

Report (2019/2020)

Research, Scholarship and the Creative Arts Committee
UVM Faculty Senate
April 28, 2020

Membership of the Committee:

The committee membership included Nick Adler (GSS), Kelly Mancini Becker (CESS), Brandon Bensel (Postdoctoral Association), Vicki Brennan (CAS), Thomas Chittenden (Faculty Senate President), Mary Cushman (LCOM), Prudence Doherty (LIB), Katie Gough (CAS), Rachelle Gould (RSEN), Britt Holmén (CEMS), Erik Monsen (GSB), Steve Keller (CAL), Dimitry Kremmentsov (CNHS), Daniel Weiss (LCOM), Stephanie Wooby (SGA). The Fine Arts Rep from CAS is currently vacant.

The committee met on seven occasions, the first being on September 12, 2019 and the last being May 14, 2020.

CHARGE OF THE RSCA

This committee is responsible for matters relating to research activities, scholarly work, and creative and performing arts carried out at the University, including graduate education and items referred to in Sections 1.1c, 1.2b, 1.2g, and 1.2k in the Faculty Senate bylaws. The RSCA reviews, recommends, and participates in the formulation of policy with respect to resources related to these activities, including physical facilities and allocation of appurtenant space, library resources and resources for graduate programs, and makes recommendations to assure effective use of these resources. The RSCA serves as liaison between the Senate and the administration on such matters as, but not limited to: the broad role of the University in advancing knowledge through research, scholarship, and the performing arts; external and internal support for encouraging these activities, including graduate and undergraduate research; intellectual property, and technology transfer; ethical issues and issues affecting the academic environment as these arise in research or scholarly work. The RSCA consults frequently with other University and collegiate committees that are charged to initiate, maintain, and monitor institutional support programs for research, scholarship, the creative arts, and graduate education, as well as maintains close liaison with appropriate administrative offices in its areas of responsibility.

KEY RSCA ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

At its first meeting, the committee discussed major themes of proposed activities during a brainstorming session, and prioritized and adjusted these as the year progressed. A calendar outline was made at the start of each semester. The committee has strong interest in, and had several discussions about, promoting interdisciplinary research, scholarship and creative arts activities, and the role of the Faculty Senate in the area of diversity, equity and inclusion.

- **UVM Click Update:** Brian Prindle presented the new UVM Click software to the RSCA for review and discussion. For more information on UVM Click visit the university website at <https://www.uvm.edu/ovpr/uvmclick-irb>.
- **Post-Doctoral Student Representation.** A Post-Doctoral Student Association has started on campus. The RSCA has asked that they be represented on the RSCA, to join its Graduate Student Association member. Brandon Bensel is the first member of the RSCA from the Post-Doctoral Student Association, and participated actively in discussions at meetings.
- **Libraries Update.** Dean Geffert, our new Dean of Libraries, presented to the RSCA on scholarly publishing and what it means to UVM, and on considerations regarding journal subscriptions. Feedback from the RSCA was extremely valuable, and members put forward plans for discussion of these important issues by Dean Geffert across UVM Colleges. This conversation will afford and contribute to upcoming strategic decisions for the Libraries.
- **Graduate College.** Dean Forehand updated the committee on the following topics:
 - **Three Minute Thesis Competition.** More information can be found at <https://www.uvm.edu/graduate/three-minute-thesis>.
 - **Parental Leave Policy Draft.** A parental accommodation for full time students with full time funding assistantships or fellowships. The RSCA approved this.
 - **Graduate College Highlights.** These can be found on the Graduate College homepage at <https://www.uvm.edu/graduate>.
- **Burack President's Distinguished Lecture**
 - The committee reviewed 8 Fall Burack Lecture nominations. A ranked list of suggested recipients, along with written comments from the committee discussion, were provided to President Garimella.
 - The committee provided suggestions to President Garimella for revisions to the application instructions in order to enhance considerations of cross-campus collaboration and diversity and inclusiveness in nominations.
 - The Spring Burack nomination review was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **FOUR Update, Ann Kroll Lerner, January**

A robust discussion took place regarding fellowships for undergraduate research.

 - Interim Undergraduate Research Coordinator will start January 16, 2020.
 - Student Research Conference 16 April 2020

- Last year 400+ presentations, 500 + students. Working to be more selective.
- Discussed formats for presentations, ideas for new ones, and RSCA provided assistance identifying faculty hosts and judges for session.
- Undergraduate Funding applications due soon. RSCA provided input on faculty reviewers.
- Fellowship Highlights: Continue to rely on faculty to review for particular fellowships, but request made for faculty to send exceptional students to FOUR for discussion.
- Matching funds for Student Fellowships
 - ~\$30,000 in awards had to be declined due to lack of matching funds required in order to make awards.
 - RSCA supports the identification of funding sources for this purpose
- **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Across UVM Advisory and Governance Boards.**
 - The committee discussed how principles of diversity, equity and inclusion are represented across all of UVM's advisory and governance boards, including the point of view of faculty. They shared their concerns directly with the Board of Trustees. Considering this input, the Board of Trustees voted to update their guidelines for selection of university trustees, as seen below (note yellow highlighted text).

UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT AND STATE AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Guidelines for Selection of University Trustees

With full deference to the discretion of the bodies and officials who appoint trustees to the University of Vermont and Agricultural College Board, the Board offers the guidelines set forth below for trustee selection. These criteria acknowledge desired competencies and the value of having trustees who reflect the diversity from which the University draws its students and faculty. A trustee's qualifications should encompass:

- Endorsement of the vision and mission of the institution
- Capacity to understand a large, complex organization
- High integrity and sensitivity to conflicts of interest
- Proven leadership and strong decision-making skills
- Commitment to the best interests of the University as a whole as well as the larger communities within which it operates
- Full acceptance of trustee responsibilities (as set forth in the Statement of Trustee Responsibilities), including preparation for and regular attendance at Committee and Board meetings and prompt completion of all work required of a trustee and participation in the life of the University through attendance at ceremonial and social events, as feasible
- Support of the principles articulated in Our Common Ground

In addition, the Board strives to include in its composition trustees who have the following skills and/or experience, recognizing that the University and the Board are best served by having a Board comprised of members with complementary skills and experience, and who reflect diversity in its many forms, including but not limited to gender, race, and ethnicity. The Board should include members who have:

- Financial acumen

- Knowledge of nonprofit organizations or other relevant sectors
- Experience in higher education or with issues facing educational institutions
- **Appreciation of the diverse constituencies of which the University is comprised**
- Familiarity with the regulatory and political processes
- Fundraising experience
- Familiarity with the needs of the community, the state, and the geographical areas and populations specially served by the University

Board and Committee Leadership, the University President and a student trustee selected by the Board Chair, will meet at least once annually as vacancies arise to discuss the Board's compositional needs.

Approved by the Executive Committee: January 8, 2007

Amendments endorsed by the Committee on Board Governance: September 24, 2010

Approved as amended by the Board of Trustees: October 30, 2010
Amendments endorsed by the Committee on Board Governance: December 10, 2012

Approved as amended by the Executive Committee: December 10, 2012

Amendments endorsed by the Committee on Board Governance: January 30, 2020

Approved as amended by the Board of Trustees: January 31, 2020

- The committee discussed taking up responsibility for governance on diversity, equity and inclusion for the Senate. Recognizing the importance of this across Faculty Senate governance, this will be included for consideration in By-Laws revisions that are due next academic year.
- **Vice President of Research Update, Richard Galbraith.**
 - VPR Office has hired 2 full time grant writers to join the existing person. Current negotiations hope to add another full-time grant writer to the group.
 - Discussed R1 status and planning UVM is doing to analyze needs to gain this status.
 - Faculty Action Networks. Discussed the VPR office activities to promote interdisciplinary research across campus. For more information visit the VP of Research website at <https://www.uvm.edu/ovpr/faculty-activity-network-fan>.
 - Richard Galbraith is stepping down as the VP of Research.
- **University Distinguished Professors.** All ten University Distinguished Professor spots are currently filled so the RSCA did not review nominees this year.
- **Vice President of Research Search.** The committee met as a group with each candidate who visited campus.
- **Interdisciplinary Research.** The committee discussed their desire to be active in promoting interdisciplinary activities in research, scholarship and creative arts, and developing joint strategic planning with Kirk Dombrowski the new Vice President of Research.

- **COVID-19 Response.** The committee discussed research being proposed across UVM Colleges, and that concerns are being raised about impaired productivity for faculty, postdocs and graduate students.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Cushman
April 30, 2020