



FACULTY SENATE

Research, Scholarship & the Creative Arts Committee
May 12, 2022
12:30-2:00
Microsoft Teams

Present: Thomas Borchert (FS President), Marieka Burg (CAS), Mary Cushman (LCOM), Evan Eyer (Faculty Senate Vice President), Rachelle Gould (RSENr), Jennifer Hurley (CESS), Dimitry Kremmentsov (CNHS), Jill Preston (CALs), Christie Silkotch (LIB), Daniel Weiss (LCOM), Chun Zhang (GSB)

Absent: Raju Badireddy (CEMS), Brandon Bensel (Postdoctoral Association), Jonah Steinberg (CAS), Pending (GSS), Sarah Wood (SGA)

Co-Chair Gould called the meeting to order at 12:35 pm via Microsoft Teams.

1. **Approval of the Minutes.** The minutes of the April 2022 meeting were approved as written.

2. **Chair Update.**

- **RSCA Year End Report.** The year-end report has been submitted to the Faculty Senate. It can be found at https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/Faculty-Senate/RSCA_AnnualReport_2021-2022.pdf.
- **2022 / 2023 RSCA Co-Chairs.** Jill and Mary will co-chair the RSCA for the 2022 / 2023 year. Mary thanked Mildred and Rachelle for serving as co-chairs for the 2021 / 2022 year.

3. **Brown Bag on Decolonizing Research on UVM.** The event was successful with a lot of interest. There were about 30 participants. They came up with a list 8 follow up items to consider moving forward. They consisted of

- Consider funding
- Insert into IRB process
- Consider low impact factors and impact in performance
- Have reference-sharing platform
- Have decolonizing research class for research graduate students
- Work more effectively with local Abenaki
- Have place-based education for all teaching-in-learning

- Continue the conversation

The committee discussed how the RSCA can move these topics forward. The idea of a website was discussed and how that would look.

- The committee would like to invite Cindy Forehand to come in the fall to discuss the possibility of having a decolonizing research class for research graduate students.
- The committee would like to invite the IRB to discuss the opportunity to insert this topic into the process.
- Hold another Brown Bag on Decolonizing Research on UVM, include in the discussion https://www.uvm.edu/cas/english/profiles/lokangaka_losambe.

4. Resolution

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.

Mary moved to approve the Resolution Supporting Faculty Autonomy in Scholarly Work Regarding Critical Race Theory and Other Aspects of Bias, Discrimination and Social Justice, Dimitry seconded the motion.

APPROVE: 9

OPPOSE: 0

ABSTAIN: 0

The motion to accept the Resolution Supporting Faculty Autonomy in Scholarly Work Regarding Critical Race Theory and Other Aspects of Bias, Discrimination and Social Justice was approved.

5. RSCA 2022 / 2023 Goals.

- More discussions around promotion and tenure in relation to impact factor.
- Open channels with SPA / Disbursement / OVPR to facilitate more research.
- Invite Jane OKech to discuss the Henderson Fellowship.
- What does R1 status mean for faculty across campus.
- Invite chair of PSC, Carolyn Bonifield to discuss how the RPT process works and what impacts RPT. Jim Vigoreaux and Jane OKech would also be a good addition to this discussion. How are research quality and productivity defined and evaluated by different colleges on campus?

- A program that brings high school students to campus to work on research.
- Invite SPA guests Brian Prindle, Kirk Dombrowski and purchasing to a meeting to discuss how to make the process easier.

In the coming year the RSCA can make recommendations to administrative units, consider sending statements to the senate for review and committee members are expected to take what the RSCA discusses back to their colleges to share information.

6. Adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 2:05 pm.