



**Council on Postsecondary Education Meeting
Wednesday, April 29, 2020, 5:00 p.m.
560 Jefferson Blvd., Warwick, RI 02886**

**PURSUANT TO GOVERNOR RAIMONDO'S EXECUTIVE ORDER
20-25, THIS MEETING WAS HELD REMOTELY.**

MINUTES

Chair Timothy DelGiudice called this remote meeting to order at 5:07 p.m. and acknowledged that a quorum was present via the Zoom meeting platform. He thanked everyone for their patience and flexibility during such an unexpected time.

Chair DelGiudice announced that, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council on Postsecondary Education is hosting a virtual meeting this evening using Facebook Live for the public to access the meeting. The Council will pause the live cast to enter Executive Session and resume it once back in Open Session.

Chair DelGiudice recognized all attendees participating remotely:

Council on Postsecondary Education members:

Timothy DelGiudice, Chair, Council on Postsecondary Education
Barbara Cottam, Chair, Board of Education
Dennis Duffy
Rachelle Green
Thomas Izzo
Michael Mello
Marianne Monte
Jeffery Williams

Rhode Island Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner (RIOPC) staff:

Ronald Cavallaro, Esq., Acting Commissioner, General Counsel
Anne Marie Coleman, Esq., Director of Labor Relations
Susan Mansolillo, Chief Financial Officer
Dr. Tammy Warner, Assistant Commissioner, Academic and Student Affairs
Dr. Phyllis Harnick, Interim Assistant Commissioner
Amy Grzybowski, Executive Director, Westerly Education Center
Lynn Owens, Assistant to the Commissioner

Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) participants:

Dr. Meghan Hughes, President
Dr. Rosemary Costigan, Vice President, Academic Affairs
Sara Enright, Vice President, Student Affairs/Chief Outcomes Officer
Alix Ogden, Associate Vice President, Administration
Bobby Gondola, Associate Vice President, Institutional Advancement
Amy Kempe, Director, Marketing and Communications

Rhode Island College (RIC) participants:

Dr. Frank Sánchez, President
Clark Greene, Executive Director for Strategic Initiatives, Chief of Staff
Stephen Nedder, Vice President, Administration and Finance
Anna Cano Morales, Associate Vice President, Community Equity and Diversity
Jenifer Giroux, Associate Vice President, Professional Studies & Continuing Education
Robert Eaton, Director of Budget
Dr. Sue Pearlmuter, Interim Provost/Vice President, Academic Affairs
Dr. Helen Tate

Shortly after introducing attendees, RIOPC staff advised the Chair that the Facebook Live feed was not working. Over the next forty minutes, best efforts were made to identify a technology workaround to provide public access. Two messages were posted on the RIOPC Facebook page advising viewers of efforts being made to resolve the matter.

At 5:49 p.m., RIOPC staff announced that a live video of the Zoom meeting was visible on the RIOPC Facebook page. At this point, the Chair called the Open Session of the public meeting to order and took a roll call vote of Council members in attendance. He noted that a full transcript of the meeting will be available.

1. Acceptance of the Agenda

Chair DelGiudice called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education accept the agenda for this meeting.

On a motion duly made by Mr. Williams and seconded by Mr. Mello, it was

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education accepts the agenda for the meeting of April 29, 2020.

VOTE: 8 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Timothy DelGiudice, Barbara Cottam, Dennis Duffy, Rachelle Green, Thomas Izzo, Michael Mello, Marianne Monte and Jeffery Williams.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

2. Approval of the Minutes

A. Minutes of the March 24, 2020 meeting.

Chair DelGiudice called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education approve the minutes of the meeting held March 24, 2020.

On a motion duly made by Ms. Green and seconded by Ms. Monte, it was

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education approves the minutes of the meeting held March 24, 2020.

VOTE: 8 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Timothy DelGiudice, Barbara Cottam, Dennis Duffy, Rachelle Green, Thomas Izzo, Michael Mello, Marianne Monte and Jeffery Williams.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

3. Reports from the Chairs

A. Council on Postsecondary Education – Updates and issues affecting local and national higher education.

Chair DelGiudice deferred his comments, in the interest of time.

B. Board of Education – Updates and issues affecting local and national PK-20 education.

Chair Cottam spoke about the recently announced \$3.24 million federal grant awarded to the Rhode Island Department of Education, together with the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner, the University of Rhode Island, and the Annenberg Institute at Brown University, to improve equity outcomes across the State. The grant funded project will link new data to help us understand the 360-degree view of our students. This will include the sharing of data from state agencies that will allow for a broader look at the challenges disadvantaged students face both in and out of the classroom. Information, once gathered, will be made available to school and district leaders, to connect outcome data with program and finance data so that schools can look at how well (or not) they are addressing equity gaps in programming services.

This planning tool will be integrated into the Rhode Island federal and state grant funding system. It will identify different patterns around inequitable student access and resources so that schools have better insight into interventions that are likely to make a difference for this population. Chair Cottam celebrated the great team approach to providing valuable information to school districts.

4. Report from the Commissioner

- A. Updates and issues affecting local and national higher education – Current and anticipated impacts of COVID-19

Acting Commissioner Cavallaro deferred his report to the next Council meeting.

5. Reports from the Presidents

- A. Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) - Updates and issues affecting local and national higher education – Current and anticipated impacts of COVID-19

President Meghan Hughes reported on the current and anticipated impacts of COVID-19 on the Community College of Rhode Island's students, faculty, and staff. She began by outlining the context:

- March 23rd, CCRI went fully online, moving to a pass/fail grading system.
- 13,000 students, 600 different courses, 2,400 sessions moved to a remote teaching and learning context.
- Prior to March 23rd, only thirteen percent of courses were available online, only nineteen percent of faculty had ever taught an online course, and around fifty percent of students had never taken an online course.

President Hughes spoke of the positive impact of COVID-19 on the college, stating that what the students, faculty, and staff have done is extraordinary, noting that this effort has been the most humbling and rewarding experience she has ever lived through in her professional career.

President Hughes spoke of the negative impact of COVID-19 on the college. As sixteen percent of Rhode Islanders are now unemployed, she knows that CCRI students and their families represent that population in far greater numbers. CCRI students are out of work, they are socially isolated, anxious, worried. She noted that even with support and understanding from staff and faculty, she expects higher failure rates. CCRI will report those numbers at the next Council meeting.

President Hughes reported that CCRI is working closely with the State to design a plan to re-open its campuses and meet students in the classrooms in the fall. CCRI will deliver its academic courses in both an online fashion and in a classroom physically located on one of its four campuses. CCRI plans to open its doors in a way that requires detailed protocols for social distancing.

President Hughes stated she looks forward to coming back to the Council to report on the details of the plan.

Ms. Cottam asked about the impact of COVID-19 on the Promise scholars and questioned whether an extension of the program guidelines should be considered.

B. Rhode Island College (RIC) - Updates and issues affecting local and national higher education – Current and anticipated impacts of COVID-19

President Frank Sánchez reported on the current and anticipated impacts of COVID-19 on Rhode Island College's students, faculty, and staff. He echoed President Hughes' comments, celebrating the responsiveness of faculty and staff in coming together to plan for the immediate future, anticipating a variety of scenarios.

President Sánchez noted that Rhode Island College was called upon to put together a testing site on campus led by the National Guard. The Rhode Island Department of Health and the Department of Commerce recently asked RIC to create a community outreach center to help the state reach out to our multilingual and diverse community.

President Sánchez stated that RIC has mobilized over eighty faculty, staff, students, and administrators to begin planning for the fall session. There are a number of issues to address given the likelihood of going remote this coming fall, such as possibly not having a residency life experience on campus, potentially no intercollegiate athletics, both of which have an impact on enrollment. General challenges include the tracking of students who, for a variety of reasons, have been unable to stay engaged, despite numerous efforts by faculty and staff. As communication plays a critical role for the college, the school launched "RIC Remote" for faculty, students, and staff to provide the latest updates, resources, and services available during the pandemic.

President Sánchez reported that on March 23rd, RIC launched remote education, an alternative grading policy, and worked closely with the administration and academic leadership to send a joint letter to the unions laying down expectations as RIC prepares for the fall. He is grateful to RIC's faculty and its collective bargaining units for unifying around this common message to our community. RIC has refunded over \$880,000 to students and is still supporting 46 students who do not have alternative housing options.

President Sánchez expressed concern about enrollment for the fall. Given the uncertainty of families and students about their options, RIC started a series of webinars and chat discussions for prospective students.

Traditional commencement exercises are cancelled at RIC; a virtual video celebration is planned for May 16th. President Sánchez announced that RIC received half of its CARES Act funding, \$3.7 million, earlier today. Of that, fifty percent of funds are directed for student emergency funding, the other half will be left to the school's determination, which will likely be invested in continuing to support students and build out RIC's remote infrastructure. RIC has rallied its alumni and raised a little over \$50,000 as part of its emergency response fund to provide direct student support.

President Sánchez stated that RIC's strategic plan working group has pivoted its focus to academic and teaching excellence, the student experience and resource stewardship and generation, now in the context of preparing for the fall. Faculty members are preparing for remote learning, taking advantage of the success of the last few months, while addressing the gaps and challenges presented.

President Sánchez noted that the strategic budget resource planning committee is looking at factors contributing to RIC's structural deficit. Post COVID-19, RIC is planning for the worst, anticipating significantly diminished state support and enrollment. He is concerned that if RIC does not receive additional federal funding beyond the CARES Act, it will see a significant decline in resources, which may necessitate a reorganization of the entire organization.

Chair DelGiudice learned that the Facebook Live feed has been intermittent; he noted that the entire Zoom recording will be posted on RIOPC's Facebook page at the conclusion of the meeting. Best efforts are being made to maintain access to the meeting on the Facebook Live feed, which appear to have been successful.

Chair DelGiudice advised participants and viewers that the Council will seek to move into Executive Session following consideration of action items listed under **6. Action Items**. Viewers were advised that the Council will end the livestream to enter Executive Session and will resume the Facebook live cast once the Council returns to Open Session.

Chair DelGiudice called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education enter Executive Session at the conclusion of Council action on agenda items listed under **6. Action Items**, for the following items:

- A. Discussion regarding potential litigation pursuant to R.I.G.L. §42-46-5 (a) (2).
- B. Discussion regarding the acquisition or lease of real property for public purposes, pursuant to R.I.G.L. § 42-46-5 (a) (5).

On a motion duly made by Mr. Mello and seconded by Mr. Williams, it was

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education enter into
Executive Session for the following items:

- A. Discussion regarding potential litigation pursuant to R.I.G.L. §42-46-5 (a) (2).
- B. Discussion regarding the acquisition or lease of real property for public purposes pursuant to R.I.G.L. § 42-46-5 (a) (5).

VOTE: 8 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Timothy DelGiudice, Barbara Cottam, Dennis Duffy, Rachelle Green, Thomas Izzo, Michael Mello, Marianne Monte and Jeffery Williams.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

Chair DelGiudice noted that the Facebook livestream will pause as the Council enters executive session. The Facebook livestream will resume when the Council returns to Open Session to seal the minutes of the executive session and to adjourn the meeting.

6. Action Items

A. Approval of awarding of degrees

I. Community College of Rhode Island

Chair DelGiudice called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education approve the awarding of undergraduate and graduate degrees, diplomas, and certificates to the candidates who will have completed their requirements at the conclusion of the Spring 2020 semester at the Community College of Rhode Island.

On a motion duly made by Ms. Green and seconded by Ms. Monte, it was

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education approves the awarding of undergraduate and graduate degrees, diplomas, and certificates to the candidates who will have completed their requirements at the conclusion of the Spring 2020 semester at the Community College of Rhode Island.

VOTE: 8 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Timothy DelGiudice, Barbara Cottam, Dennis Duffy, Rachelle Green, Thomas Izzo, Michael Mello, Marianne Monte and Jeffery Williams.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

II. Rhode Island College

Chair DelGiudice called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education approve the awarding of undergraduate and graduate degrees, diplomas, and certificates to the candidates who will have completed their requirements at the conclusion of the Spring 2020 semester at Rhode Island College.

On a motion duly made by Ms. Green and seconded by Mr. Duffy, it was

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education approves the awarding of undergraduate and graduate degrees, diplomas, and certificates to the candidates who will have completed their requirements at the conclusion of the Spring 2020 semester at Rhode Island College.

VOTE: 8 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Timothy DelGiudice, Barbara Cottam, Dennis Duffy, Rachelle Green, Thomas Izzo, Michael Mello, Marianne Monte and Jeffery Williams.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

B. Approval of Non-SARA application for National University

Chair DelGiudice called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education approve National University's application to operate/offer distance learning programs in Rhode Island as a non-SARA, private, non-profit institution.

On a motion duly made by Ms. Green and seconded by Mr. Mello, it was

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education approves National University's application to operate/offer distance learning programs in Rhode Island as a non-SARA, private, non-profit institution.

VOTE: 8 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Timothy DelGiudice, Barbara Cottam, Dennis Duffy, Rachelle Green, Thomas Izzo, Michael Mello, Marianne Monte and Jeffery Williams.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

C. Approval of RI-SARA application for Rhode Island School of Design

Chair DelGiudice called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education approve the Rhode Island School of Design's application to become an RI-SARA institution.

On a motion duly made by Ms. Green and seconded by Mr. Mello, it was

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education approves the Rhode Island School of Design's application to become an RI-SARA institution.

VOTE: 8 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Timothy DelGiudice, Barbara Cottam, Dennis Duffy, Rachelle Green, Thomas Izzo, Michael Mello, Marianne Monte and Jeffery Williams.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

D. Ratification of the Memorandum of Understanding Creating a COVID-19 Incident Command System between the Council/Rhode Island College and the City of Central Falls and Regarding the Lease of Property at 934 Dexter Street, Central Falls, Rhode Island.

Chair DelGiudice called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education ratify the Memorandum of Understanding, creating a COVID-19 Incident Command System between the Council/Rhode Island College and the City of Central Falls, and

regarding the lease of property at 934 Dexter Street, Central Falls, Rhode Island, which was executed by the Council Chair on April 22, 2020 and the President of Rhode Island College on April 24, 2020.

On a motion duly made by Ms. Green and seconded by Ms. Monte, it was

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education approves the ratification of the Memorandum of Understanding, creating a COVID-19 Incident Command System between the Council/Rhode Island College and the City of Central Falls, and regarding the lease of property at 934 Dexter Street, Central Falls, Rhode Island, which was executed by the Council Chair on April 22, 2020 and the President of Rhode Island College on April 24, 2020.

VOTE: 8 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Timothy DelGiudice, Barbara Cottam, Dennis Duffy, Rachelle Green, Thomas Izzo, Michael Mello, Marianne Monte and Jeffery Williams.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

E. Approval of the appointment of Dr. Helen Tate as the new Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Rhode Island College

President Sánchez stated that RIC is excited to have concluded its national search for a new provost and is submitting for the Council's approval the appointment of Dr. Helen Tate. President Sánchez listed Dr. Tate's extensive background.

Chair DelGiudice called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education approve the appointment of Dr. Helen Tate as Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Rhode Island College.

On a motion duly made by Mr. Mello and seconded by Mr. Williams, it was

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education approves the appointment of Dr. Helen Tate as the new Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Rhode Island College

VOTE: 8 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Timothy DelGiudice, Barbara Cottam, Dennis Duffy,
Rachelle Green, Thomas Izzo, Michael Mello, Marianne
Monte and Jeffery Williams.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

Chair DelGiudice welcomed Dr. Tate and stated that the Council looks forward to working with her. Dr. Tate thanked the Chair, Council members and future colleagues for their support.

At this point in the meeting, the Facebook livestream was paused, and the Council entered Executive Session to consider the following discussion items:

7. Executive Session

A. Discussion regarding potential litigation, pursuant to R.I.G.L. §42-46-5(a)(2)

B. Discussion regarding the acquisition or lease of real property for public purposes, pursuant to R.I.G.L. §42-46-5(a)(5)

The Council entered Executive Session at 6:29 p.m.

The Council reconvened in Open Session at 7:23 p.m.

RIOPC staff confirmed that the Facebook livestream resumed. Chair DelGiudice noted that RIOPC will post the Zoom meeting video to Facebook to offset technical difficulties; heroic efforts were made by staff to maintain the video stream in compliance with the Open Meetings Act.

Chair DelGiudice called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education seal the minutes of the Executive Session held on April 29, 2020.

On a motion duly made by Ms. Green and seconded by Mr. Duffy, it was

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education seal the minutes
of the Executive Session held on April 29, 2020.

VOTE: 8 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in
the negative.

YEAS: Timothy DelGiudice, Barbara Cottam, Dennis Duffy,
Rachelle Green, Thomas Izzo, Michael Mello, Marianne
Monte and Jeffery Williams.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

8. Upcoming Meetings

- A. The next meeting of the Board of Education is scheduled for May 27, 2020.
- B. The next meeting of the Council on Postsecondary Education is scheduled for June 17, 2020.

The Council recognized Presidents Hughes and Sánchez and noted their appreciation for the exceptional effort and work involved with transitioning the schools to online learning.

9. Adjourn

Chair DelGiudice called for a motion to adjourn tonight's meeting.

On a motion duly made by Mr. Williams and seconded by Mr. Duffy, it was

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education adjourn the meeting of April 29, 2020.

VOTE: 8 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Timothy DelGiudice, Barbara Cottam, Dennis Duffy, Thomas Izzo, Rachelle Green, Michael Mello, Marianne Monte and Jeffery Williams.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

This meeting adjourned at 7:26 p.m.