

**Council of Rhode Island College 2019-2020  
Council Meeting  
Friday, December 13, 2019  
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, J. Eagle, E. England- Kennedy, R. Franzblau, B. Holmes, D. Kaspin, J. Kim, R. Kim, R. Kraus, P. Little, M. Lynch, M. Mock, A. Montali, M. Motte, J. Murphy, A. Patrie, S. Pearlmutter, L. Pinheiro, M. Raimondo, K. Saatcioglu, A. Smuts (for A. Berg), S. Turki, S. Weiss, J. Zornado (for Z. Jalalzai)

*Absent:* J. Percy

*Excused:* F. Sánchez, M. Lawrence

*Guests:* M. Brophy-Baermann, A. Cano-Morales, K. Dumpson, J. Horwitz, P. Mettauer, E. St. Pierre

1. Call to Order	Meeting called to order by V. Bohlinger at 2:05 pm.
2. Minutes of the November 15, 2019	Motion to approve the minutes from November 15, 2019 made by R. Clark and seconded by M. Motte. Accepted with 3 abstentions and no objections.
3. Opening Remarks	<p>Prior to opening remarks, one Council member made a request to the Chair of Council to respectfully ask the President to be present at all Council meetings, as it is important for the faculty to have him present. V. Bohlinger will reiterate Council's collective agreement that his presence here is important.</p> <p>Some future items for Council were announced, including a presentation from Student Success on HOPE, a presentation from the Unity Center, policies from UCC and CAPP regarding class sizes, and revisions to the faculty hiring guidelines.</p>
4. By-Laws Change for Academic Technology Advisory Committee (ATAC)	This was the second vote for a By-Laws change presented at the previous Council meeting. V. Bohlinger reported no comments were received. M. Motte moved to accept the motion and R. Clark seconded. Approved unanimously with no abstentions or nays.
5. Provost's Discussion Items	Sue Pearlmutter (Interim Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs) raised several issues:

- Faculty Research and Development:

Fall allocations have been awarded with 3-4 major projects being supported and about 12-14 small grants. A brief history of this committee and process was given (e.g., the current committee combined what was formerly the Committee on Faculty Scholarship and Faculty Development Fund, the amount of money awarded—\$100,000—had not changed in well over a decade). The Committee on Faculty Research and Development distributes awards twice a year, once per semester. A small amount of release/redistributed time is also awarded by this committee. The amount of money available this past cycle increased substantially from the previous cycle. Limited research and development support was a key issue among faculty in the Campus Climate Survey. Some of this money is now coming from indirect returns.

- Student Evaluations:

There is inconsistency across departments in administering student evaluations, and there are no common questions on those evaluations across departments that allow the college to have data for the Postsecondary Council or accreditation. Data is needed to address the evaluation of instructors and teaching, and currently there is insufficient data to provide evidence to NECHE and the college will not be able to comment on that area. In 2006 a committee from the RIC/AFT made recommendations for the implementation of universal student evaluations with suggestions for the content of questions. This work was not picked up, presumably with changes in administration. The hope is to resurrect a workgroup due to the need for such data. The Provost's Office will put together a workgroup to work on questions that can be used across the campus.

Faculty comments and concerns included a discussion on how evaluations are handled and security of the process once students complete the evaluations. Additional questions from Council members included how this data will be used by any given department and across the institution. Additional discussion raised the relative meaning and importance of student evaluations and whether quantitative data is the best measure of teaching effectiveness. S. Pearlmuter mentioned that quantitative and qualitative data is used in tenure and promotion data (though the RIC/AFT contract seems to mandate the exclusion of qualitative data). Another Council member asked for clarification on what data the accreditors are seeking. One member suggested that any comparison of teaching effectiveness

be done only for the same course number and not interdepartmentally or with different courses. Another comment asked about the relationship between low-enrolled classes and resistance to filling out evaluations.

- Director of Academic Advising:

The Director of Academic Advising position as posted has caused some distress among faculty. Assurances were made that this position is not an attempt to take away advising from Faculty. The goal is to move to a professional system of advising that is going to look different than what we do today. The outcome is to start where faculty are now. There will be a pilot with departments who want help with the process. What the model will look like is not known.

Discussion pointed to the job posting's description, which suggested a very specific model had already been determined (one that does not currently exist). The major issue expressed was about the process, as the current system of universal advising was initiated and implemented through Council. The changes suggested by the job posting is a prominent example of the Charter of Council being violated. Additional information was given on the process that was undertaken by Council and academic departments when universal advising was implemented. The process was intensive and involved faculty input, and decisions were made that led to changes in faculty responsibilities (and the faculty contract).

S. Pearlmutter reported that the position came through the committee that reviews new positions. The college has been trying to hire professional advisors for the past 1.5 years. Budgetary constraints have prevented the hiring of more than one advisor. Professional advisors are used at many institutions.

Michelle Brophy-Baermann (Chair of the Committee on Academic Advising who served on a RIC/AFT committee formed to address academic advising overloads many years ago) reported that she reviewed many advising models. She and her committee did recommend professional advisors as one model; however, the recommendation was not to replace faculty. It was surmised that with a change in administration the process got leapfrogged. Additional discussion ensued regarding the institution's financial ability to afford this position at the expense of new faculty.

	<p>Additional comments from faculty reinforced that the failure to follow the process of including Council is redefining shared governance and diminishing the function of Council and, therefore, the voice of faculty. Additional comments included the change of the role of the VPAA to Provost as being a potential contributing factor, that administration and faculty may not be understanding each other's motivations, and the sinking morale from the implication that such changes are the result of faculty failing in advising.</p> <p>S. Pearlmutter reported that competition for students and resources is forcing change. It was again suggested that the President should be present for this conversation. Additional comments suggested that, as an institution, the college is not in the best place, that Student Success seems to be creating silos, that the college needs to find a way to reset, and that academic excellence is student success. A proposal to make this an agenda item for February was suggested.</p>
<p>6. Honorary Degrees</p>	<p>Kim Dumpson (Vice President for College Advancement and External Relations and Chair of the Honorary Degrees Committee) provided information regarding the selection of a candidate for an honorary degrees and to serve as commencement speaker.</p> <p>The committee held two meetings about the honorary degree and commencement speaker. There were very few nominations, one of which was disqualified for already having received an honorary degree and one of which was not seriously considered. Nominations were evaluated according to a rubric, and actor/director/playwright/advocate Lin-Manuel Miranda is being put forward as our nominee.</p> <p>R. Clark made a motion to approve the candidate as our honorary degree recipient and commencement speaker. V. Bohlinger amended the motion to give full license/discretion to the committee to find a candidate "of equal or greater value" should Miranda not be available. M. Motte seconded the motion. All approved with no nays or abstentions.</p>
<p>7. Strategic Plan</p>	<p>Kim Dumpson and Julie Horwitz (Co-chairs of the Strategic Planning Committee) presented "One College One Vision" as the tagline for the Strategic Plan.</p> <p>J. Horwitz discussed how faculty and administration will be at the same table and faculty will have a voice. The goal is to create a plan that can be implemented. The process is</p>

	<p>designed to be inclusive, and a website will be created.</p> <p>The Strategic Plan will include common threads of diversity, equity, and inclusion and community partnerships. Data will be used to inform decisions and the plan should be integrated.</p> <p>EAB will provide resources and data but will not be part of the process of offering recommendations. As the college now subscribes to EAB, faculty should be able to access information from them.</p> <p>Questions arose regarding the extent of and intention behind EAB's involvement, and it was pointed out that RIC had partnered with this company many years ago. The agreement with EAB is not a consulting agreement, nor is the company being hired as a consulting agency. Membership enables the college to participate in training and professional development. A question was raised as to whether faculty leadership from the previous strategic plan will be consulted regarding this version. The plan is to continue to ask for feedback from the members of the last strategic plan and the overall campus.</p>
8. Open Discussion	None
9. Adjournment	Motion to adjourn made by M. Motte and seconded by C. Connolly. Meeting adjourned at 3:45.
	Minutes taken by Claire Creamer, Secretary of Council