

## EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

February 16, 2022

Video Conference on Microsoft Teams

### MINUTES

**Present:** Taka Ashikaga, Richard Branda, Stephen Cutler, Ruth Farrell, Alan Gotlieb, Michael Gurdon, Judith Van Houten, Rachel Johnson, Dwight Matthews, Jack McCormack, Beth Mintz, Alison Pechenick, Mara Saule, Lee Thompson

**Absent:** none

**Call to Order:** Chair Michael Gurdon called the meeting to order at 2pm

1. Minutes of January 19, 2022, approved as amended
2. RFAO Board Meeting
  - a. Faculty Senate Report (Mara Saule)
    - i. The School of Arts was discussed again, then approved by the Senate and the Board of Trustees.
    - ii. The Senate voiced support for the library budget.
    - iii. Jay Jacobs, Vice Provost for Enrollment Management, presented a strategic enrollment plan. He reported that there is a strong applicant pool but a decline in the number of Vermont applicants.
  - b. Update on United Academics (Alison Pechenick) The meeting was held on February 8<sup>th</sup>.
    - i. There was a discussion of the composition of the Board of Trustees. Currently it consists of appointees of the governor, the legislature, the Board and two students. There are no faculty or staff representatives. Tomorrow, faculty and staff members from UVM and VSC will testify before the Vermont Senate Committee on Education and present a petition in support of Senate Bill 248, which proposes to add faculty and staff seats to the trustee boards of both institutions.
    - ii. There was a discussion of the Academic Freedom Policy, particularly as it relates to the topic of sensitive issues covered during class.
    - iii. The part-time faculty are in bargaining sessions. The Administration has requested a list of observers.
  - c. Continuation of the discussion of strategy to respond to limitations placed on access to software and other benefits.
    - i. It appears that the best strategy at present is to approach the problem on a number of different levels. These could include:
      1. Pointing out the effects of these limitations on development. Discussions have been initiated with the interim CEO of the Foundation Board and further discussions are planned.
      2. The UVM Policy for Emerita/Emeritus Status, Section iv, Recognition and Privileges, states that at the discretion of the relevant academic department or program head and College or School Dean, and based upon the availability of resources, an emerita/emergitus faculty member may be provided office and laboratory space, office support and other resources to be used for professional purposes consistent with the department or program, College or School, and University mission. Therefore Emerita/Emeritus faculty who maintain academic activities should consider applying for such support from their department chair or Dean to set a precedent. The individual should note why the work is important to the department and will need affiliate status or be actively employed by UVM. Other non-paid faculty will probably be handled differently by the department. This approach is consistent with prior suggestions by Simeon Ananou. It is recognized that this

- approach may raise a budget issue for the department since there is no budget line for software access.
3. Following a discussion it was recommended that Dr Bruce Levitt go forward with his letter requesting software access for his class agent/development activities.
  4. Beth Mintz is considering putting forward a request for affiliate status from her department to have access to specialized software.
- d. Letter to go to entire RFAO Listserv. It was noted during the discussion that such a communication should be selective and of global importance to our membership. The RFAO forum will be a more suitable means of communicating most of these proposals and requests. Chair Gurdon presented a draft letter regarding the issue raised by Stephanie Woods, which was approved by the Board, and will be distributed soon on the RFAO Listserv.
- e. Cleaning up the Listserv (Dwight Matthews) In reviewing the content of the UVM-RFAO listserv, several problems were realized:
- (1) Some emeriti faculty members listed in the UVM Catalogue of Emeriti Faculty members (<https://catalogue.uvm.edu/undergraduate/faculty/emeriti/>) were missing from the UVM-RFAO listserv. Analysis showed that 37 emeriti retiring between 1994-2020 were not in the listserv. An e-mail to these got responses from 8 who would like to be added to the listserv.
  - (2) Some recent UVM Administrative Officers (AOs) were missing from the UVM-RFAO listserv. There were 14 AOs that retired between 2010-2021; 8 were included in the listserv and 6 not. Only one of these 6 asked to be added.
  - (3) There were entries in the UVM-RFAO listserv that could not be assigned to emeriti or retired AOs. Most were deceased. Eight were people in administrative roles who posted informational materials for UVM.
  - (4) After this review and making changes to the UVM-RFAO listserv, there are 611 retired members in the UVM-RFAO listserv, 593 emeriti and 18 AOs. There are very few retired AOs who were also not emeriti faculty members. Retired AOs make up only 3% of the membership. As a side note, there are currently 109 members in the RFAO-FORUM listserv, representing 18% of the UVM-RFAO listserv.
- f. Discussion of eligibility for RFAO membership, with particular emphasis on “administrative officers”.
- i. Chair Gurdon has been in contact with Andrea Mast to obtain a more accurate and encompassing list of retirees and requested an update of recent retirements during the summer.
  - ii. He has also been in conversations with Gary Derr to define senior administrators who are not Officers of Administration. There are 33 OA and 59 people listed as managers, such as classified executives who directly report to OA. Most OA come from the faculty. The administration position at present appears to be that the Faculty Handbook is for faculty and OA, and the Staff Handbook is for all below OA.
  - iii. It may be that there is a need for an organization like RFAO for other administrative staff.
- g. Other business.
- i. Members have complained about a lack of information from UVM. The Provost has responded that communications from her and the President’s Office will be added to the RFAO listserv.
  - ii. Work on an *In Memoriam* list continues but it has been hard to locate death notices for faculty. Once the list is compiled it will be available from the RFAO Secretary.
  - iii. There is an issue with the new health plan regarding co-pays for surgical procedures. At least part of the problem appears to be that the customer agents are located in Michigan and are confusing the several Vermont Blue plans. It was recommended that Pam Getsie be invited to a future meeting to discuss this and other problems with the health plan being encountered by our members.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:04pm. The next meeting is scheduled for: **March 16, 2022, at 2pm as a Videoconference**

Respectfully submitted, Richard Branda