

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

April 15, 2026

In Person Meeting with Video Conference on Microsoft Teams

MINUTES

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

Absent: Taka Ashikaga, Ralph Budd, Dwight Matthews

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

1. Approval of the Minutes of March 18, 2026

Minutes were approved.

2. Faculty Senate Report (submitted by Mara Saule):

The Faculty Senate met on Monday, March 23, 2026, in person in Memorial Lounge, Waterman Building. There were approximately 80 people in attendance. As always, minutes of the Senate meeting and attendant materials are available through the Faculty Senate website. The next Senate meeting will be held on Monday, April 27. The following is a summary of the March meeting.

- I. Faculty Senate President's Remarks: 1) Amy Trubek has been elected President-Elect of the Senate beginning July 1, 2026, after which she will serve as Senate President from July 2027-June 2029. Prof. Lizzy Pope (CALS) and Abby Crocker (CEMS) were elected as Members-at-Large each for two-year terms. 2) The Provost's Search Committee has now been fully constituted. 3) Faculty have been asked to review and complete an evaluation survey assessing a new stand-alone AI module intended for first-year students.
- II. AI in the Curriculum and in Grading: Two ad-hoc committees are being formed regarding how AI should be incorporated in the curriculum and, how AI should be used in grading. Both committees will seek faculty input and will focus on "campus norms, principles, and potential guardrails."
- III. Assessment Report: Richard Cohen, Assessment Coordinator in the Office of Institutional Research and Assessments, presented the initial results and summary of the Catamount Core Curriculum outcomes. This assessment process is part of an ongoing assessment of student outcomes that will inform future continuous improvement to the core curriculum across disciplines.
- IV. Update on recent legal developments and campus inclusivity: Sharon Reich Paulsen, VP for Legal Affairs and General Counsel, provided a detailed update on the history and status of recent federal regulations related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). After several executive orders, subsequent "dear colleague" letters to institutions, and legal challenges it was determined by the courts that it is the federal agencies that determine how those executive

orders will be implemented, For UVM, we continue to be guided by our long-standing "Our Common Ground" values while ensuring compliance with evolving research funding parameters and federal guidelines. UVM remains true to its core mission and values. Both the Faculty Senate and the Board of Trustees have reaffirmed our commitment to academic freedom.

- V. Update from working groups on 10% workload allocation: The Faculty Senate has received input from four academic units--CAS, CESS, RSEN, and CEMS--regarding on-going work to standardize teaching effort allocation at 10% per course. Each unit presented its Task Force's work on concerns and recommendations for implementing the 10% allocation and its impact across cohorts of faculty and teaching configurations. There was an open discussion about the implications of the various task force considerations.
- VI. There were two reports that did not need approval: the Curricular Affairs Committee Report and the Faculty Affairs Committee Report regarding safety concerns in classrooms.

The RFAO must hold an election for the next Senate member who will represent the retirees because there is a three year limit for representatives. Michael Gurdon will organize this process.

3. Update on United Academics (Beth Mintz)

United Academics is included in the search for the new head of HR. Our retiree group is not included, but our concerns are conveyed to UA.

4. UBAC update (Ruth Farrell)

Meetings Held: UBAC met on March 19th and its Health Insurance Working Group (HIWG) met on March 24th. Both meetings focused on data HR presented regarding health claims and utilization for the PPO1 health insurance plan for active employees. Note that there is a small population of retirees - those who are not yet eligible for Medicare, on the active employee PPO1 plan. We are waiting to find out how many retirees that is.

Membership: Ashley Bolger replaced Diana Nasser as the Staff United representative.

Next Meetings: UBAC will meet again on Thursday, April 16th and an HIWG meeting will be scheduled for early May. The topic of recent increase in Medicare supplement premiums will be added to the April 16th meeting agenda and will be the focus of the May HIWG meeting.

Communication to Retirees about recent premium increases: Caitlyn will be addressing this in the next retiree newsletter, due out on April 30th.

5. Evidence of large projected midyear premium increases

Retirees first brought to our attention through the RFAO Forum that there will be significant increase in premiums effective on July 1 for United Health Care Plan G. (Other plans might be affected, but our knowledge of the Via plans is not complete.)

Retirees were under the impression that the premium levels at the time of joining the health care plans through Via would apply for the entire first year. Some members of the Board explained that in Vermont health care insurers, with approval by the State, are allowed to change premiums once per year, usually at the same time each year. This does not have to be on the anniversary of the initial plan. Not all the plans offered by Via will raise their rates on July 1, 2026, and the ones that do will not necessarily use the same rate increase. These mid-year raises do not apply to the Drug Plans, which must make rate changes on the calendar year.

We considered this situation to be due to a very serious failure of Via to communicate with retirees. We will communicate with HR about this situation and invite Caitlyn Sisler and Leslie Melo to our May board meeting.

6. Updates on communication

Messages from the administration (Gary Derr) Gary Derr described his work with Susan Davidson to improve the communications from the administration to the retirees. More to come soon.

Resources for retirees (Judy Van Houten and Rachel Johnson):

We have collected the links to various programs that might be of interest to our retirees. They now reside on a page on the RFAO web site. A copy of the page of links was previously provided to the board members and approved for posting on the web site. As more organizations, programs, and series become known to us, we will amend the web page.

Because our web site cannot be updated very frequently, new announcements and links that might be of interest to retirees are being distributed by way of the Forum. We hope that by next academic year, it will not be necessary to release dates and information about special events on the Forum.

7. Planning for June 5th luncheon

Wolfgang Mieder will speak at the Spring Luncheon on "Proverbial Democracy: Government of the People, by the People and for the People." The luncheon will be held in the Davis Center 11:30-am-2 pm. Lunch will consist of sandwiches, salad, cookies, beverages and coffee, at a cost of \$20 per attendee. The form for the retirees to fill out was discussed. Name tags were requested.

8. Invited Guest: UVM President Marlene Tromp

There was a congenial discussion with Pres. Tromp about the state of higher education in Vermont, the new athletic complex, the helpful work of the new communications officer, and the search for a new CEO of the UVM foundation. The demographic cliff is a concern for the future of UVM. Pres. Tromp described some plans to address this cliff, such as scholarship support and showcasing UVM across the country.

Specifically regarding retirees, Pres. Tromp emphasized the importance of including retirees in the UVM community. She discussed a model from Arizona where students and retired faculty are housed together to facilitate mentoring across generations. Michael Gurdon provided Pres. Tromp with a summary of our RFAO surveys of members' continuing contributions to UVM. Pres. Tromp will return in the near future.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:43 pm

Respectfully submitted, Judith Van Houten