



The University of Vermont  
FACULTY SENATE

**Minutes**

Monday, May 19, 2022

Online via Microsoft Teams 3:00 – 4:30 PM

Recording of this meeting is available on Microsoft Sharepoint

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The meeting was called to order by Faculty Senate President, Thomas Borchert at 3:04 PM

**Senators in Attendance: 61**

**Absent:** Senators Tharp (Anesthesiology), Seyller (Art & Art History), Schneebeli (Chemistry), Gotelli (Biology), Chiang (Business), Floreani (Engineering-Mechanical), Callahan (Extension), Knodell (FPPC), Calkins (Family Medicine), Weinstein (Family Medicine), Swanson (German & Russian), Julianelle (Mathematics & Statistics), Terrien (Medicine), Feurzeig (Music), Gorres (Plant & Soil Science), Bradley (Political Science), Lach (Radiology), Cockrell (Surgery), Carleton (Theatre & Dance)

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- 1. Faculty Senate President's Welcome Remarks** – Thomas Borchert welcomed everyone to the final meeting of the academic year. The plan for Fall 2022 is for the Senate to return to in-person meetings in Waterman Memorial Lounge.
  - 2. Reflections on end of the year.** Provost Patricia Prelock thanked the Faculty Senate leadership, senators, and senate committee members for their service, and for diligent and thoughtful engagement. The Provost expressed appreciation for the Senate's work in the following five areas of importance to the institution: academic reorganization discussions; feedback on the Art and Science Group's Institutional Strategy study; development of the process to stand up the new Catamount Core General Education systems; continuing efforts in support of curricular stewardship; and ongoing discussions to further DEI efforts. The input of the Senate was crucial to each of these five areas and made a difference in the direction and decisions that were made. Provost Prelock also recognized that each of us personally were impacted by COVID, and thanked faculty for their creativity, dedication, hard work, and for supporting each other and our students. During these challenging times, our faculty have contributed to the advancement of the University. UVM was placed among the top 100 of public institutions in the nation by the National Science Foundation ranking of research universities. In 2021, and early 2022, thirty-four UVM faculty received national recognition and prestigious awards, including Fulbright, Guggenheim Fellowship, and National Institute of Health and National Science Foundation Career Awards, and NIH R35 Outstanding Investigator Awards. Provost Prelock stated that she is proud of our faculty and grateful that so many are getting the national recognition they deserve.

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

- Minutes of the April 2022 Faculty Senate Meeting
- Resolution to extend the Faculty Senate ad hoc DEI committee

**Motion:** President Borchert stated that the consent agenda came to the Senate moved and seconded by the Executive Council. No requests were made to pull items from the consent agenda.

**Vote:** **48 approved**, 0 opposed, 1 abstained. **The motion carried**

**4. Conferral of Degrees**

It was moved, seconded and voted that the following numbers of graduates be recommended by the Senate to the President for the awarding of the appropriate degrees or certificates as authorized by the Board of Trustees. Individual names of the graduates are recorded with the Minutes of this meeting in the permanent Senate records.

Degrees:

Agriculture and Life Sciences (274)

Arts and Sciences (729)

Education and Social Services (158)

Engineering and Mathematical Sciences (281)

Grossman School of Business (169)

Graduate College (375)

Honors College (114)

Larner College of Medicine (118)

Nursing and Health Sciences (234)

Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources (146)

University Latin Honors (268)

**Vote:** **52 approved**, 0 opposed, 0 abstained. **The motion carried**

**5. Resolution in Memoriam**

Huck Gutman, Professor Emeritus of English, presented a Resolution in Memoriam for **Reno Thomas Simone, Professor Emeritus of English**, College of Arts and Sciences. The resolution is attached to these minutes.

**Motion:** Huck Gutman moved to inscribe the Resolution in Memoriam for Reno Thomas Simone in the minutes of the Faculty Senate and to have a copy sent to his family.

**Vote:** **50 approve**, 0 oppose, 0 abstain. **The motion carried.**

**6. Contested Deactivation Physical Education (Grades PreK-12) B.S. Ed.**

**Motion:** The item comes moved from the Curricular Affairs Committee (CAC) to approve the contested deactivation of the Physical Education (Grades PreK-12) B.S. Ed. The report from the CAC, and the rebuttal from Professor Brett Holt, Director of the Physical Education Program were distributed with the meeting agenda and are attached to these minutes. Discussion included a statement from Stephen Everse, Chair of the CAC, reminding the senators of the deactivation process, and clarifying that the role of the CAC in contested deactivation is to evaluate the request at a curricular level only. The CAC decision to

recommend deactivation was based on the concern that having a curriculum that is primarily taught by a single faculty member is not sustainable, and because the degree does not include course work and field experiences needed for endorsement as a health educator, students exiting the program are unable to get employment in the state of Vermont. Katharine Shepherd, Interim Dean of the College of Education and Social Services stated that they have not taken this deactivation lightly and look forward to further exploration into the program to see what areas might be brought to bear, particularly in the area of a health endorsement.

**Vote: 35 approve, 7 oppose, 9 abstain. The motion carried.**

- 7. Resolution Supporting Faculty Autonomy in Scholarly Work Regarding Critical Race Theory and Other Aspects of Bias, Discrimination and Social Justice.** The Research, Scholarship & the Creative Arts Committee of the Faculty Senate, the Faculty Senate Ad Hoc DEI Committee, and the Faculty Senate Executive Council presented the following resolution supporting faculty autonomy in scholarly work regarding critical race theory and other aspects of bias, discrimination, and social justice. There were no comments or questions presented for discussion.

**Resolution Supporting Faculty Autonomy in Scholarly Work Regarding Critical Race Theory and Other Aspects of Bias, Discrimination and Social Justice**

WHEREAS, state legislatures are introducing proposals across the United States that target academic discussions of racism and other aspects of bias and discrimination in American history in schools, college, and universities; and

WHEREAS, the University Manual of the University of Vermont affirms the importance of academic freedom to the proper functioning of universities, citing the American Association of University Professors' 1940 statement of principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure; and

WHEREAS, the Constitution and Bylaws of the Faculty Senate states that the Faculty are empowered "To review and establish policy with respect to...Academic freedom including rights and responsibilities" (section 1.1.a); and

WHEREAS, these legislative proposals vary but all seek to prohibit or restrict curriculum on what they call "divisive concepts" in the teaching and education of students; and

WHEREAS, the term "divisive" is indeterminate, subjective, and chills the capacity of educators to explore a wide variety of topics based on subjective criteria that are inapposite from the goals of education and the development of essential critical thinking skills; and

WHEREAS, educating about systemic barriers to realizing a democracy free of bias based on race, gender, sexual orientation, and other aspects of human diversity should be understood as central to the active and engaged pursuit of knowledge in the twenty-first century to produce engaged and informed citizens; and

WHEREAS, UVM's Our Common Ground states, "As a just community, we unite against all forms of injustice, including, but not limited to, racism. We reject bigotry, oppression, degradation, and harassment, and we challenge injustice toward any member of our community;" and

WHEREAS, while Vermont's current legislature and governor have not sought to restrict academic freedom at the University of Vermont, Vermont is not immune from these efforts; and

WHEREAS, teaching and research regarding the diversity of human experience, equity, power and privilege represent fundamental aspects of contemporary university education, and that topics of critical importance include race and racism, anti-Semitism, religious diversity and discrimination, gender dynamics and discrimination; gender identity and expression, sexual orientation and queerness, homophobia and transphobia.

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the University of Vermont Faculty Senate supports teaching, research, and scholarship in these and related fields, including critical race theory, and opposes censorship and the suppression of scholarly inquiry and dialog; and

THAT the Faculty Senate of the University of Vermont resolutely rejects any attempts by bodies external to the faculty to restrict or dictate university curriculum on any matter, including matters related to racial and social justice, or any aspect of human diversity and discrimination, and will stand firm against encroachment on faculty authority by the legislature or the Board of Trustees; and

THAT the Faculty Senate of UVM stands with our K-12 colleagues throughout the country who may be affected by this pernicious legislation; and

THAT the Faculty Senate affirms the Joint Statement on Efforts to Restrict Education about Racism authored by the AAUP, PEN America, the American Historical Association, and the Association of American Colleges and Universities, issued on June 6, 2021.

**Vote: 46 approve, 0 oppose, 1 abstain. The motion carried.**

- 8. Resolution in support of extending the Test-optional admissions pilot program.** The Faculty Senate Student Affairs Committee presented a resolution in support of extending the Test-optional admissions pilot program. There were no questions or comments raised for discussion.

Resolution in Support of Extending the Test-optional Admissions Pilot Program

WHEREAS, the Faculty Senate has the authority "To review and establish policy with respect to admissions standards and prerequisites" (Constitution and By-Laws 1.1.d); and

WHEREAS, in spring 2020, in response to the global pandemic disrupting normal processes for secondary students taking standardized tests, UVM waived its standardized testing requirement for students applying to UVM during Fall 2020; and

WHEREAS, the Student Affairs Committee passed a motion to extend the Standardized Testing Requirement Waiver in November 2020, stating, "In part due to the challenges and risks associated with COVID-19, as well as inequity and bias that may be ingrained into standardize tests, the SAC moves to extend the test-optional option for UG admission, for TWO admission cycles, with later consideration of making this change permanent. This would apply to students entering for the fall of 2021 through 2023."; and

WHEREAS, research suggests that standardized tests are not as good a measure of student success as high school gpas; and

WHEREAS, there remain important questions of equity associated with standardized tests; and

WHEREAS, the University of Vermont has not had sufficient time to collect data to determine whether to make the test-optional policy permanent;  
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Faculty Senate supports the following recommendations from the Vice Provost for Enrollment management, to:

- Extend the test-optional admission pilot for three additional years through the entering classes in Fall 2026 and Spring 2027
- Collect standardized test scores from all students who have test scores, upon enrollment, regardless of whether or not they applied under the test-optional policy. This allows us to understand the difference in scores between the submitters and non-submitters.
- Regularly review the data from the classes of Fall 2021 through Fall 2026 to understand first-year GPA, retention rates, graduation rates, and other outcomes (placement, salary, etc.); this should be an annual exercise in the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment

**Vote: 45 approve, 1 oppose, 3 abstain. The motion carried.**

#### **9. Academic Reorganization Working Group Final Report**

**Motion:** Stephen Everse moved to accept the report and endorse the recommendations of the Academic Reorganization Working Group. The motion was seconded. The report was included with the meeting agenda and is attached to these minutes. Discussion included clarification that the first recommendation discussed the establishment of an academic stewardship group that would be charged by the Provost in consultation and collaboration with the Faculty Senate and other university stakeholders. The review of cross disciplinary programs would be in consultation with that group. Recommendations of the academic stewardship group would go to the Provost and to the Faculty Senate, and follow processes for review that are already in place.

**Vote: 37 approve, 5 oppose, 10 abstain. The motion carried.**

#### **10. Reports that do not require a Senate vote** – Thomas Borchert provided an overview of the seven (7) reports submitted by the Senate committees. Much of the formal work of the Senate is conducted in the committees. The full reports were included with the meeting agenda and are posted on the Senate webpage. Highlights of this academic year include:

- Student Affairs Committee (SAC)
  - Discussing and working on policy proposal regarding Out of Class Expectations and how to manage them
  - Resolutions to extend flexibility on late withdrawal
  - Discussion with SGA on uneven use of Extended Course Descriptions across units
- Educational and Research Technologies Committee (ERTC)
  - Served as focus group ETS, CTL and the CIO on teaching technologies (Perusall and i-Clicker), research computing, and new learning management system

- Research, Scholarship and the Creative Arts Committee (RSCA)
  - Sent forward to Senate resolution on Libraries funding, and academic freedom in relation to teaching and research around racism and other forms of bias
  - Began discussion about actions for decolonizing research
  - Met with VPR and SPA to discuss R1 process and institutional challenges around research (staffing in SPA)
- Financial and Physical Planning Committee (FPPC)
  - Regularly consulted with VP Cate and Provost Prelock about financial conditions
  - Received information about master plan and plans for campus construction

**11. Update on Board of Trustees configuration.** Thomas Chittenden, former Faculty Senate President and current member of the VT Legislature and Senate Education Committee was invited to provide an update on S248, a bill that concerned the composition of the Board of Trustees (BOT) of both the Vermont State College and the University of Vermont. At the February 2022 meeting, the UVM Faculty Senate passed a resolution supporting the bill S248 moving out of committee. The bill did not make crossover, but the Senate Education Committee took the language of the S248, refined it and added the amended language to a bill that had come from the House, bill H456. The amended language removed the requirement that the appointed faculty or staff member to the board of trustees be a part of the Union. H456 was passed out of the Vermont State Senate, but the Vermont State House did not concur with the amended bill and asked for a Committee of Conference. There was no resolution, and the bill did not move forward. Opposition to adding a voting faculty or staff member to the UVM BOT included concerns about appointing Union members to a board to which they negotiate working conditions, and the fact that current and past legislative trustees to the UVM BOT were not voicing support. Thomas Chittenden stated that advocates should be encouraged to reach out to existing and current legislative trustees to keep the conversation going.

**12. Comprehensive Sustainability Plan** – Elizabeth Palchak, Director of Sustainability, shared an overview of the effort to develop a plan that will guide sustainability at the University of Vermont with short- and long-term goals to allow UVM to step forward, amplify the work we already do and announce renewed commitment to a healthy environment and healthy societies. The presentation slides are attached to these minutes, and include key results, work group members, timeline, supporting resources, and draft themes and focus areas. The next steps include distribution of a survey to the UVM community, faculty and expert input, development of preliminary goals, and key performance indicators. Elizabeth Palchak encouraged faculty to complete the Comprehensive Sustainability Plan survey available at [go.uvm.edu/csp](http://go.uvm.edu/csp)

**13. New Business**

- Antonio Cepeda-Benito (Psychology) reported that bike helmets are not being worn by students riding bikes on campus. Provost Prelock agreed that this is an important

- issue, and will raise it with the SGA President, Maddie Henson, to explore ways to educate and engage students in protecting themselves.
- Antonio Cepeda-Benito (Psychology) acknowledged the work and effort of Provost Prelock, Dave Jenemann, and the Provost's team in handling the many challenges of the past year, and for working with the Senate and Senate leadership to bring shared governance to the university.

**14. Closing Remarks** – Thomas Borchert stated that it was a very full and productive year in the Faculty Senate. He thanked Senators for coming prepared and willing to engage in the issues that came before the Senate, and for participating in our shared governance. President Borchert recognized that it has been a challenging year of teaching and often required extra effort to help students get through the year. President Borchert expressed thanks to the President and Provost for their shared governance, the Executive Council and former Faculty Senate Presidents for their guidance, other governance groups for their partnership, and the Faculty Senate staff for working together to get the work of the University done.

The meeting adjourned at 4:42 pm