Council on Postsecondary Education Meeting  
Wednesday, October 21, 2020 5:30 p.m.  
HYBRID MEETING  
Room 200, Gaige Hall, Rhode Island College  
600 Mount Pleasant Avenue, Providence, Rhode Island  
and Zoom Webinar  

Pursuant to Governor Raimondo’s Executive Order 20-84,  
this was a hybrid meeting.  

MINUTES  

Chair Timothy DelGiudice called this hybrid meeting to order at 5:34 p.m. and acknowledged that a quorum was present. Due to social distancing restrictions, this meeting was held in person at Rhode Island College for Council members and essential personnel only, including:  

Participating in person:  
Timothy DelGiudice, Chair, Council on Postsecondary Education, Council members Rachelle Green and Michael Mello.  
Meghan Hughes, President, Community College of Rhode Island  
Frank Sánchez, President, Rhode Island College  
Ronald A. Cavallaro, Acting Commissioner and General Counsel  
Anne Marie Coleman, Director of Labor Relations  
Support staff included Lynn Owens, Assistant to the Commissioner, and Rhode Island College technical assistants John Rosa, Robert Ferland, and Michael Caine.  

Remote Participation:  
Council members Dennis Duffy, Thomas Izzo, Marianne Monte, Jeffery Williams, and Board of Education Chair Barbara Cottam  
Lou Saccoccio, University of Rhode Island (URI) General Counsel  
The Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) remote participants included Kristen Albritton, Alix Ogden, Sara Enright, Dr. Rosemary Costigan, Greg LaPointe, Sybil Bailey, and Amy Kempe.  
Rhode Island College (RIC) remote participants included Clark Greene, Stephen Nedder, Helen Tate, Kimberly Conway-Dumpson, Anna Cano Morales, Ducha Hung, Robert Eaton, and Jen Giroux.
RI Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner (RIOPC) remote participants included Susan Mansolillo, Dr. Tammy Warner, and Beth Bailey.

Guest: Dennis Littky, President, College Unbound

Public access was provided to attendees of this Zoom webinar in compliance with the Open Meetings Act and the provisions of the Executive Order; contact information was provided for those experiencing technical difficulties.

1. **Acceptance of the Agenda**

Chair DelGiudice asked for a motion to accept the agenda for the meeting of October 21, 2020.

On a motion duly made by Michael Mello and seconded by Jeffery Williams, it was

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education accepts the agenda for the meeting of October 21, 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 September 16, 2020 meeting.

Chair DelGiudice called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education approve the minutes of the meeting that took place on September 16, 2020, as presented.

On a motion duly made by Michael Mello and seconded by Marianne Monte, it was

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education approves the minutes of the meeting that took place on September 16, 2020, as presented.

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.

Chairman DelGiudice dispensed with his report for the sake of efficiency.

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

No report.

4. Report from the Commissioner

A. Updates and issues affecting local and national higher education.

Acting Commissioner Cavallaro reported to the Council that the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner has completed its move to the second floor in the same building, 560 Jefferson Boulevard.

He reported on activity at the Westerly Education Center (WEC), including the September start of process technician training, the planned November start of pipeline training courses for Electric Boat/Quonset Point, and Pearson Testing Center’s continuing activity at the Center.

Acting Commissioner Cavallaro noted that WEC staff continues to support the Governor’s Office on the COVID-19 response activities in the higher education communities. He praised the work that Executive Director Amy Grzybowski and her staff are doing in that regard; he acknowledged that Amy has become an important liaison between the Department of Health and the public and private institutions of higher education.

Regarding the RI Nursing Education Center (RINEC), Acting Commissioner Cavallaro reported that the semester continues to progress smoothly, thanks in large part to the work that the staff at RINEC did in collaboration with RIC and URI over the summer, to ensure COVID compliance, and to ensure that the needed activities could continue within the restrictions and guidelines.
In conclusion, Acting Commissioner Cavallaro reported that the RIOPC office completed the annual review of proprietary school renewals in Rhode Island. Annual review included examination of financial information, and review of bonds, curricula, student catalogs, and COVID response protocols. Fourteen schools applied for renewal during this year’s cycle; one school did not apply due to coronavirus restrictions.

B. Update on policy and programmatic initiatives

I. Report on Signature Authority

Acting Commissioner Cavallaro advised the Council that on January 15, 1998, the then Board of Governors (now the Council on Postsecondary Education) delegated to the Commissioner of Postsecondary Education the responsibility for conferring signature authority on behalf of Rhode Island College, The Community College of Rhode Island, and the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner, with notification provided to the Council of approved changes in the list of those who have signing authority. On an annual basis or upon change of personnel, the institutions and RIOPC may request changes to signature authority for agreements and contracts, financial authorizations and adjustments, and personnel and payroll forms.

Acting Commissioner Cavallaro noted that current signature authority listings from Rhode Island College, The Community College of Rhode Island, and the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner have been provided to the Council.

C. Notices of new programs and/or changes that were submitted and reviewed for notification to the Council:

I. From The Community College of Rhode Island

a. Notice of Change: Basic Accounting Skills Certificate

Acting Commissioner Cavallaro confirmed that staff at RIOPC reviewed the information on this matter that was provided by the College. He confirmed that Council approval is not required, as the changes are within the role and scope of the program.

5. Reports from the Presidents

A. Rhode Island College - Update on the college’s enrollment and most recent budget situation, and the current and anticipated impact and response.

President Frank Sánchez shared key points from recent enrollment data, including:

- Overall enrollment is 7,072, down from 7,531 last year (6% decrease between this year and last year).
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- Over the last five years, enrollment has declined by 16.3%.
- Graduate enrollment (1,074) is 2.5% higher this fall than it was five years ago. Graduate returning figures increased, while the number of new graduate students decreased. The number of returning graduate students is the highest it has been over the five-year period, while the number of new graduate students is the lowest.
- Graduate enrollment in each of the schools is up from five years ago, while non-degree/certificate enrollment is down.
- Only social work program enrollment is higher than it was five years ago; decreases have been most pronounced in RIC’s Business and Education programs over the five-year period.

The President shared an update on budget challenges. The college continues to implement its expense reductions, making nearly 85% of planned cuts in order to manage deficits while awaiting the outcome of state budget decisions.

President Sánchez noted that RIC is working through the layoff process, and remains in constant contact with its respective unions. The College has prepared its five-year capital plan, and is preparing the FY2022 budget, and is advocating for the $38 million bond for the Clark Science center for a special election in Spring 2021. Renovation of the Horace Mann Hall is on schedule for completion in Spring 2022.

President Sánchez celebrated the success of RIC’s Concert Chorus, which has been placed on the official ballot of this year’s Grammy Awards for their virtual performance of “When I Think of You”. He announced the upcoming RICFEST virtual events.

Wrapping up his report, President Sánchez detailed efforts to mitigate the risk of COVID-19, and listed current testing results and planning efforts for the spring semester. He applauded students, staff, and faculty for their level of compliance with the processes and protocols put into place.

In response to Council inquiry about the demographics of graduate students enrolled in the education program, and the availability of teaching positions statewide, President Sánchez stated RIC will follow up and conduct a breakdown on growth within the program and student population using census data.

B. Community College of Rhode Island – Update on the college’s enrollment and most recent budget situation, and the current and anticipated impact and response.

President Meghan Hughes reported to the Council on continuing efforts to address the financial challenges the college faces as a result of the pandemic. She noted that CCRI has had to take significant action to reduce expenses, and it recognizes that this action has impacted its employees. CCRI’s ongoing focus will be to work in partnership with its union leadership to implement these cost-savings, and to treat all of its employees with the consideration and respect they deserve.
The President reported on the challenge of making budget decisions based on best available information, including the State’s instructions to submit a FY22 budget that reflects a 15% reduction in state appropriation, a projected $800 million decline in state revenues in FY21, and an ongoing uncertainty about a second stimulus bill.

President Hughes stated that it was against that backdrop that CCRI took the difficult step last month of laying off 44 full-time, non-faculty employees. She asserted that CCRI’s employees are its greatest asset and richly contribute to the college and to student success. She continued by saying that since the start of the pandemic, faculty and staff have leaned in to create new ways of teaching and working, and she is grateful for their creativity, persistence, and commitment to excellence – all in support of CCRI’s students. She proclaimed that should the college’s financial position improve, her priority will be to rebuild and reinvest in its people.

In terms of enrollment, as of Friday, October 15, the college’s headcount for the fall semester is 13,684 students. This is 1,091 fewer students, or 7.4% off of last year’s fall headcount. In fact, the latest national enrollment numbers from the National Student Clearinghouse show that community colleges have been hardest hit by the pandemic and are off by 9.4% on average when compared to last fall’s enrollment figures. One of the keys to partially recovering its fall enrollment position was the Last Call for Fall program, offering students late-start courses (nearly 600 new students enrolled in the program). Without the late start, enrollment would have been off by at least 11% from last year’s total.

President Hughes expressed concern about the disproportionate decline in already vulnerable student populations. While overall enrollment is down 7.4%, it is down 9.1% for students of color and 13.1% for Pell-grant recipients. Low-income communities and communities of color have been hit harder by every challenge the pandemic presents, including COVID-19 infections and fatalities, unemployment, housing and food insecurity, and the digital divide.

The President announced that CCRI just launched caseload advising for all new students. Each new student is matched with a specific advisor who will support them through their experience at CCRI. The school has partnered with TutorMe, a new virtual tutoring program, to enhance current tutoring and workshops offered by the Student Success Center and the Writing Center. TutorMe is an online tutoring platform that allows students to connect with one of more than 10,000 verified tutors 24 hours a day covering more than 300 subjects.

President Hughes outlined efforts to engage students who have stepped away from the college community, including outreach by the Educational Opportunity Center team to more than 3,000 individuals to help them get back on track. This team is focused on connecting with first-generation, low-income, and ELL students, helping them file their FAFSA and navigate the enrollment process in order to get them back to CCRI. CCRI’s admissions team is working with the many students who didn’t make it to college in the first place. First year community college students nationally have seen the biggest drop in enrollment of any population. The enrollment team is proactively
emailing, texting, calling and mailing to students who applied to CCRI but did not enroll in order to support them through the enrollment process and get them ready for spring.

Given the ongoing gravity of the pandemic, and the fact that registration for the spring semester starts in two weeks, President Hughes said CCRI has determined it must continue primarily with remote teaching and learning next semester. Winter athletics has been suspended, including men’s and women’s basketball, indoor track, and women’s volleyball, which is traditionally held in the fall, but was pushed to the winter due to the virus.

President Hughes noted that CCRI continues to see growth with the Division of Workforce Partnerships. Recently, the college was awarded funding for several certificate programs and incumbent worker trainings through the Governor’s Back to Work initiative, including Software Development, Business & Digital Essentials, Securities Industry Essentials, Women in Tech, Mortgage Data Processing, and Patient Support Specialist. These programs, all of which will have launched by year’s end, are examples of how CCRI continues to expand its workforce training programs to create strong employment pathways for Rhode Islanders.

Concluding her report, President Hughes listed current COVID surveillance testing efforts and results. She celebrated the fact that CCRI doubled its two-year graduation rate (reached 30% within four years), and graduated more Rhode Islanders than at any other moment in the last twenty years, despite the pandemic.

Following Council inquiry about anticipated school enrollment for the spring, President Hughes responded that traditionally there is a decline in enrollment from fall to spring. President Sánchez added that, across the nation, schools are seeing more students leave college; retention is tougher in this difficult environment.

6. Action Items

A. Approval of a Proposal from College Unbound for conditional approval to operate in Rhode Island and offer the Bachelor of Arts degree in Organizational Leadership and Change.

This item was presented for discussion at the September 16, 2020 Council meeting. Dr. Tammy Warner provided a summary of College Unbound’s request for conditional approval for a period of one year, while the accreditation review is completed. She noted that College Unbound will be subject to a complete review upon the completion of the New England Council on Higher Education (NECHE) accreditation process, and/or their application for full approval. President Dennis Littky confirmed that NECHE conducted a virtual inspection in late September.

Chair DelGiudice call for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education approve a proposal from College Unbound for conditional approval to operate in
Rhode Island and offer the Bachelor of Arts degree in Organizational Leadership and Change.

On a motion duly made by Jeffery Williams and seconded by Michael Mello, it was

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education approves a proposal from College Unbound for conditional approval to operate in Rhode Island and offer the Bachelor of Arts degree in Organizational Leadership and Change.

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 a Proposal from College Unbound to offer more than fifty percent (50%) of the Bachelor of Arts degree in Organizational Leadership and Change through Distance Learning.

This item was presented for discussion at the September 16, 2020 Council meeting.

Chairman DelGiudice called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education approve a proposal from College Unbound to offer more than 50% of the Bachelor of Arts degree in Organizational Leadership and Change through Distance Learning.

On a motion duly made by Rachelle Green and seconded by Michael Mello, it was

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education approves a proposal from College Unbound to offer more than 50% of the Bachelor of Arts degree in Organizational Leadership and Change through Distance Learning.

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

Dennis Littky, College Unbound, thanked the Council for its support, and confirmed that College Unbound will return to the Council once it receives its full accreditation from NECHE.

C. Approval of a Small Cell Lease Agreement with New Cingular Wireless PCS, LLC, for real property located at Rhode Island College, 600 Mount Pleasant Avenue, Providence, Rhode Island.

President Sánchez provided a brief explanation of RIC’s request for approval of a small cell lease agreement to provide 5G cell service to the campus.

Chief Financial Officer Steve Nedder responded to Council inquiry regarding the location of the leased property, the value of monthly lease payments, risk and liability concerns, electrical usage and whether there was a requirement for a competitive bid process. Mr. Nedder asserted that the lease is consistent with that of other cell phone tower leases at RIC. He confirmed that the benefit of this lease is in expanding the 5G cellular service to the students on campus.

Assistant Commissioner Cavallaro provided historical information on past cell phone company requests to lease property, consistent with this request.

Chair DelGiudice called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education approve a small cell lease agreement with New Cingular Wireless PCS, LLC for real property located at Rhode Island College, 600 Mount Pleasant Avenue, Providence, Rhode Island, as presented.

On a motion duly made by Michael Mello and seconded by Rachelle Green, it was

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education approves a small cell lease agreement with New Cingular Wireless PCS, LLC for real property located at Rhode Island College, 600 Mount Pleasant Avenue, Providence, Rhode Island, as presented.

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. Approval of a Sublease with Skills for Rhode Island’s Future for real property located at the Rhode Island College Workforce Development Hub, 934 Dexter Street, Central Falls, Rhode Island.

President Sánchez explained that this lease will allow Rhode Island College to expand educational and training opportunities to unemployed/underemployed adults in Northern Rhode Island as well as strengthen the coordination of services with employers.

Acting Commissioner Cavallaro noted that there needs to be a signature line added to the sublease for the Council; any approval would be subject to that modification.

Associate Vice President Jen Giroux confirmed that this sublease came about with RIC’s partnership with Real Jobs RI programming through the Department of Labor and Training (DLT). She noted that DLT had suggested that RIC lease space to Skills for Rhode Island’s Future to further collaborate with employers and unemployed adults living in Northern Rhode Island. She noted that the original lease with the City of Central Falls allows RIC to enter into a sublease agreement.

Responding to Council inquiry, Jen Giroux explained that the sublease was not put out to bid, and that the original lease agreement with the City of Central Falls allows RIC to enter into a sublease agreement. As the original lease agreement was considered and approved by the State Properties Committee, she assumes this sublease will be approved as well. She confirmed that Skills for Rhode Island’s Future cannot sublet the space.

In response to Council inquiry about the benefit to the RIC students, Jen Giroux stated that RIC would work collaboratively with the employers. Skills for Rhode Island’s Future would act as a conduit to the employer, to alleviate any duplication of effort on RIC’s part. Skills for Rhode Island’s Future would assist RIC with job placement for any adults participating in training at the Workforce Development Hub. She said the partnership will also help support an initiative that RIC is leading with the Governor’s office, the Recovery Friendly Workforce Initiative, that will also be co-located at the Workforce Development Hub.

Chair DelGiudice call for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education approve a sublease with Skills for Rhode Island’s Future for real property located at the Rhode Island College Workforce Development Hub, 934 Dexter Street, Central Falls, Rhode Island, as presented.

On a motion duly made by Michael Mello and seconded by Rachelle Green, it was

\[\text{VOTED: THAT} \]

The Council on Postsecondary Education approves a sublease with Skills for Rhode Island’s Future for real property located at the Rhode Island College Workforce Development Hub, 934 Dexter Street, Central Falls, Rhode
E. Approval of the AY21-22 Concurrent Course Listing.

Assistant Commissioner Tammy Warner provided background information on this item. She reminded the Council that the public institutions were asked to provide the listing of courses which they have approved to be offered in the high schools. This item will be presented for approval subsequently at the November Board of Education meeting.

In response to Council inquiry about courses being offered by the University of Rhode Island, and listed on the document, Acting Commissioner Cavallaro stated he did not think the statute was amended to remove URI from the Council’s oversight in this matter. Dr. Warner added that the Council on Postsecondary Education remains responsible for paying for the cost of the dual and concurrent enrollment for all of the students that take part.

Chair DelGiudice call for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education approve the AY2021-2022 Concurrent Course Listing and its transmittal to the Board of Education for its approval.

On a motion duly made by Rachelle Green and seconded by Michael Mello, it was

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education approves the AY2021-2022 Concurrent Course Listing and its transmittal to the Board of Education for its approval.

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
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ABSTAINS: 0

7. Executive Session

Chair DelGiudice called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education enter Executive Session for the following items:

A. Discussion regarding collective bargaining – all bargaining units, pursuant to R.I.G.L. §42-46-5(a)(2).

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

C. Discussion regarding the Annual Report on Litigation (all cases pending in the United States First Circuit Court of Appeal, the United States District Court for the District of Rhode Island, the Rhode Island Supreme, and Superior Courts\(^1\); the RI Commission for Human Rights); and potential litigation, pursuant to RIGL §42-46-5(a)(2)

On a motion duly made by Michael Mello and seconded by Marianne Monte, it was

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

A. Discussion regarding collective bargaining – all bargaining units, pursuant to R.I.G.L. §42-46-5(a)(2).

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

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C. Discussion regarding the Annual Report on Litigation (all cases pending in the United States First Circuit Court of Appeal, the United States District Court for the District of Rhode Island, the Rhode Island Supreme, and Superior Courts, the RI Commission for Human Rights); and potential litigation, pursuant to RIGL §42-46-5 (a)(2)

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

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

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

The Council entered Executive Session at 6:48 p.m. Virtual public access was paused.

The Council reconvened in Open Session at 7:33 p.m. Virtual public access resumed.

Chair DelGiudice thanked attendees for their patience while on hold during the Council’s Executive Session. He confirmed that the Council was back in Open Session.

Chair DelGiudice called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education seal the minutes of the Executive Session held on October 21, 2020.

On a motion duly made by Rachelle Green and seconded by Michael Mello, it was

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education seal the minutes of the Executive Session held on October 21, 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. Additional Action Item

A. Ratification of tentative agreement with CCRI Part-Time Faculty Association.

Chair DelGiudice called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education ratify the tentative agreement with the CCRI Part-Time Faculty Association, as presented.

On a motion duly made by Rachelle Green and seconded by Michael Mello, it was

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education ratifies the tentative agreement with the CCRI Part-Time Faculty Association, as presented.

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

9. Upcoming Meetings

Chairman DelGiudice noted that the meeting schedule is subject to change.

A. The next special meeting of the Council on Postsecondary Education is scheduled for November 4, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.

B. The next meeting of the Board of Education is scheduled for November 10, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.

C. The next regular meeting of the Council on Postsecondary Education is scheduled for December 9, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.

10. Adjourn

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

On a motion duly made by Michael Mello and seconded by Rachelle Green, it was

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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

The hybrid meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.