



**Faculty Senate
Minutes
Monday, February 24, 2025
4:00 – 5:30 PM, Microsoft Teams**

The meeting was called to order by Faculty Senate President Thomas Borchert at 4:00 PM

Senators in Attendance: 60

Absent: 17 Senators: Biomedical & Health Sciences (Allen), Education Rep1 (Cowles), English Rep1 (vacant), Environment & Natural Resources (Danks), Family Medicine (Berns), Mathematics & Statistics Rep1 (Julianne), Medicine Rep2 (vacant), Orthopaedics & Rehabilitation (vacant), Psychiatry Rep1 (Hall), Psychological Science Rep1 (vacant), Radiology Rep1 (vacant), Religion (Morgenstein Fuerst), RSCA Co-Chair (Hurley/Smith), School of the Arts Rep1 (vacant), School of World Languages & Cultures Rep2 (Scollins), Sociology (Kaelber), Surgery (vacant)

1. Faculty Senate President's Welcome Remarks – Thomas Borchert made the following remarks:

- This has been a difficult month in higher education in the United States. The Trump administration executive orders and administrative changes have created uncertainty and anxiety for many of our colleagues. It is important to recognize that these actions do not hit all of us equally. It is a dire set of circumstances that threaten the legitimacy of the academic mission of this and other public universities. President Borchert expressed appreciation for the work of the administration, the Vermont legislature, our representatives in Washington, the Board of Trustees, President Prelock and VP for Research Dombrowski for their work to oppose these attacks on higher education.
- Senators are encouraged to share with their units the following statement from the chairs of the Research, Scholarship and the Creative Arts (RSCA) Committee:
The Research Scholarship and Creative Arts Committee of the Faculty Senate is committed to supporting the broad range of academic and intellectual pursuits of which UVM has a long and rich history. To this end we stand firmly in support of the spectrum of activities affected or potentially affected by recent directives. We will be supporting the outstanding job of UVM leadership who are monitoring the situation and following lawsuits and assessing potential impact. Please reach out to us with issues and concerns that you feel may not have already had appropriate visibility or guidance.

For a list of RSCA committee members and the representative for your college visit: <https://www.uvm.edu/facultysenate/research-scholarship-and-creative-arts-committee-rsca>

2. **Approval of Minutes** – The minutes of the January 2025 Senate meeting were approved as written. **Vote: 49 approve**, 0 oppose, 0 abstain. The motion carried.
3. **Call for Nominations** – Thomas Borchert called for final nominations for the following leadership positions on the Faculty Senate. The nomination window opened on January 27th and closed at this meeting.
 - Faculty Senate Vice President, for the 2-year term beginning July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2027. This is open to all eligible faculty.
 - One (1) member at-large seat on the Executive Council to fill a vacant seat. The term will begin immediately and end on June 30, 2026. Elected Senators are eligible.
 - Two (2) member at large seats on the Executive Council for a two-year term beginning July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2027. Elected Senators are eligible.

Candidates nominated for Vice President

- Amy Trubek, CALS (accepted)

Candidates nominated for Member At Large – 2-year term

- Kenneth Allen, CNHS (accepted)

Candidates nominated for Member At Large – 1-year term

- None received to date

President Borchert called for additional nominations from the floor of the Senate. No additional nominations were received. In the case of uncontested elections, for which there is only one nominee, the nominee shall be declared elected by acclamation. Amy Trubek and Kenneth Allen are standing unopposed for election. The formal ballot is waived, and the candidates have been elected by acclamation. The Senate will continue to accept nominations for the two remaining seats for members at large to the Executive Council until they are filled.

4. **Resolution in Memoriam** – Lisa Schnell, Associate Professor of English, College of Arts and Sciences, presented a Resolution in Memoriam for Mary Jane Dickerson, Associate Professor Emerita of English. The resolution is attached to these minutes.
Motion: Lisa Schnell moved to inscribe the resolution in memoriam for in the minutes of the Faculty Senate and have a copy sent to the family.
Vote: 51 approved, 0 opposed, 0 abstained. The motion carried.
5. **Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws** – Thomas Borchert asked for a motion to accept changes to the Constitution and Bylaws made after the Senate approved revisions at the January 27, 2025 meeting. These changes described in the memo attached to the agenda remove language from 7.1.5.3-7.1.5.8 directing committees

who to liaise with and adds language to 6.2 clarifying that revisions to the Constitution and Bylaws are to be reviewed by the Board of Trustees.

Motion: Nicole Phelps moved that the Faculty Senate accepts the proposed amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws as presented at the meeting of February 24, 2025, and recommends to the full Faculty of the University of Vermont that they approve these amendments in an electronic referendum ballot. The motion was seconded. The floor was opened for discussion. No questions or comments were received.

Vote: 46 approve, 0 oppose, 4 abstain. The resolution was approved.

6. **Resolution regarding Test Optional Admissions** – Thomas Borchert shared the following resolution in support of ending the test-optional admissions pilot and making test optional an ongoing admissions practice.

WHEREAS, the Faculty Senate has the authority “To review and establish policy with respect to admissions standards and prerequisites” (Constitution and By-Laws 1.1.d); and

WHEREAS, in spring 2020, in response to the global pandemic disrupting normal processes for secondary students taking standardized tests, UVM waived its standardized testing requirement for students applying to UVM during Fall 2020; and

WHEREAS, the Student Affairs Committee passed a motion to extend the Standardized Testing Requirement Waiver in November 2020, stating, “In part due to the challenges and risks associated with COVID-19, as well as inequity and bias that may be ingrained into standardize tests, the SAC moves to extend the test-optional option for UG admission, for TWO admission cycles, with later consideration of making this change permanent. This would apply to students entering for the fall of 2021 through 2023.”; and

WHEREAS, the University of Vermont’s Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) gathered data about retention and grade point averages for test optional and test sending students in 2021, 2022, and 2023, and this data was shared with the Student Affairs Committee in November 2024 and the Faculty Senate in January 2025 by the Vice Provost of Enrollment Management; and

WHEREAS, the Student Affairs Committee recommends that the Division for Enrollment Management end the pilot in using a test optional admissions practice, and make this an ongoing admissions practice (see attached)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Faculty Senate supports the following recommendations from the Vice Provost for Enrollment management, to end the pilot phase of the test optional admissions practice;

And also to continue to review first-year GPA, retention rates and other outcomes and report to the Student Affairs Committee every three years on this data.

Discussion: no questions or comments were received.

Vote: 45 approve, 0 oppose, 5 abstain. The resolution passed.

7. Update on Responding to Executive Orders – Patricia Prelock, Interim President provided an overview of the response strategy being developed to navigate the information coming from the federal government. The response strategy includes four primary areas:

- *Educating our community* – Educational sessions for the entire campus have been held in-person and broadcast virtually to help build understanding of executive orders and the history of immigration. Faculty experts on campus were utilized to share their knowledge in these areas. More educational sessions are being planned.
- *Communicating and engaging with the community* – Developing a strategic communication plan to include weekly written communication from the President, a website with key information, access to video recordings of the educational sessions, and holding both in-person and online meetings to hear concerns and address questions with our research faculty, governance groups, and unions. The key engagement plan includes developing a task force led by Acting Provost Linda Schadler. There will be a core leadership team and four operations groups with team leads. These groups will include faculty, staff, and administrators. The four areas are:
 - *Research* - examining reductions and delays in funding, shifting funding priorities and recommendations for changes in F&A;
 - *Our Common Ground* – dealing with directives associated with DEI, antisemitism, and issues of curriculum, hiring, admissions, and financial aid;
 - *Immigration* – looking at the impact of travel bans, and visas;
 - *Faculty Affairs* – looking at the impacts on faculty research, career trajectories and RPT.
- *Monitoring the federal actions* - Monitoring the federal actions on a daily basis, and participating in discussions with other universities and colleges, societies and organizations for universities (APLU, ACE, NECHE, NCAA, and others), the VT Attorney General's Office, and our U.S. Representative and Senators. We are tracking lawsuits. VT is involved in six thus far.
- *Scenario Planning* – Michael Schirling, Chief Safety & Compliance Officer, is leading scenario planning including engaging in tabletop activities to prepare for compliance related events or impacts in DEI, immigration, and research.

President Prelock recommended that individuals write to their legislative body to share specific stories about the importance of the work they are doing at UVM and the contribution their research or scholarship makes to contributing to the health and wellbeing of our community, the state and the nation. The floor was opened for questions. Discussion included concerns about changes in F&A, financial impacts, the impact on inclusive excellence efforts, and concerns for foreign students.

8. **Update on Campus Climate Survey and Lived Identity Projects** – Jason Garvey, Executive Director of Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA), and Amer Ahmed, Vice Provost for Inclusive Excellence provided an overview of the Lived Identity Project and the Campus Climate Survey. The presentation slides are attached to these minutes and include the mission and vision of the Lived Identity Project. Jay Garvey stated that having person and community centered data helps stakeholders meet the needs of different constituents in forecasting trends in reporting and dashboard development and in outreach for students and employees. The Lived Identity Project scope includes reviewing all social identity demographic information collection at UVM, including ability, citizenship, faith and spirituality, lived gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status. The current focus is on banner for students, PeopleSoft for employees and all campus wide surveys administered through OIRA. Recommendations for how we can update data practices and policies at UVM across those three systems will be made to the President. The efforts are organized into five different areas: Leadership – advocating for the project; Cultural – humanize data practices; Policy – governing how we collect, use, analyze and dispose of data concerning students and employees; Technical – data modernizations to update or improve system architecture; Functional – how data stewards across campus are using these data. The Campus Climate Survey happens every three years and is currently being deployed. OIRA is responsible for collecting all information. It is completely anonymous and kept strictly confidential. OIRA will only share analysis and reports in aggregate and will only share information germane to the mission and priorities of an office. There will be a dashboard that will be accessible for people to look at the data in aggregate on the OIRA website. The higher the response rate, the more likely there will be usable data. The survey will close on March 21, 2025.

9. **Reports that do not require a Senate vote:**

- a) Change to the University Manual
- b) Change to the 2025 Academic Calendar
- c) Faculty Senate President report to the Board of Trustees

10. **Presidential Search Update** – Ron Lumbra, Chair UVM Board of Trustees, Cynthia Barnhart, Vice Chair UVM Board of Trustees, and Faculty Representatives to the Presidential Search Committee, Debra Leonard, Abigail McGowan, and Eric von Wettberg provided an update on the process and progress in the search for the next President of UVM. Chair Lumbra reported that the committee met with eleven candidates from an original pool of over 30 internal and external candidates. The process is continuing, and he anticipates a decision and a finalist candidate by the end of March. At that time, the governance groups, including the Faculty Senate, Student Government Association, Graduate Student Senate, and Staff Council, will have an opportunity to engage with the finalist candidate. Chair Lumbra and Vice Chair Barnhart expressed gratitude for the alignment between the search committee and the Board of Trustees on both the philosophy on what we are looking for, and on the assessment of

candidates. Abigail McGowan and Debra Leonard reported that the faculty members have had a strong voice in the conversations, and were well listened to, and they thanked Chair Lumbra and Vice Chair Barnhart for operating a very inclusive search that valued a variety of voices and perspectives. The floor was opened for questions. Discussion included the candidates' interest and enthusiasm for UVM as an institution, candidates' concerns and questions around how UVM is positioned financially, the challenges of a small state, lack of large businesses, and candidates' complements on UVM's *Our Common Ground* values, R1 status, and the Men's Soccer Team.

Chair Lumbra announced that his time as Chair of the Board of Trustees is ending, and that Cindy Barnhart will be stepping into the role of chair in March. Chair Lumbra expressed appreciation for Tom Borchert's leadership and stated that Tom's counsel and communication has helped the Board understand the sentiment of faculty.

11. New Business

- Jeremy Barry, Neurological Sciences, shared information about Stand up for Science, March 7, 2025. The rally will take place in Washington, DC and nationwide, because science is for everyone. Contact Jeremy if you are interested in helping organize a local team or local rally.

12. The meeting adjourned at 5:30 PM

**Resolution In Memoriam
Mary Jane Phillips Dickerson
Associate Professor Emerita of English
1937-2024**

**Presented by Mary Lou Kete, Professor of English
February 24, 2025**

Mary Jane Phillips Dickerson, who died peacefully at her home in Jericho Center VT on October 3, 2024, arrived in Vermont in 1966 from the University of North Carolina where she had cemented a lifelong relationship with the work of William Faulkner with a master's degree in English. It was at UNC where she met and married a fellow graduate student, A. Inskip Dickerson. Skip, as he was known by everyone, was a medievalist, and was hired as an assistant professor in the English Department at UVM. Mary Jane began teaching American literature courses in the department, and soon distinguished herself as a tireless and generous colleague, writer, and teacher who, with the humility, kindness, and courage she exuded and that was so much a part of her aliveness, transformed the English department in ways that continue to shape the way the discipline is approached at UVM. During her 34-year career, she served as the director of freshman English, associate director of writing and, in 1996, associate professor of English. An ardent, elegant feminist, and a passionate supporter of civil rights, Mary Jane developed courses in women's autobiography and UVM's first courses in African American literature on the undergraduate and graduate levels. In 1997, she was awarded the George V. Kidder Outstanding Faculty Award and was thrilled to be invited in the years leading up to her retirement to both Japan and South Africa as a visiting scholar.

In 2016, she was inducted as a fellow in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, an honor that is as much an acknowledgement of the career she had at UVM as it is of the long and meaningful retirement she had, a seamless continuation of the vocation she had manifested in her UVM career. She taught regular classes on reading and writing poetry at local libraries and was a writer/faculty member at the New England Young Writers' Conference at Breadloaf. She published two volumes of poetry; served on numerous boards and committees, including the Deborah Rawson Memorial Library in Underhill, Vt., and the Fleming Museum board. She was proud to have cofounded Sundog Poetry, whose mission is to support Vermont poets. She was a beloved, dedicated mentor to many of those poets to the very day she died.

Though a prolific writer, dedicated citizen and friend of the arts, it is as a teacher that Mary Jane made her most indelible mark. She was deeply, genuinely committed to her students--the thousands she taught in classrooms at UVM, and the scores of writers, young and old, she mentored after she left classroom teaching. They remember her, and not just the music of the North Carolina Sandhills that accented her speech. They remember her words, and the words of the writers she introduced them to. In a social media post written after he learned of her passing, a former student remembered Mary Jane telling him that "William Faulkner writes like Michael Jordan plays basketball." And they remember her presence. A colleague of many years, Huck Gutman, paid tribute to Mary Jane with words that capture perfectly this presence, her most compelling pedagogical gift: "It was if she walked in a halo of good feeling towards others, always attentive, always supportive. Students picked up on this, quickly and intuitively. They

responded to her presence, and in later years after they left UVM to the memories of her presence, with a wondrous attachment. That caring, that sensitivity to the lives of others, marked her life and her work.”

For those who were touched by her presence—and there are so many, in so many places – it is nearly impossible to imagine a world without Mary Jane Dickerson in it. Though there's a lot of her that will always be here.

Lived Identity Project and Campus Climate Survey

Jay Garvey, Office of Institutional Research & Assessment

Amer Ahmed, Division of Inclusive Excellence



Lived Identity Project

The mission of the Lived Identity Project is to humanize data infrastructures at the University of Vermont. Our vision is to develop student and employee data infrastructures with policies and practices that promote dignity, confidentiality, and fidelity.

Lived Identity Project

Leadership

Cultural

Policy

Technical

Functional

Campus Climate Survey

The Campus Climate Survey helps UVM understand the perceptions and experiences of our students and employees. It gives us the data needed to make and measure progress.

Overall Response Rates

Unit	# of Responses*	Total Staff/Faculty & Students	Response Rate*
Staff/Faculty Completed	627	5,257	11.9%
Staff/Faculty In Progress	718	5,257	--
Students Completed	570	13,696	4.2%
Students In Progress	1,377	13,696	--

Note: The number for students and staff/faculty completed include those that completed the survey, but did not answer their unit or college affiliation.

**As of February 24th*

Employee Response Rates

Unit	# of Responses*	Total Employees	Response Rate*
Athletics	6	74	8.1%
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences	29	405	7.2%
College of Arts and Sciences	50	570	8.8%
College of Education and Social Services	29	224	12.9%
College of Engineering and Mathematical Sciences	24	401	6.0%
College of Nursing and Health Sciences	22	154	14.3%

**As of February 24th*

Employee Response Rates

Unit	# of Responses*	Total Employees	Response Rate*
Division of Academic Affairs and Student Success	21	43	48.8%
Division of Enrollment Management	35	109	32.1%
Division of Faculty Affairs	4	11	36.4%
Division of Finance and Administration	41	541	7.6%
Division of Inclusive Excellence	11	24	45.8%
Division of Safety and Compliance	19	69	27.5%
Division of Student Affairs	36	179	20.1%

**As of February 24th*

Employee Response Rates

Unit	# of Responses*	Total Employees	Response Rate*
Enterprise Technology Services	20	97	20.6%
Graduate College	4	128**	3.1%
Grossman School of Business	13	59	22.0%
Human Resources	14	38	36.8%
Larner College of Medicine	107	1,517	7.1%
Office of the President	7	41	17.1%
Office of the Provost	19	30	63.3%
Office of the Vice President for Research	14	194	7.2%

**As of February 24th*

**** Includes Graduate Assistants**

Employee Response Rates

Unit	# of Responses*	Total Employees	Response Rate*
Patrick Leahy Honors College	2	10	20%
Professional and Continuing Education	11	49	22.4%
Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources	16	199	8.0%
Strategic Communications	6	38	15.8%
University Libraries	15	70	21.4%
UVM Foundation	2	--	--
Another	28	--	--
Missing	22	--	--

**As of February 24th*

Student Response Rates

College	# of Responses*	Total Students	Response Rate*
CALS	57	1,517	3.8%
CAS	209	4,739	4.4%
CESS	37	1,078	3.4%
CEMS	63	1,579	4.0%
CNHS	79	1,339	5.9%
Grad College	5	172	2.9%
GSB	27	914	3.0%
LCOM	12	628	1.9%
PACE	2	558	0.36%
RSENR	66	1,172	5.6%
Another	3	--	--
Missing	10	--	--

**As of February 24th*