



**Faculty Senate
Minutes
Monday, March 24, 2025
4:00 – 5:30 PM, Waterman Memorial Lounge**

The meeting was called to order by Faculty Senate President Thomas Borchert at 4:03 PM

Senators in Attendance: 60

Absent: 17 Senators: Biomedical & Health Sciences (Allen), Community Development & Applied Economics (Kostell), Counseling, Human Development & Family Science (Maianu), Extension (Hazelrigg), Family Medicine Rep1 (Bamford), Medicine Rep1 (Hagerty), Medicine Rep2 (vacant), Orthopaedics & Rehabilitation (vacant), Pediatrics Rep2 (Todd), Plant Biology (Beckage), Psychiatry Rep1 (Hall), Psychological Science Rep1 (vacant), Radiology Rep1 (vacant), Religion (Morgenstein Fuerst), School of the Arts Rep1 (vacant), Sociology (Kaelber), Surgery Rep 1 (vacant)

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

- The proposed amendments to the Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws were approved by the full faculty in a referendum ballot. The amendments were approved by President and Provost and will now to the Board of Trustees for review and approval.
- The newly hired University President, Marlene Tromp, will be begin later this summer. As part of the hiring process, the Faculty Senate Executive Council met with Dr. Tromp and provided feedback to Chair Ron Lumbra.
- Statement of appreciation for interim President Prelock for leading the University mission forward. Her leadership helped us manage many of the crises of the last four years. She has been an excellent partner for faculty through the Senate and has consistently made space for the Senate leadership and other faculty at various tables when decisions are made.
- Response to events and actions in Washington – As part of their response strategy, Interim President Prelock and Acting Provost Schadler put together four operational response teams: Research, Faculty Affairs, Our Common Ground, and Immigration. The teams consist of faculty members, staff, administrators and others. The Faculty Senate leadership was consulted for recommendations of faculty representatives on these groups. The Faculty Senate Executive Council has decided to include an update from one of these groups as a standing Faculty Senate agenda item for the rest of this year. The Immigration group is on today's

agenda. On Friday, there will be an open forum on the federal actions and next Tuesday at noon there will be a discussion on academic freedom for faculty only in Waterman Memorial Lounge.

- Senators have expressed the desire for the Senate to make a statement on academic freedom. At their March meeting, the Executive Council discussed how the Senate can and should act. It is appropriate for the Senate to reaffirm our commitment to academic freedom and our commitment to inclusive excellence. It is important to be clear what our values are as an academic community, which begins with Our Common Ground. It is also reasonable to be concerned about triggering a crisis for the University. It is important to be thoughtful about who our audience is, our evidence, and our framing in this political moment. Items come to the Faculty Senate agenda from a Standing Committee, the Executive Council, or from a petition signed by 10% of the full membership of the Faculty Senate (140 members), submitted to the Executive Council prior to their monthly meeting (April 14th). A petition should be presented as a single document with the names of the supporting Senate members. It should come as a resolution that the signatories are willing to support.

2. Consent Agenda – The following items were presented as a consent agenda:

- A. Minutes of the February 2025 Faculty Senate Meeting
- B. Changes to Dean's List and Latin Honors – recommendation from Student Affairs Committee
- C. Curricular Affairs
 - a) Minor in Computer Engineering
 - b) Minor in Epidemiology
 - c) CGS Data Analytics for Water Resources
 - d) CGS School Library and Information Science
 - e) MCGS Applied Statistics
 - f) CGS Materials Science and Engineering

Motion: Thomas Borchert stated that the consent agenda came to the Senate moved and seconded by the Executive Council. Nicole Phelps, History Department, requested that item B. *Changes to the Dean's List and Latin Honors* be removed from the consent agenda for discussion.

A vote was called for items A and C.

Vote: 52 approve, 0 oppose, 0 abstain. The motion carried.

Thomas Borchert opened the floor for discussion on item B. **Changes to Dean's List and Latin Honors policies.** Veronika Carter, Registrar, addressed concerns regarding overflow of the percentages and stated that the current process will remain the same. When students meet the GPA, they still qualify, and the percentage may overflow. The percentages were based on analysis of data. The proposed percentages meet standards of rigor and align with peer institutions. The proposed criteria-change in policy:

Dean's List: Status is awarded to full-time undergraduate students whose GPA is 3.7 or higher in the semester in question.

Latin Honors: Top 25% of class in a college/school, divided into the following levels:

- Top 5% of the class is awarded Summa cum laude
- Next 10% of the class is awarded Magna cum laude
- Next 10% of the class is awarded Cum laude

Vote: 47 approve, 1 oppose, 3 abstain. The motion carried.

3. **Resolution in Memoriam** – Kelly Melekis, Associate Professor of Social Work, College of Education and Social Services, presented a Resolution in Memoriam for Phyllis Paolucci-Whitcomb, Professor Emerita of Social Work. The resolution is attached to these minutes.

Motion: Kelly Melekis moved to inscribe the resolution in memoriam for in the minutes of the Faculty Senate and have a copy sent to the family.

Vote: 55 approved, 0 opposed, 0 abstained. The motion carried.

4. **Update on Federal and UVM Matters** – Co-chairs of the Immigration operational response group, Pablo Bose, Professor of Geography and Associate Dean of Research and Graduate Education in CAS, and Jamie McGowan Director of International Partnerships and Programs provided an overview of their work. Since it was charged, the team has been meeting twice per week. They will hold a town-hall style Immigration Information Session: The Evolving U.S. Context on Tuesday, March 25th. The session is open to students, staff and faculty, and will be available by live stream, but will not be recorded due to security and privacy concerns. The session will address how to respond if ICE comes to campus, the context in which a bystander should and should not interact with that official, and the broader context of immigration concerns, including travel bans. Human Resources (HR) is represented on the team and they are reaching out to colleagues who are impacted and who may not be able to attend the session based on work schedule or language barriers. The Office of International Education (OIE) is working directly with international students and faculty with different status. The team has been fielding questions from our community on issues ranging from visa questions, border crossing with a green card, and different kinds of status. Messages from Interim President Prelock have been translated into seven (7) different languages, and individual sessions are being held for groups with a translator.

5. **UVM Cares Overview** – Thomas Borchert stated that this item has been moved to the April agenda.

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

a) Curricular Affairs Committee Report

7. **Food Systems Research Institute** – Polly Ericksen, Director Food Systems Research Center presented an overview of the Food Systems Research Institute proposal. The presentation slides are attached to these minutes. The proposal is for the Food

Systems Research Center, established in 2019 with a Congressionally mandated allocation and currently housed in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS), to become an Institute under the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR). The presentation included a description of the partnership with the USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS), and the vision of the Food Systems Research Institute, including staff, operations, funding, research, and collaborations. Discussion included questions regarding overhead rates, support for graduate students, and clarification about the difference between disciplinary centers (curriculum and/or internship based) and institutes and the formal process created for support and oversight. The Faculty Senate Research, Scholarship & the Creative Arts Committee has reviewed the proposal and will submit a recommendation to be voted at the April Faculty Senate meeting.

8. **Senate Discussion on Future Goals** - Thomas Borchert asked the members to work in small groups to submit advice or guidance for the incoming University President. The advice will be compiled and forwarded in a letter to President Tromp. Thomas Borchert opened the floor for a conversation to give members a space to speak about concerns stemming from federal actions.
9. **New Business** – none at this time.
10. The meeting adjourned at 5:27 PM



**University
of Vermont**

Faculty Senate

**Resolution in Memoriam
Phyllis Paolucci-Whitcomb
Professor Emerita of Social Work
1942-2024**

**Presented by Kelly Melekis
Associate Professor
Department of Social Work
February 24, 2025**

The UVM Department of Social Work is sad to report that a beloved colleague and friend, Dr. Phyllis Paolucci Whitcomb, Emerita Professor of Social Work, passed away on February 7, 2024. Phyllis was born in Keene, NH and grew up in Westminster, VT. The first in her family to go to college, she graduated from Castleton State College in 1965, earned her M.Ed. from the University of Vermont in 1970 and her Ed.D. from Boston University in 1980.

Dr. Paolucci-Whitcomb joined the UVM faculty in 1979 as an Assistant Professor. She served first as a special education faculty member and later as a founding member of the Department of Social Work. She was promoted to Associate Professor with tenure in 1981 and Professor in 1994. Phyllis served as acting chair from 1997 to 1998 and associate director and chair from 2000-2002. Throughout her years at UVM she received multiple awards and became Professor Emerita in 2009. Dr. Paolucci-Whitcomb's research and teaching focused on collaborative consultation models in general and special education, leadership preparation, equity issues, poverty, and the strengths and challenges encountered by foster and adoptive families. A gifted orator, she gave numerous national and international presentations.

Dr. Paolucci-Whitcomb will be remembered for her relational approach to teaching and supervising students, her impactful contributions to the fields of social work and general and special education, and her generous and collaborative approach to working with colleagues. She was renowned among faculty and students alike for the many hours she spent giving detailed feedback to her students. Unknown to most, Phyllis also worked tirelessly with students who needed additional support, be it academic, personal, or financial. Phyllis was beloved for her kindness and care for all around her. She will be deeply missed.

Food Systems Research Institute Proposal

Presentation to Faculty Senate
March 24, 2025

The UVM Food Systems Research Center

- Established in 2019 with a Congressionally Mandated Allocation
- Annual budget of \$5.6M
- Partnership with the USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) provides anchor funds via a cooperative agreement, for the long term
 - Similar to EPSCOR
- ARS leverages UVM facilities but also sets ground rules for the collaboration and provides oversight of the research
 - ARS Food Systems Research Unit (FSRU) housed in the Leahy Building through a lease

Why Food Systems?

- Food is complex.
- Not just agricultural commodities
- It offers amazing opportunities for solutions BUT there are no “silver bullets”



Food Systems research requires:

- Collaborative, multi-disciplinary, problem driven research with concerted coordination
- A safe space for complicated discussions



Vision of the Food Systems Research Institute

To foster a thriving food system fueled by transdisciplinary, people-centered research.

- Create and support collaborative teams, connecting disciplines and communities
- Answer risky questions over a longer time frame
- Produce results that are relevant to users from consumers to policy makers

FSRI Staff

- Director: Polly Ericksen
- Six full time staff:
 - Programs and Operations Manager
 - Strategic Communications Manager
 - Data Scientist
 - Grants Manager
 - Project Coordinator
 - Office Coordinator
- One part time staff:
 - Food Systems Graduate Education & Research Programs Coordinator

Operation of the FSRI

- Offers funding opportunities to UVM faculty and students across disciplines
 - e.g. GRA stipends, postdoctoral fellowships, catalyst grants, co-created projects
- Facilitates collaboration between ARS scientists and UVM faculty, students and facilities
 - e.g. supervision of PhD students; use of UVM research farms; developing a Long- Term Agricultural Research (LTAR) site
- Promotes transdisciplinary food systems research
 - e.g. Food Systems Research summit; Food and Ideas Gathering; Sustainable Metrics Project.

People We Fund



Undergraduate
Researchers



Graduate
Fellows



Postdoctoral
Appointments



Faculty

Projects We Fund



Soil Health
Research &
Extension
Center



Nutrients and
Bioactives Lab



Climate
Kitchen



The Genetics,
Environment and
Management
Project

Food systems research for people and planet

Collaboration with the USDA-ARS



Food Systems Research Summit



The Need for an Institute

- Move to OVPR; relationship with other Institutes
- Support to faculty and students remains the same
- Raises the visibility of FSRI's work
- Allows for broader collaboration across the university
- Relieves CALS of overhead and cost-sharing expenses

Proposed review and oversight



Review through USDA-ARS: Work plan and budget reviewed annually, biweekly meetings between FSRC and FSRU directors, ARS Area Office monthly meetings.



Report submitted to Faculty Senate every 3 to 5 years for Institute Review.



FSRC Director creates faculty advisory group with guidance from Faculty Senate



University of Vermont

Food Systems Research Center