

**THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT AND STATE AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

VERMONT AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE BOARD

Chair Carol Ode, Vice Chair Shap Smith, Secretary Stephanie Jerome, John Bartholomew, Scott Beck, Monique Priestley, Lucy Rogers, Tristan Toleno, and Catherine Toll

Saturday, October 17, 2026

8:30 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.

Chittenden Bank Room, (413) Dudley H. Davis Center

AGENDA

	Item	Enclosure/ Exemption	Discussion Leader(s)	Time
	Call to order			*8:30 a.m.
1.	Approval of May 15, 2026 meeting minutes	Attachment 1	Carol Ode	8:30-8:32
2.	Strategy for 2027 legislative session		Carol Ode	8:32-9:12
3.	Other business		Carol Ode	9:12-9:15
	Adjourn			9:15 a.m.

*Times are approximate.

**VERMONT AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

A meeting of the Vermont Agricultural College Board of Trustees of the University of Vermont and State Agricultural College was held on Friday, May 15, 2026, at 8:30 a.m. in the Chittenden Bank Room (413), at the Dudley H. Davis Center.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Vice Chair Shap Smith, Secretary Stephanie Jerome, John Bartholomew, Tristan Toleno¹, Lucy Rogers², and Catherine Toll²

MEMBERS ABSENT: Chair Carol Ode, Scott Beck, and Monique Priestley

PERSONS ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: President Marlene Tromp, Trustee Shahriar Tafti, Interim Provost Linda Schadler, Chief of Staff to the President Jonathan D'Amore, Vice President for Legal Affairs & General Counsel Sharon Reich Paulsen, Executive Director of Government Relations Wendy Koenig, and Government Relations Specialist Billy Rison

¹ Joined the meeting at 8:35 a.m.

² Joined the meeting via remote conferencing.

Vice Chair Shap Smith called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m.

Legislative Update

Vice Chair Smith invited Executive Director of Government Relations Wendy Koenig to provide an update on the conclusion of the state legislative session. Discussion included recent engagement with legislators and state stakeholders regarding several university priorities, including the proposed Multipurpose Center and broader higher education policy issues. Executive Director Koenig also reported on developments related to the statewide task force addressing sexual assault prevention and response. Following legislative funding changes to the initiative, all colleges and universities in Vermont will now participate collaboratively, with institutions sharing financial responsibility for supporting and sustaining the effort moving forward.

The Board also discussed the growing need for broader public messaging around the national demographic enrollment decline and its implications for higher education institutions. Trustees and university leadership emphasized the importance of communicating how enrollment trends, reductions in research support, and changing funding landscapes may impact the university's long-term

competitiveness and financial sustainability. Several members noted that while awareness of these challenges is beginning to emerge among policymakers and community leaders, continued outreach and education will be necessary to build broader public understanding and support.

Additional discussion focused on the importance of strengthening relationships with state and local stakeholders, including Appropriations Committees and Burlington City Council, to reinforce the university's value to Vermont and the surrounding community. Members highlighted the positive impact of affordability initiatives, such as the UVM Promise program, in improving accessibility and competitiveness for prospective students. Trustees also discussed the importance of continued proactive engagement with media and public audiences to ensure accurate understanding of the university's priorities, funding needs, and long-term strategic goals.

Approval of Minutes

Vice Chair Shap Smith presented the February 6, 2026, meeting minutes for approval. A motion was made, seconded, and voted to approve the minutes as presented.

Election of Officers

Motions were made to re-elect Carol Ode as Chair, Shap Smith as Vice Chair, and Stephanie Jerome as Secretary. The motions were seconded, and it was unanimously voted to approve the appointments. Each officer will serve a one-year term, effective immediately.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:52 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Jerome, Secretary