

**Council of Rhode Island College 2019-2020
Council Meeting
Friday, January 31, 2020
2:00 – 3:30 p.m.
Faculty Center Main Dining Room, Donovan**

Minutes

Present: J. Arango, A. Barlow, E. Basile, D. Bissonnette, V. Bohlinger, E. Christiansen, R. Clark, C. Connolly, C. Creamer, A. Del Vecchio, J. Diem, L. Downes, , E. England- Kennedy, R. Franzblau, B. Holmes, Y. Hui-Michael, D. Kaspin, J. Kim, R. Kim, R. Kraus, M. Lawrence, P. Little, M. Lynch, M. Mock, A. Montali, M. Motte, J. Murphy, A. Patrie, S. Pearlmutter, L. Pinheiro, M. Raimondo, D. Ramirez (for E. Basile), K. Saatcioglu, F. Sánchez, A. Smuts (for A. Berg), S. Turki, S. Weiss, J. Zornado

Absent: J. Eagle

Excused: J. Percy

Guests: A. Cano-Morales, S. Conklin, T. Schmeling

1. Call to Order	2:04pm
2. Minutes of the December 13, 2019 Council Meeting	Motion to approve: Roger Clark Second: Mark Motte Approved by voice vote, no abstentions, no objections.
3. President's Discussion Items	<p>Frank Sánchez, President: The president began by noting that the administration can do a better job of communication and of involving faculty in decision making, particularly regarding major challenges. He went on to address several specific topics:</p> <p>1. Strategic planning: President Sánchez noted that while there are new and unique challenges that must be addressed, RIC faculty and staff are proven innovators and are up to the challenge. He listed a number of recent faculty-led initiatives as examples. A Council member asked: Are we supposed to think big, in the face of smaller enrollments, or are we supposed to get the enrollments back up and then think big? FS responded that it's not necessarily either/or, that we need to consider major redesign while also working to increase enrollment and funding. Another Council member asked: How do we improve student experience, what can we really afford to do? Response: We can't do everything, so we need to figure out what to prioritize, what is possible. FS reminded everyone that the planning process is in early stages, and only the framework is established at this point. A Council member asked about data that would help us figure out when to offer classes. Another member followed up with</p>

questions about scheduling sufficient classes to keep students on track to graduate. FS suggested that we need to rely more on data and planning to figure this out.

2. Budget: The Governor's budget took \$4.7 million out of RIC's budget proposal. FS emphasized the need for greater transparency around the budget process. A budget committee made up of a mix of people would help with planning. RIC has its lowest enrollments in 48 years, so we have immediate budget problems to solve as well as longer-term budget planning to do. He also will work to boost the state allocation, pointing out that the state is not supporting agreements already made through contracts. There was a question about URI's independence from RICPE and how it affects RIC. FS responded that as late as November there was no action taken by RICPE or OPC, and it remains unclear what is happening there. In Nov., FS and CCRI's Hughes discussed how the two institutions would move forward under the CPE, perhaps through some reforms of CPE policies and practices. There may be some movement toward greater independence for CCRI and RIC, now that URI is out. Another question asked about problems with functionality and incompatible systems at RIC that prevent efficient scheduling, etc., and also about a general lack of information about what's happening in other parts of the college, especially within the administration. FS mentioned the climate survey, and the need to improve the way we all interact with each other. As for new administrative positions, he pointed to the new Dean of Enrollment Management position and says RIC had been one of very few institutions without a VP or other leader of enrollment management, and our practices/systems are antiquated. Similar situation in other parts of the administration, which "had not evolved."

3. EAB: FS pointed out that our subscription cost less than 1 FTE, about \$80,000, and they provide a lot of return in the form of data and research capabilities. Not using them as consultant though.

4. Central Falls Workforce Development Hub: A grant allowed for purchase of the former Dexter Credit Union. We will be working with Real Jobs RI and Commerce RI, and Real Jobs staff will be housed in that space. Plans are to purchase it for around \$200,000 (property assessed at ~\$3 million). Should be a revenue generator for RIC.

A Council member asked another question about dysfunction and provided an example of how difficult it has been to get key cards – a months-long process. Waitlists don't work correctly, and students not on the waitlist are getting into the classes ahead of

those on the waitlist – just two examples of how systems aren't working properly. FS responded with further examples in admissions, advising, and budget planning and agrees that there are many operations that urgently need updating.

A Council member asked about the advising structure and why Council was not involved in the preparation of the Advising Director job description. FS noted that it was not a new line, and said the administration could have done a better job involving faculty in this position and with Enrollment Management. He said that RIC students now need different kinds of advising than what traditional faculty advising has offered.

A Council member asked if we should consider not just re-branding but elevating RIC's status to a state university. In ensuing discussion, there was reserved support for this idea from some other members of Council.

A Council member then asked about how ideas generated through strategic planning will be acted upon, and how prioritization will occur. FS responded that it's still too early to say exactly how, but the plan is to tackle lower hanging fruit quickly.

A Council member asked about the \$4.7 million deficit – why do we have that? FS responded that it's new expenses, including increased faculty salaries, and reduced revenues from lower enrollments. The budget planning committee will be tasked with figuring out how to operate with this deficit in 2020-2021, proposing cuts that are hopefully more strategic than last year's cuts. The committee membership has not been established yet, but it will include administrators and faculty, people with expertise and people in college governance.

A Council member asked about the notion that state officials have expressed that RIC "has a lot of work to do," and whether that affects our appropriation. FS responded by noting the work that URI has done over the past decade, moving from systems that were as outdated as RIC's.

A Council member posits that demographic changes are negative right now, but will become more positive in a few years, and we don't want to make radical changes that turn out to be short sighted. She expressed her appreciation that FS has acknowledged some failures of shared governance.

Sue Pearlmutter, in response to an earlier question, stated that there is no intent to destroy the liberal arts education that is the foundation of RIC's programs.

4. Open Discussion	Open discussion overlapped with the president's remarks.
5. Adjournment	Motion from Mark Motte, seconded by Christine Connolly. Adjourned at 3:41pm.
	Minutes taken by Erik Christiansen, Executive Committee of College Council