



The University of Vermont
FACULTY SENATE

Minutes

Monday, November 27, 2023

4:00 – 5:30 PM, on 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 (Counseling, Human Development & Family Science), Vacant (Education Rep2), Vacant (Emergency Medicine), Berns (Family Medicine), Spees (Medicine Rep1), Manacek (Nursing Rep2), Saia (Pediatrics Rep1), Todd (Pediatrics Rep2), Smith (Rehabilitation & Movement Sciences), Vacant (Chair RSCA)

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

- A. The review process for the proposal to reorganize the UVM Libraries has been paused until further consultation has occurred with units and the library faculty and staff. A return to the process is anticipated in the spring semester.
- B. An upgrade to the *MyUVM* Portal is scheduled for the spring semester. The Senate will receive a presentation of the anticipated changes at the December or January meeting.
- C. In response to the shooting three young men near campus, UVM Chief Safety & Compliance Officer, Michael Schirling, announced that UVM will host a forum addressing campus and community safety. The forum will take place on November 28th at 11:30 am in the Silver Maple Ballroom at the Davis Center and is open to all students, faculty and staff.
- D. President Borchert expressed his concern that hate is in our community. “Students, faculty and staff of color have and continue to experience racism in big and small ways. Religious minorities experience greater challenges than others in our community, and we could extend this list. The majority of us at UVM are well meaning people and we strive to make this a welcoming place for everyone. This is what we’ve agreed to with *Our Common Ground*, but this statement [hate has no place in our community] is aspirational, not description of fact. I think it’s important for us to remember that while it’s a lovely place, Vermont and the University of Vermont are not special. They and we are affected by all the challenges of the rest of the country. It’s our job as members of the community to ensure that we try to live up to these aspirations and not to assume that we have achieved them.”

2. **Consent Agenda** – The following items were presented as a consent agenda:
 - A. Minutes of the October 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: 53 approved, 0 opposed, 0 abstained. **The motion carried.**
3. **Reports that do not require a Senate vote**
 - A. **Curricular Affairs Committee Report**
 - Approved receipt of two APR reports for the Counseling program and the Communication Sciences Disorders MS program
 - Approved a new course prefix for the School of the Arts (SOA)
 - B. **Student Affairs Committee Report**
 - Voted to explicitly state that the intention of the Attendance Policy regarding intercollegiate and academic competitions is to cover Graduate College student athletes as well as undergraduate student athletes.
 - The SAC also requested that the Senate work with the Dean and Associate Dean of the Graduate College to determine which policies are meant to also apply to graduate students.
4. **Academic Freedom and Outside Speakers** – At the request of the EC, the general counsel of UVM, took the floor to clarify why the university canceled this Fall’s Will Miller Lecture, which featured Mohammed El-Kurd, a Palestinian poet scheduled to speak at the Davis Center on Thursday, October 26. The university originally cited security concerns for the cancellation. After the general counsel reiterated that security concerns and not the controversial nature of the speaker’s opinions were the main reasons why the event was canceled, several faculty, including sponsors of the event, protested the cancellation, which they characterized as a violation of academic freedom and freedom of speech, warned that the cancellation set a problematic precedent, and expressed concern about the lack of transparency and communication surrounding the cancellation. It was requested from the floor that the EC take under advisement a review and possible revision of the policies that guided the decision to cancel the event.
5. **Water Resources Institute Proposal** – Thomas Borchert reported that the Research, Scholarship, and the Creative Arts Committee (RSCA) of the Faculty Senate has completed their review of the proposal to establish a Water Resources Institute at UVM and will be providing a memo to the Faculty Senate recommending approval. The proposal will be on the Faculty Senate agenda for vote at the December 18th meeting. Beverley Wemple, Professor of Geography & Geosciences, presented an overview of the proposed institute. The presentation slides are attached to these minutes and include the institute development background; supporting and coordinating campus-wide excellence in water research, education, and outreach; the institute goals, leadership, governance, and budget model. Professor Wemple stated that water is a clear strategic strength at UVM. UVM has received several capacity building grants, multiple college-level programs support water-

related research, UVM was selected to be a member of a NOAA supported cooperative research group, and a large cohort of faculty at UVM are engaged in water research. The floor was opened for questions. Professor Wemple confirmed that the salary figures in the budget model include fringe benefits, and that Health Sciences is an area for future focus. The difference between the proposed Water Resources Institute and the Gund Institute is that the Gund's mission and work encompasses environment with a set of thematic areas of focus. Water is not one of the Gund thematic areas. The Water Resources Institute will be more specifically focused on operational type work, such as how to operate reservoirs, improve water forecasting, or develop engineering solutions for water challenges.

6. **Update on Admissions and the Impact of Supreme Court Decision on Affirmative Action** – Jay Jacobs, Vice Provost for Enrollment Management, presented an overview of how UVM has responded to the recent Supreme Court decision and how it is affecting our admission processes. The presentation slides are attached to these minutes. The SCOTUS decision is narrow to the admissions review and decision-making process only. Race can no longer be considered in and of itself as a factor in admissions, but UVM is able to consider race if an applicant talks about their lived experience with that racial and ethnic identity. We are still able to collect racial and ethnic data on the application, but it is suppressed so an admission officer does not see that information. Importantly, the SCOTUS decision did not impact financial aid, scholarships, recruitment/yield programs, or student success initiatives, which can still be race conscious. UVM still seeks to provide diverse perspectives, thoughts, and ideas amongst our student body. We will need to continue to explore and understand how race neutral practices fit and impact our programs, policies, and procedures, including the test optional admissions policy, no longer considering legacy status in admissions decisions, and leaning into student success initiatives. Jay Jacobs also provided a brief update on the applicant pool for Fall 2024. Applications are down about 2%, however, BIPOC students are up 7%, international students are up 19%, and Vermonters are up 4%. The quality of application as measured by high school GPA and test scores is also up. It is anticipated that 14% of the class will come in Early Decision. Student financial aid packages will not go out until late February because the FAFSA form will not be available for students until December 2023.
7. **New Business** – none at this time.

Motion: Joan Rosebush moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:27 PM. The motion was seconded and carried.

The Water Resources Institute (WIR) at the University of Vermont

Harnessing UVM's strength in water research, education and outreach to advance a sustainable water future

Beverley Wemple, Professor, Dept. of Geography & Geosciences and Faculty Fellow, Office of the Vice President for Research
Presentation to the Faculty Senate
November 27, 2023



July 2023 floods in Vermont



Photo credit: Vermont Emergency Management / National Guard

The Northeast is in the middle of an intense drought

Rivers have been reduced to a trickle in the most severely affected areas, and farmers are facing consequences of a summer without rain

By Zach Rosenthal
August 16, 2022 at 1:27 p.m. EDT



A sign announces a water ban in Scituate, Mass. (Michael Dwyer/AP)

Floods, Fires and Torrential Rains Further Bedevil Europe

The extreme weather across the continent this summer has destroyed huge amounts of land, forced many to evacuate, and in some cases caused deaths.



A flooded area in the northern Slovenian town of Crna na Koroskem on Sunday. Associated Press



A massive algae bloom in 2011 turned Lake Erie into pea soup. PHOTOGRAPH BY PETER ESSICK, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

Driven by Climate Change, Algae Blooms Behind Ohio Water Scare Are New Normal

Climate change and increased runoff are triggering more potentially toxic blooms.



Jackson Water Crisis Forces Cities to Confront Their Own Aging Infrastructure

Utilities say the situation in Mississippi's capital is a wake-up call to problems with the nation's aging pipes and pumps

A major water main break caused flooding on several blocks in Philadelphia in June. MATT SLOCUM/ASSOCIATED PRESS

By Rachel Wolfe Follow
Sept. 2, 2022 11:35 am ET

Coastal Sea Levels in U.S. to Rise a Foot by 2050, Study Confirms

More precise measurements indicate that the increase will happen "no matter what we do about emissions."

Share full article



A "sunny day" flood in Mill Valley, Calif., last month. Such events will become more damaging in the future, scientists predict. Josh Edelson/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

By Henry Fountain
Feb. 15, 2022

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Home Popular Water



New database shows hundreds of contaminants detected in US tap water

"We are not being exposed to just one contaminant when we're drinking water. We're being exposed to multiple contaminants."

by Huanqia Zhang November 09, 2021 3 min read



A school of surgeon fish swim in Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park. PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID DOUBILET, NAT GEO IMAGE COLLECTION

ENVIRONMENT NEWS

Climate change is depleting our essential fisheries

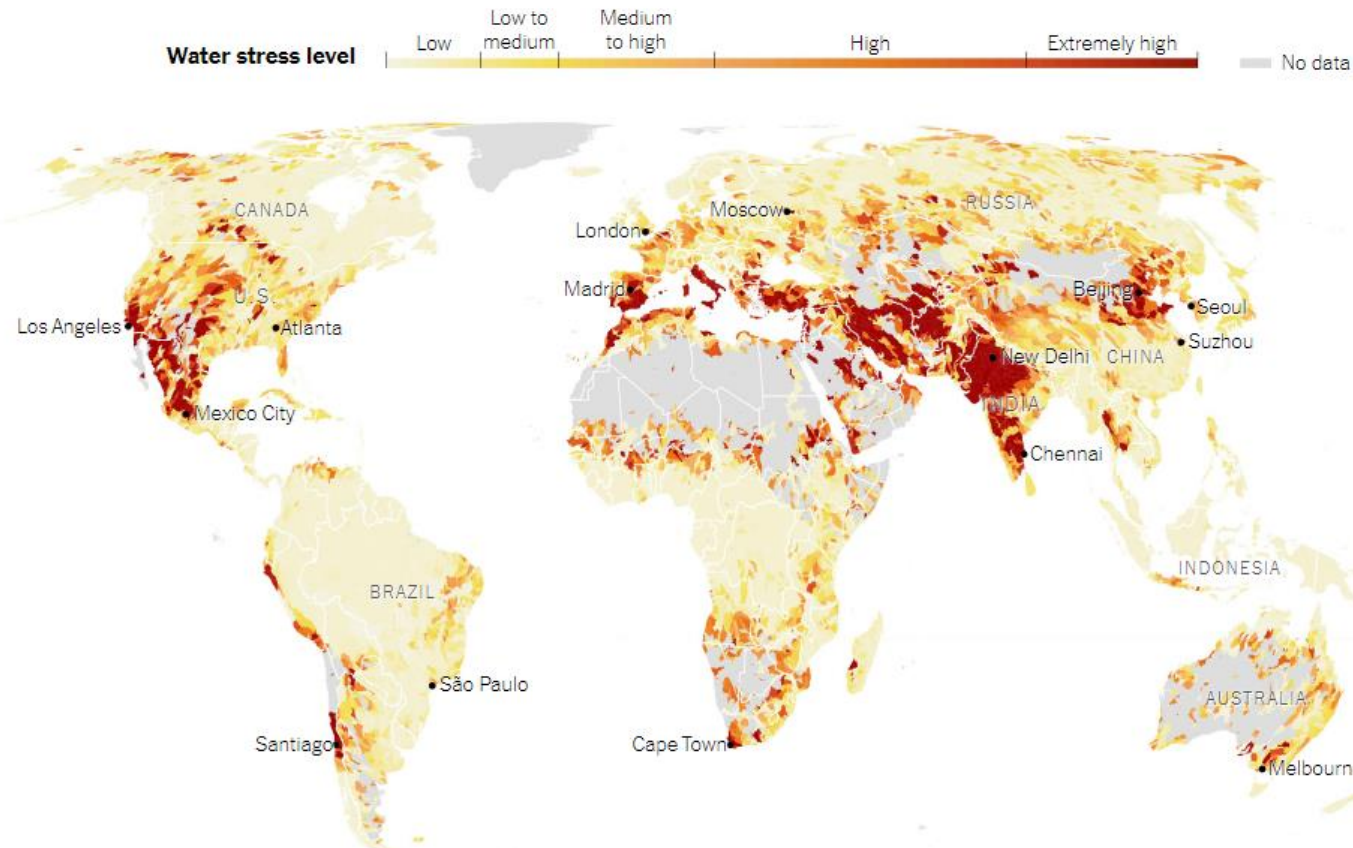
Over the past 80 years, a warming planet has disrupted critical fisheries worldwide--and many have declined precipitously.

BY SARAH GIBBENS



A Quarter of Humanity Faces Looming Water Crises

By [Somini Sengupta](#) and [Weiyi Cai](#) Aug. 6, 2019





RESEARCH

Renewing the water workforce: Improving water infrastructure and creating a pipeline to opportunity

Joseph W. Kane and Adie Tomer
June, 2018



The Water Resources Institute (WIR) at the University of Vermont



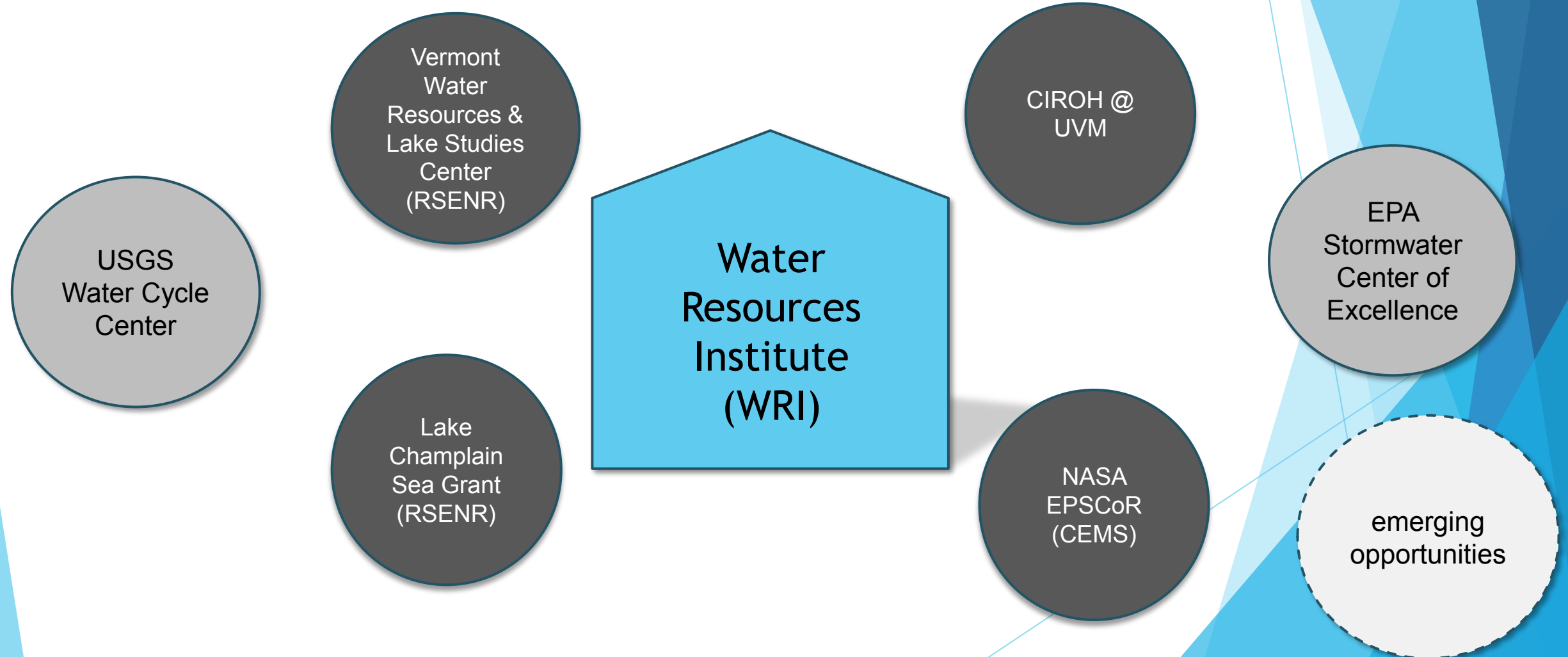
Harnessing UVM's strength in water research, education and outreach to advance a sustainable water future

Institute Development Background

- More than a decade of NSF-supported capacity building grants to Vermont EPSCoR on water-related topics (Research on Adaptation to Climate Change in the Lake Champlain Basin 2011-16, Basin Resilience to Extreme Events 2016-2021).
- Multiple college level programs that support wholly or water-related research (Vermont Water Resources & Lake Studies Center and Lake Champlain Sea Grant in RSEN, NASA EPSCoR in CEMS)
- NOAA supported Cooperative Institute for Research to Operations in Hydrology (CIROH) funded with UVM as partner institution in 2022.
- Over 100 faculty across 6 colleges and 22 departments engaged in water research

Water → a clear strategic strength of UVM

Supporting and coordinating campus-wide excellence in water research, education and outreach



Institute Goals

- 💧 Enhance the flow of information and ideas among scholars and trainees by establishing a hub of water research at the nexus of natural and social sciences, engineering, and governance.
- 💧 Coordinate and develop new water-related programs, equipment, and services on campus.
- 💧 Build bridges with external academic, nonprofit, state, federal, and international partners that accelerate the translation of research to practice.
- 💧 Educate the next generation of problem solvers on water issues and water justice.

Leadership and staff team

Faculty director: Dr. Beverley Wemple (CAS) - oversees institute operations and development

Senior faculty advisors:

- *Dr. Anne Jefferson* (RSENR) - senior advisor on watershed science, community engagement and extension
- *Dr. Bernard Cole* (CEMS) - senior advisor on research innovations and capacity building
- *Dr. Asim Zia* (CALs) - senior advisor on policy, governance, and transboundary water security

Staff:

- *TBD*, Manager of operations and programs
- *Joshua Benes*, Manager of research facilities and networks (shared with OVPR)
- *Steve Exler*, Technologist and web master (shared with Vermont EPSCoR)
- *TBD*, Communications and Events specialist

Institute Governance

Advisory Committee of faculty - provide strategic guidance and feedback to institute leadership and staff; serve as liaisons between their deans and units and the institute.

Council of Partners – leaders from key constituencies in state and federal government, industry, and the NGO community; provide strategic advice on use-inspired research needs; provide letters of support, broader impacts partnerships, and in-kind contributions for grant applications.

Resources / Budget model

	Three Year Institute Budget Proposal		
	FY24	FY25	FY26
Revenue:			
CIROH projects F&A - secured	297,731	262,438	
CIROH projects F&A - anticipated		50,000	170,000
Other sources - UVM administration, philanthropy - anticipated	-		150,000
subtotal revenue:	297,731	312,438	320,000
Expenses:			
Salaries			
- Institute director at 25% FTE	28,375	29,226	30,103
- Manager of Operations and Programming at 100% FTE	68,000	70,040	72,141
- Shared staff with OVPR and VT EPSCoR	42,000	43,260	44,558
- Communications and Outreach specialist at 60% FTE	33,000	33,990	35,010
- Summer stipends for senior faculty advisors	10,373	10,685	11,005
subtotal salaries and fringe:	261,718	271,441	279,584
Operating			
- Speaker series and annual science meeting	16,000	16,480	16,974
- Trainings (team science, science communications, and similar)	5,000	5,150	5,305
- Travel	5,000	5,150	5,305
- Business services	7,000	7,210	7,426
- Office supplies	1,000	1,030	1,061
- Contingencies	4,000	4,000	3,500
subtotal operating:	38,000	39,020	39,571
Total Expenditures	299,718	310,461	319,155

Campus consultation

Faculty information sessions - fall 2022: > 50 faculty attendees (CALs, CAS, CESS, CEMS, CNHS, LCOM, RSENR)

Meetings and consultations with Deans/ADRs

- Dean Strong, RSENR
- Dean Schadler, CEMS
- Dean Parise, CALS
- Dean Beckford, Extension
- Dean Falls, CAS
- Dean Shepherd, ADR Killean, CESS
- ADR Tracy, LCOM
- ADR Deming, CNHS (via email)
- ADR Arel, GSB (via email)

Meeting with senior staff engaged in institute work - J. Valcour, J. White, L. Gamache

Additional consultations with center directors

- Taylor Ricketts, Gund Institute
- Ernesto Mendez and Colin Anderson, Institute for Agroecology
- Trisha Coates, Institute for Rural Partnerships
- Randall Halcombe, UVM Cancer Center

UVM Foundation, Foundation Board, and key donors

Questions?



Beverley Wemple
bwemple@uvm.edu

Post SCOTUS Cases: *SFFA v. Harvard/UNC*

Jay Jacobs, Ed.D.

Vice Provost for Enrollment Management

Faculty Senate

November 27, 2023



The University of Vermont

Post-SCOTUS and DEI

- Narrow decisions surrounding the admissions decisions and selection process
 - Race can no longer be considered, in and of itself, as a factor in admissions
 - Race can be considered if “an applicant’s discussion of how race affected his or her life, be it through discrimination, inspiration, or otherwise.”
- No changes to:
 - financial aid
 - scholarships
 - recruitment/yield programs
 - student success initiatives
 - Goals at UVM to provide diverse perspectives at a PWI in VT

Impact on UVM's Admissions Process

- Racial/ethnic data will be collected, but suppressed so admissions readers cannot consider
- Optional essay prompting students to tell us about their identities and how it has shaped their experiences
- Continuing to explore and understand race-neutral practices
 - Test-optional
 - Legacy admissions
- Leaning into Student Success
 - Young Men of Talent
 - Summer Enrichment Scholars Program
 - First Gen @ UVM