiliated individuals
- Use and payment for work completed by external facilities instead of Core facilities

- Cost benefit analysis of maintaining a Core facility

### **Review of Misconduct in Research Policy.**

During our February meeting, we reviewed and discussed proposed changes to the Misconduct in Research Policy, and each member provided individual feedback during the open comment period.

### **Wiley Open Access Waivers Discussion with Susan Swogger.**

The RSCA met with Susan Swogger, Head of Collection Development, Analysis, and Strategy and Library Associate Professor, to learn more about the Wiley Open Access waivers. With the change in regulation requiring federally funded grants to publish open access of their research findings, we wanted to know what resources are available to researchers at UVM. Susan shared that as part of our contract with Wiley, we are given a certain number of waivers, which is currently 73, per year. The waivers mean that researchers publishing in a Wiley journal does not have to pay the article processing charges (APCs). Any unused waivers are not carried over to the next year. We expressed concern that so few of us knew about the availability of the waivers. The limited knowledge about the waivers for Wiley journals and others across campus can potentially limit where researchers decide to publish if they do not have funds to cover the APCs. As such, the RSCA suggested the following:

- Have information about all available open access waivers more easily accessible on the UVM library website
- Work with SPA to disseminate the availability of waivers to researchers during the post-award process
- Disseminate the availability of waivers more broadly to researchers across campus