Meeting Minutes

Chair Dennis Duffy called this meeting to order at 2:04 PM and acknowledged that a quorum was present.

Council on Postsecondary Education members present:

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

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

Shannon Gilkey, Ed.D., Commissioner
Anne Marie Coleman, Director of Labor Relations
Ronald Cavallaro, Esq., General Counsel
Beth Bailey, Director of Communications
Zachary Saul, Chief Financial Officer
Jill Olson-Crowley, Assistant to the Commissioner

Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) participant: Meghan Hughes, President

Rhode Island College (RIC) participant: Helen Tate, Provost

1. Acceptance of the Agenda
Chair Duffy called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education accept the agenda for the meeting of April 14, 2022.

The motion was made by Jeffery Williams and seconded by Rachelle Green.

Chair Duffy then called for a motion that item 5(A)(1) on the agenda be amended (Report from the Presidents, Community College of Rhode Island) to:

5. Reports of the Presidents
   A. Community College of Rhode Island
      1. Enrollment Update
      2. Facilities Update
      3. Legislative Update
      4. Programs of Excellence

On a motion duly made by Jeffery Williams and seconded by Rachelle Green it was:

VOTED: THAT Item 5(A)(1) on the agenda be amended (Report from the Presidents, Community College of Rhode Island) to be:

5. Reports of the Presidents
   A. Community College of Rhode Island
      1. Enrollment Update
      2. Facilities Update
      3. Legislative Update
      4. Programs of Excellence

VOTE: 6 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

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

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

On the motion duly made by Jeffery Williams and seconded by Rachelle Green, it was:

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education accept the agenda for the meeting of April 14, 2022,
VOTE: 6 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

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

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

2. Approval of the Minutes

Chair Duffy called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education approve the minutes of the meeting that took place on March 29, 2022.

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

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education approve the minutes of the meeting that took place on March 29, 2022, as presented.

VOTE: 6 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Dennis Duffy, Barbara Cottam, Rachelle Green, Thomas Izzo, Michael Mello, and Jeffery Williams

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

3. Report from the Chair of the Council on Postsecondary Education

Chair Duffy thanked each Council member for their dedication. The Chair stated that as a member of the Council for many years, he believes that there are both opportunities and privilege to make significant progress on postsecondary outcomes for Rhode Island. Chair Duffy shared that Rhode Islanders deserve access to high-quality education and through the work mapped out in the strategic plan, he is hopeful that this will be delivered by RIOPC and the Council. The Chair stated that he hopes to help evolve the work of the Council to increase discussions during Council meetings and through committee work to deepen the Council’s understanding of the work occurring across many facets of Rhode Island’s education and its institutions.
4. Report from the Commissioner

Commissioner Gilkey shared that RIOPC is in partnership with EOHHS and DLT to address the short and long-term needs of the healthcare workforce labor shortages. He stated that by putting higher education in the middle there will be an opportunity to review the data and determine needs that can be shared with the IHEs that have healthcare programs, and to identify short, mid, and long-term action items. Commissioner Gilkey also indicated that OPC is continuing to work with the IHEs to develop a Transfer Vision Statement.

5. Reports from the Presidents

A. Community College of Rhode Island

President Hughes reported that CCRI targeted 5300 students for the summer semester, which is beginning in 40 days, and is presently up 10.5% over last summer. President Hughes stated that they are optimistic about the fall semester. RI Promise applicants are up 28% with 2551 applicants, and total applications, including all non-RI Promise applicants, are up 22% with 612 applicants. The President stated that there is an ongoing need to increase the number of advisors serving students, which in the last five years, has increased from 15 advisors to 34. CCRI is also issuing a basic needs assessment survey to students in the summer and hopes to increase the number of social workers and use a collective impact model to strive to meet all identified student needs.

President Hughes also provided an update on GWO training and shared that CCRI had been awarded $500,000 to advance this project. The College will be launching the first cohort this year. The President indicated that the Senate and House Finance Committee hearings have gone well. Commencement, the President informed the Council, will be held on May 12, 2022, at the Dunkin Donuts Center, and CCRI’s Annual Benefit will be held in Lincoln on June 10, 2022.

B. Rhode Island College

Provost Tate shared that last weekend Rhode Island College held Accepted Students Day on campus with over 1000 guests on campus including 335 students. RIC is presently up 6% in application activity; admissions are up 11% and the application completion rate is up for a gross deposit increase of 12% compared to 2021. The Provost reported that freshman gross deposits are up 19.3% and transfer applicants are up 5%. Provost Tate stated that on April 27, 2022, RIC will have a cap and gown ceremony, and commencement will be at the Dunkin Donuts Center on May 14, 2022.

The Provost shared that several projects are underway at RIC. The Horace Mann project, a 25-million-dollar renovation project, is on target for a mid-June completion. The Clark Science Building, a 38-million-dollar renovation project, has the beginning of the design and schematics underway. The Provost also highlighted the student services project to centralize activities for students, which will be funded with ARPA funds.

Provost Tate provided legislative updates and indicated that the Governor is supporting RIC’s requests. The College is grateful that the Hope Scholarship was reintroduced by Senators Pearson and Amore. It will positively impact students by providing funding for
their last two years of school.

6. Action Items

A. Approval of awarding of degrees

1. Community College of Rhode Island

Chair Duffy called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education approve the awarding of degrees, diplomas, and certificates to the candidates who will have completed their requirements at the conclusion of the Spring 2022 semester at the Community College of Rhode Island.

On a motion duly made by Rachelle Green and seconded by Jeffery Williams, it was:

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education approve the awarding of degrees, diplomas, and certificates to the candidates who will have completed their requirements at the conclusion of the Spring 2022 semester at the Community College of Rhode Island.

VOTE: 7 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

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

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

2. Rhode Island College

Chair Duffy called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education approve the awarding of degrees, diplomas, and certificates to the candidates who will have completed their requirements at the conclusion of the Spring 2022 semester at Rhode Island College.

On a motion duly made by Rachelle Green and seconded by Barbara Cottam, it was:

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education approve the awarding of degrees, diplomas, and certificates to the candidates who will have
completed their requirements at the conclusion of the Spring 2022 semester at Rhode Island College.

VOTE: 7 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

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

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

B. Approval of awarding of tenure

1. Community College of Rhode Island

Chair Duffy called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education approve the awarding of faculty tenure at the Community College of Rhode Island.

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

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education approves the awarding of faculty tenure at The Community College of Rhode Island to Kristen A. Hogan, Mathematics and Robert T. Kilduff, Mathematics, effective July 1, 2022

VOTE: 7 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

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

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

2. Rhode Island College

Chair Duffy called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education approve the awarding of faculty tenure at Rhode Island College.
On a motion duly made by Michael Mello and seconded by Rachelle Green, it was:

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education approves the awarding of faculty tenure at Rhode Island College to Aswood Bousseau, MSW; Jesse Capece, BSW; Justin DiLibero, Graduate Nursing; Adrienne Goss, Educational Studies; Geoff Harkness, Sociology; Mark Medwid, Mathematics; Suzanne Mello-Stark, Computer Science and Information Systems; Larissa Patterson, Biology; Elizabeth Pfeiffer, Anthropology; Carse Ramos, Sociology; Victoria Restler, Educational Studies; Kemal Saatcioglu, Economics and Finance; Jennifer Walrad, Music, Theatre and Dance; effective July 1, 2022.

VOTE: 7 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

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

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

C. Approval of an amendment to the Community College of Rhode Island’s FY 22 Voluntary Retirement Incentive Program.

Chair Duffy called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education approve an amendment to the Community College of Rhode Island’s FY 22 Voluntary Retirement Incentive Program.

President Hughes asked for VP Alix Ogden to provide additional information. VP Ogden stated that the College seeks to amend the Voluntary Retirement Incentive Program that the Council approved previously. The amendments include an option for employees to choose to retire at the end of the 2022 calendar year and would allow employees who are enrolled in the College’s phased retirement program to participate.

On a motion duly made by Michael Mello and seconded by Thomas Izzo it was:
Rhode Island Council on Postsecondary Education
April 14, 2022 Meeting

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education approve the amendment to the Community College of Rhode Island’s FY 22 Voluntary Retirement Incentive Program, as presented.

VOTE: 7 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

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

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

7. Executive Session

Chair Duffy asked for a motion to enter into Executive Session for the following:

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 appointment of an interim president at Rhode Island College, pursuant to R.I.G.L. §42-46-5(a)(1).

Chair Duffy stated that any individual to be discussed in Item 7C had been notified, in writing, of their right to have this discussion take place in Open Session, and no objection to proceeding in Executive Session has been received.

On a motion duly made by Rachelle Green and seconded by Jeffery Williams, 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).

C. Discussion regarding the appointment of an
interim president at Rhode Island College, pursuant to R.I.G.L. §42-46-5(a)(1).

VOTE: 7 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

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

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

The Council entered Executive Session at 2:55 PM.

The Council reconvened in Open Session at 4:20 PM.

Chair Duffy called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education seal the minutes of the Executive Session held on April 14, 2022.

On a motion duly made by Rachelle Green and seconded by Marianne Monte, it was:

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education seal the minutes of the Executive Session held on April 14, 2022.

VOTE: 7 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

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

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

8. Additional Action Item

   A. Appointment of an interim president at Rhode Island College, and authorization of the Chair and/or the Commissioner to negotiate and execute any required documents or agreements with the interim president.

Chair Duffy called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education appoint Dr.
Rhode Island Council on Postsecondary Education
April 14, 2022 Meeting

Jack Warner as the Interim President at Rhode Island College, and authorize the Chair and/or the Commissioner to negotiate and execute any required documents or agreements with Dr. Warner.

Personnel Committee Chair Rachelle Green shared with the Council the Committee’s evaluation process, and stated that due to President Sanchez’s departure and the academic calendar cycle, an Interim President had to be appointed as the search process for a new RIC president moves forward. Ms. Green shared that Dr. Warner’s background and experience made him the best choice for an Interim President and commented on Dr. Warner’s Curriculum Vitae.

Chair Duffy stated that he was very impressed with the pedigree and experiences of Dr. Warner, who is an excellent candidate.

On a motion duly made by Rachelle Green and seconded by Thomas Izzo, it was:

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education appoint Dr. Jack Warner as the Interim President at Rhode Island College, and authorize the Chair and/or the Commissioner to negotiate and execute any required documents or agreements with Dr. Warner.

VOTE: 7 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

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

NAYS: 0

9. Next Meeting

Chair Duffy stated that the next meeting of the Council on Postsecondary Education will be on June 22, 2022, at RINEC at 5:30 PM.

10. Adjourn

Chair Duffy called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

On a motion duly made by Rachelle Green and seconded by Jeffery Williams, it was:

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education adjourn the meeting of April 14, 2022.

VOTE: 7 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.
Rhode Island Council on Postsecondary Education
April 14, 2022 Meeting

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

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

The meeting adjourned at 4:25 PM.