**Minutes**
Monday, September 18, 2023
4:00 – 5:30 PM, on Microsoft Teams

---

The meeting was called to order by Faculty Senate President, Thomas Borchert at 4:02 PM

**Senators in Attendance:** 66
**Absent:** Senators: Vacant (Anesthesiology Rep2), Vacant (CDAE), Vacant (Counseling, Human Development & Family Science), Vacant (Education Rep2), Vacant (Emergency Medicine), Knakal (Orthopaedics & Rehabilitation), Gorres (Plant & Soil Science), Tsai (Radiology Rep1), Vacant (Chair RSCA)

---

With no objection, President Thomas Borchert added an item to the agenda. Vice Provost for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Amer Ahmed, will provide information about the Inclusive Excellence Plan that will be presented to the Board of Trustees in October.

1. **Faculty Senate President's Welcome Remarks** – Thomas Borchert made the following remarks:

- The Senate meeting calendar was compressed this fall to avoid meeting on the Jewish holiday Yom Kippur. Faculty are encouraged to look at the interfaith calendar as part of normal syllabus generation process, and to be thoughtful and give accommodations to students when there are religious holiday conflicts.

- The UVM Libraries have gone through an extensive planning process including the development of a strategic plan and a staffing plan. The Dean of the Libraries has proposed the reorganization of some of the departments to better fulfill the Libraries' mission to serve the scholarly and research activities of the University. According to the bylaws, the Faculty Senate has an advisory role in the formulation of policy with regard to the Library in so far as it pertains to scholarly activities and research (1.2.g). The Faculty Senate has a role in reviewing this proposal to reorganize the departments of the Libraries, as we reviewed the proposal to oversee the establishment of the School of the Arts and the School of World Languages and Cultures in the last two years. There are some differences in that this process does not go to the Board of Trustees, and it is also advisory to the Provost, however in its broad overall form, the Senate's review will mirror those. As a result, we will need to establish an ad hoc committee comprised of three members of the Senate and a member from the standing committees of the Senate. The goal is to provide a recommendation to the Senate by the November meeting. Senators interested in serving on this ad hoc review committee, please contact the Senate office before Friday, September 22nd. If more than three Senators are interested in serving, an electronic ballot will be held.

2. **Degree Conferrals**

   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:

   > Arts and Sciences (5 Bachelor of Arts, 2 Bachelor of Science)
   > Education and Social Services (1)
   > Grossman School of Business (3)

   **Vote**: **59 approved**, 0 opposed, 0 abstained.  **The motion carried.**

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

   A.  Minutes of the August 2023 Faculty Senate meeting

   **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**:  **55 approved**, 0 opposed, 3 abstained.  **The motion carried.**

4. **Reports that do not require a Senate vote:**

   A.  Curricular Affairs Committee Report of Actions voted by CAC

   - Approval of new curricular proposal templates for units wishing to create a co-major including a required MOU document.
   - Approval of a minor change to the guidelines for proposing new course prefixes. The guidelines were approved by the CAC in winter 2023 but a minor change to reflect the newly approved public circulation timeline of 15 days in May 2023 warranted a revision.
   - Approved receipt of two APR reports for Critical Race and Ethnic Studies and the Food Systems Graduate Programs.

5. **Co-Major Credential at UVM –** Colby Kervick reported that at their September 7th meeting the Curricular Affairs Committee (CAC) unanimously approved the proposal to establish a new undergraduate credential of co-major. A co-major is a credentialed course of study focused on a particular area or topic germane to the mission and vision of the University of Vermont. Co-majors are for matriculated undergraduate students only and are intended to allow students to pursue two majors in different degree granting units without having to do two separate sets of degree requirements. Students must successfully complete a major in their degree granting unit to graduate with a co-major in another unit. Students may not do a co-major offered by their degree-granting unit. The CAC also approved templates to be used by units developing a proposal for a co-major. If the co-major credential is approved by the Faculty Senate and the Board of Trustees, curricular proposals for co-majors could begin being reviewed by the CAC during the spring 2024 semester. The routing process for co-major proposals would end with a vote by the CAC and notification at the Faculty Senate and Board of Trustees levels.  The Curricular Affairs Committee recommends that the

Faculty Senate vote to approve the proposal to establish a new undergraduate co-major credential. There were no comments or questions received from the floor.

**Motion:** Thomas Borchert called the vote on the proposal to establish a new undergraduate credential: co-major.

**Vote: 58 approved**, 1 opposed, 3 abstained.  **The motion carried.**

6. **Eclipse Day –** Thomas Borchert restated the information regarding the proposal for Eclipse Day that was shared at the Senate meeting in August, and asked Senators to report the feedback received from their departments or schools on the following question:
Would you support making Monday April 8, 2024, a required alternate instructional day without standard class meetings?  Why or why not? Senators reported positive response to the Eclipse Day plan. Concerns cited included challenges of rescheduling clinical time, inability to do asynchronous laboratory time, finding rooms to reschedule exams for large classes, and lack of flexibility around students in practicum sites. One department expressed the opinion that classes meet as normal in the morning given that the eclipse isn't to take place until the afternoon. Another expressed support for Eclipse Day but questioned the value statement of a special day for the Eclipse, but not for other things, like Indigenous People's Day and Martin Luther King Day. Registrar, Veronika Carter, stated that the Registrar's Office is willing to help reschedule the exam space and look for creative solutions.
Tom Borchert posted a non-binding poll: Would your department support a change to the Spring calendar for special/alternative education rather than normally scheduled classes? Response: 47 yes, 10 no
A final proposal for Eclipse Day will come to the Faculty Senate for vote at the October meeting.

7. **Announcement about NECHE report**  - Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Student Success, J. Dickenson, presented information on UVM's 5-Year Interim Report to the New England Commission on Higher Education (NECHE). UVM is reaccredited by NECHE once every 10 years and January 2024 is the five-year interim point between the 2019 and 2029 reaccreditation. The presentation slides are attached to these minutes and include an outline of the structure of the 50-page report, key areas of focus, and a sampling of institutional updates. The committee working on the interim report represents a broad range of expertise on campus. The draft report will be circulated to campus in October with an opportunity for comments. NECHE will provide feedback on the draft in October. After editing, the final interim report will be uploaded to the portal on January 15th. NECHE will give UVM notice of any areas requiring continuing updates for UVM's 2029 self-study.

8. **New Business** – none at this time.

9. **Inclusive Excellence Plan –** Vice Provost for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Amer Amed, reported that Inclusive Excellence Plans have been completed by all units. The plans were aggregated, themes emerged, and a comprehensive DEI strategy was developed. This University comprehensive DEI strategy will be presented to the Board of Trustees in

October. The document will include a message from the President, Provost, and VP for DEI, the purpose of the plan, rationale, data components and a timeline and overview of the process. The individual unit plans will be released at the same time as the broader strategy document. All of this will be public and communicated to the UVM community. A new Catamount DEI Hub will be launched as a comprehensive DEI database for all DEI related activity at the university. It will be populated first with the unit Inclusive Excellence Plans. The Hub will be able to be searched laterally across the plans. In addition, there will be a research component so that anything DEI related to research will be populated in this database.

**The meeting adjourned at 5:29 PM**

# Accreditation Process

- Our accreditor is the New England Commission on Higher Education (NECHE)

- 10-year accreditation renewed in 2019

- Next self-study and site visit in Spring 2029

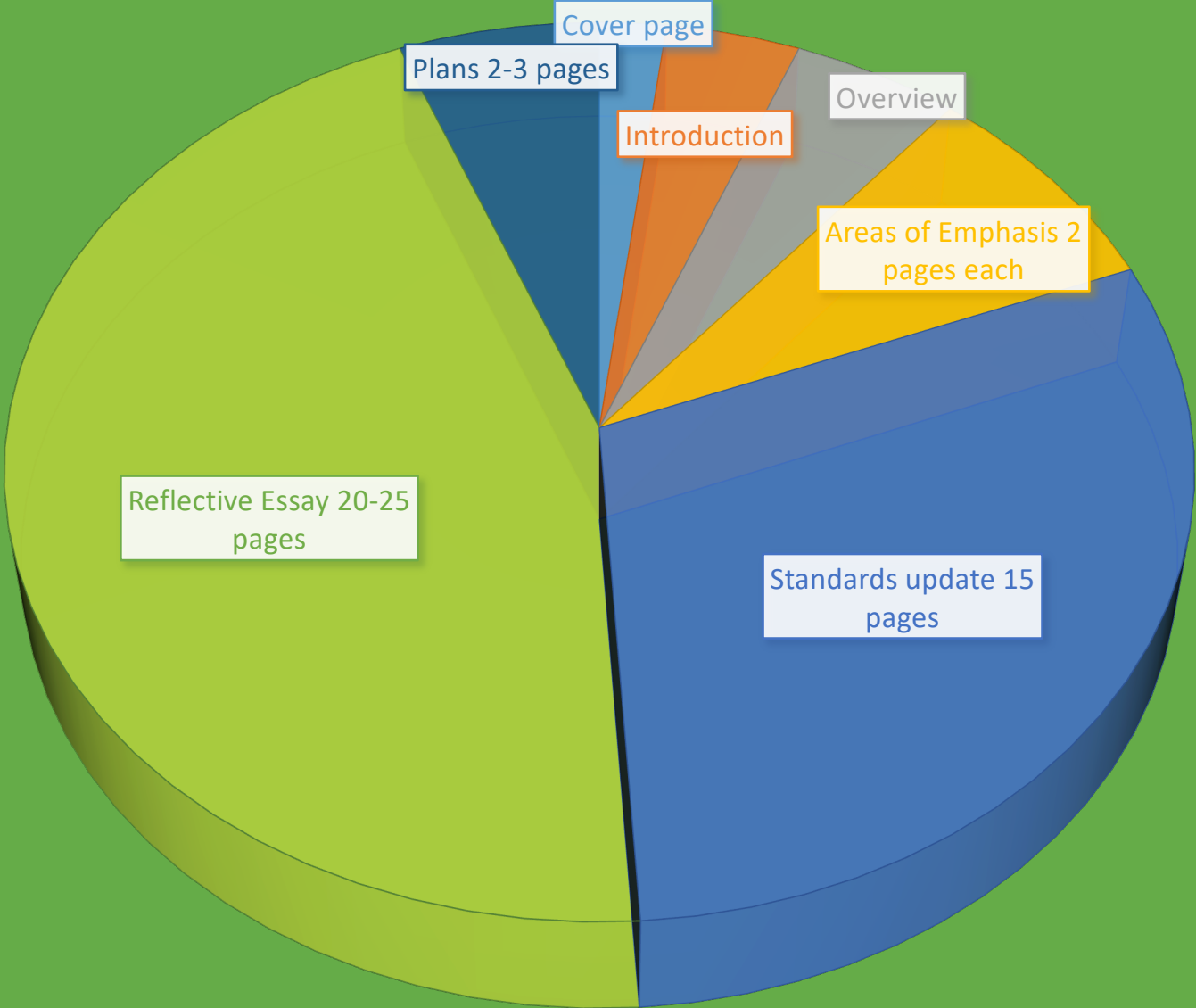- 5-year Interim Report due January 15, 2024

# 5-year Interim Report (50 pages)

**Emphasis on *data-informed analysis*, not description**

- Cover page, introduction and overview

- 2 pages on each area of emphasis (UVM has 4)

- Update on standards 1-7 and 9

- 20-25 page reflective essay on Educational Effectiveness (Std. 8)

- Future plans

# INTERIM REPORT 50 PAGES

- Cover page
- Plans 2-3 pages
- Introduction
- Overview
- Areas of Emphasis 2 pages each
- Standards update 15 pages
- Reflective Essay 20-25 pages

# Interim Report Special Feature:  Reflective Essay

- What and how students are expected to learn

- Current assessment processes and activities

- Evidence of student learning

- Improving student learning and success

- Future assessment goals and plans

# New NECHE Focus Areas (2021 Standards update)

- Transfer Credit subheading (Std. 4)

- Integrity of Admissions Standards (Std. 5) and gift acceptance policies (Std. 7)

- Evaluation and Updating of disaster and business continuity plans (Std. 7)

- Transparency (Std. 9) has more emphasis throughout

- DEI and Organization and Governance have increased focus throughout the standards

# Institutional Updates – a sampling

- Std. 1 Mission and Purpose – strategic alignments with our mission

- Std. 2 Planning and Evaluation – Amplifying our Impact, ASGs, DEI Strategic planning

- Std. 3 Governance - Efforts to diversity the BOT; new procedures for structural changes

- Std. 4 Academic Program - Defining a separate graduate curriculum

- Std. 5 Students - Test-optional; UVM GO; CatAdvantage program; policy updates

- Std. 6 Teaching, Learning and Scholarship - Faculty development and support through COVID; emphasis on recruitment, mentoring and retention of faculty

- Std. 7 Institutional Resources - Emergency preparedness; Campus Master Plan; financial planning; new LMS; Leahy archive

- Std. 9 Integrity, Transparency and Public Disclosure– New website; communications efforts; policy clarifications

# UVM Areas of Emphasis (2019 Commission Letter)

"…that, in addition to the information included in all interim reports, the institution give emphasis to its success in:

1) implementing its plans to revise its general education curriculum;

2) engaging in strategic planning and campus master planning;

3) implementing initiatives to assure the effectiveness of academic advising and career services;

4) implementing a systematic approach to the assessment of student learning and using the results for improvement"

# Reflective Essay on Educational Effectiveness

- Making data accessible through OIRA dashboards

- Building assessment into new initiatives (Catamount Core; LMS implementation)

- New processes for annual assessment reporting

- New Assessment Coordinator role in OIRA

- Incorporating info from regular surveys and assessments into strategic planning

# Questions?

The University of Vermont