



**Meeting of the Council on Postsecondary Education
Wednesday, May 3, 2023**

**Rhode Island Nursing Education Center
350 Eddy Street
Providence, RI 02908 Room 316
Meeting Minutes**

Chair David Caprio called this meeting to order at 5:36 PM and acknowledged that a quorum was present.

Council on Postsecondary Education members present:

David Caprio, Chair, Council on Postsecondary Education
Dennis Duffy
Thomas Izzo
Michael Mello
Lawrence Purtill
Rachelle Green
Marcy Reyes
Ana Duarte Spencer, enters at 5:38 PM

Council on Postsecondary Education members absent: Jeffery Williams

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

Shannon Gilkey, Ed.D., Commissioner
Ronald Cavallaro, Esq., General Counsel
Anne Marie Coleman, Vice President of Labor Relations
Beth Bailey, Director of Communications
Zachary Saul, Chief Financial Officer
Jill Olson-Crowley, Assistant to the Commissioner, Special Liaison to the Council on Postsecondary Education
Jackie Xiong, Administrative Assistant

Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) participants:

President Meghan Hughes
Rosemary Costigan, Vice President of Academic Affairs
Alix Ogden, Vice President of Administration and External Relations

Richard Sullivan, Vice President of Administration and Finance, and other staff members

Rhode Island College (RIC) participants:

President Jack Warner
Carolynn Masters, Vice President of Academic Affairs
Steven Nedder, Vice President of Administration and Finance
Clark Green, Interim Vice President for College Advancement, and other staff members

1. Acceptance of the Agenda

Chair Caprio asked for a motion to accept the agenda for the meeting of May 3, 2023.

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

VOTED:	THAT	The Council on Postsecondary Education accept the agenda for the meeting on May 3, 2023.
	VOTE:	7 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.
	YEAS:	David Caprio, Dennis Duffy, Rachelle Green, Thomas Izzo, Michael Mello, Lawrence Purtill, and Marcy Reyes.
	NAYS:	0
	ABSTAINS:	0

2. Approval of the Minutes

Chair Caprio called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education approve the minutes of the meeting that took place on March 15, 2023.

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

VOTED:	THAT	The Council on Postsecondary Education approve the minutes of the meeting that took place on March 15, 2023, as presented.
	VOTE:	7 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.
	YEAS:	David Caprio, Dennis Duffy, Rachelle Green, Thomas Izzo, Michael Mello, Lawrence Purtill, and Marcy Reyes.
	NAYS:	0

ABSTAINS: 0

3. Report from the Chair

Chair Caprio provided an update on the Rhode Island College President Search. He stated that earlier this year, the Council on Postsecondary Education outlined a process for selecting the next president of Rhode Island College, which included the formation of a Search Committee. He indicated that the Search Committee will consist of Council Members, Alumni, the President of the Faculty Union, and others, namely, himself, Rachelle Greene Esq., Bishop Jeffrey Williams, Senator Thomas Izzo, Mr. Steve Smith, Judge Kevin McHugh, Mr. Kenneth Gilbert, Dr. Erik Christiansen, Mr. Dennis Souza, and Dr. Val Endress. The Search Committee's charge is to meet with the search firm; review candidates; participate in interviews; and recommend finalists to the Council for consideration. Chair Caprio has also requested that the Rhode Island College Alumni Association and the Rhode Island College Student Government Association sponsor an Advisory Committee that will outline the qualifications needed for the Rhode Island College President, criteria for the job description, and other activities they deem necessary to ensure the Search Committee and Council have the necessary and relevant information needed for its selection of the next President of Rhode Island College.

4. Report from the Commissioner

Chair Caprio asked if there were any questions or comments regarding the Commissioner's report on updates on credentials of value and federal updates. There were no questions. Commissioner Gilkey commented that during the House Finance meeting, the discussion of pathways in higher education or post-secondary nomenclature arose and this will be looked into in the future.

5. Report from the Committee Chairs

A. Finance and Facilities Committee

Chair Dennis Duffy reported that the committee has not met since the last Council meeting and there was no report.

B. Academic Affairs and Student Success Committee

Chair Michael Mello reported that the committee met on April 5, 2023. At that meeting, the committee discussed notices of change and revisions with the colleges as well as the transfer and articulation policy between public institutions of higher education in RI. Chair Mello also said this is a credit to the institutions for evaluating what is working and not working and making revisions.

Chair Caprio asked if there were any questions or comments regarding Chair Mello's report. President Warner commented that by making these changes Rhode Island

College is creating a more dynamic curriculum by evaluating, monitoring, and modifying programs and concentrations to create guided pathways for students.

Council Member Thomas Izzo inquired about the RICs budget and how RIC will utilize funds. President Warner responded that funds will go towards a build-out of existing labs, upgrading and modifying biology labs, hiring new faculty, and investments in the Clarke Science building.

C. Personnel Committee

Chair Rachelle Green reported that the committee last met on March 22, 2023, and again on April 4, 2023. At these meetings, the leadership transition at the Community College of Rhode Island was discussed.

D. Joint Alternate Retirement Plan Committee

Chair Zachary Saul reported that the committee has not met since the last Council meeting and there was no report.

6. Reports from the Presidents

A. Community College of Rhode Island

Chair Caprio asked if there were any questions for President Hughes regarding CCRI's report. Chair Dennis Duffy inquired about CCRI's enrollment for the fall. President Hughes stated that their goal is 1,275 and enrollment for the fall begins now. Council member Dennis Duffy complimented CCRI's successful student acceptance rate. President Hughes shared CCRI's approach to engaging families on Accepted Student's Day.

B. Rhode Island College

Chair Caprio asked if there were any questions or comments for President Warner regarding RIC's report. Council Member Dennis Duffy inquired about Rhode Island College's fall enrollment. President Warner responded that RIC's enrollment is up by 157 students in gross deposits as of May 1st, and predicts a 10% to 15% increase in freshman enrollment for the fall. President Hughes commented on having a great partnership with RIC and the commitment to transfer. President Warner stated summer enrollment is up by 45% and expects a big influx in summer section II because of a contract learning partnership.

Council Member Marcy Reyes inquired about how many students took advantage of the free application day, how effective it was, and whether to bring it back the following academic year.

President Warner confirmed that the free application day was a success and plans to bring it back next year. President Warner shared that the goal is to fill the freshman

pipeline with a target of 5,300 to 5,500 students.

Council Member Dennis Duffy inquired about RIC's balanced budget which was recently highlighted in the newspaper. He indicated that the Council should be informed of such accomplishments before they are reported on in the press. Council Member Duffy also inquired about the source of the 2 million dollars mentioned in the newspaper article. President Warner stated that the 2 million is part of the dedication of existing resources from their computer information science program, existing infrastructure faculty, and other supports that are ongoing funding, as well as hiring faculty and staff.

Chair Caprio asked President Warner what RIC's budget projection was when President Warner first arrived as interim president. President Warner responded that the budget was projected at an 11.6 million deficit a year ago.

Council Member Marcy Reyes inquired about the retention rate at RIC and if there has been any research done to understand why students are not returning. President Warner responded that the college has conducted surveys and exit interviews. and that it appears that due to financial reasons, many students are ineligible to register. President Warner stated that the Hope Scholarship Bill is so significant because it will address the sophomore to junior attrition due to financial reasons. President Warner further explained that due to covid learning loss, students are struggling academically and that RIC is offering remedial courses this summer to prepare students for the fall.

President Hughes shared that during a recent College Board meeting, data was presented that exhibited community colleges saw the steepest decline in enrollment and persistence in retention and that colleges like RIC were next in line.

Commissioner Gilkey commented on affordability and added that other potential life factors also contribute to completion. Commissioner Gilkey further added he believes researching retention rates is potentially something that could be looked into more this summer. Council Member Marcy Reyes commented that she would like to make sure colleges are promoting wrap-around services and make sure it's more expansive across RIC and amongst all demographics.

Council Member Thomas Izzo requested a more robust exercise around finances to coordinate budgets and inquired about the budget for the Cyber Security program at RIC. President Warner stated that RIC's cyber security program is a 2-million-dollar investment within three years. He stated that separating the finances of the center from the institution will allow the revenue streams that they expect to generate in the form of tuition dollars and enrollment.

Commissioner Gilkey commented on the Promise I in-state scholarship program that funds state scholarship programs and dual and concurrent enrollment in the state and agreed to a more collective strategic plan for funding education.

Council Member Marcy Reyes stated the importance of promoting particular

resources that the colleges are offering, such as Rhode Island College's food pantry, in a culturally sensitive manner and inquired if the food pantry was something the students had requested.

President Warner responded that the pantry was what students had wanted but was also mindful of providing other means of providing food support while acknowledging cultural awareness.

7. Discussion Item

A. Discussion on the proposed Amendment to the Council's Adoption of Policies and Regulations Policy.

Chair Caprio introduced the discussion item and called upon General Counsel Ron Cavallaro for context. General Counsel Cavallaro stated that under the existing Policy on the Adoption of Policies and Regulation Policy, an amendment to an existing policy or approval of a new policy needs to be on two Council agendas—first as a discussion item and then as an action item. He stated that with the use of the Council's Committee, there are three required meetings for the approval of amendments or new policies which is not efficient. Under the proposed amendment to the “policy on policies”, items would be discussed at a committee meeting and then be an action item at a following Council meeting. He indicated that for policies that are not assigned to committees, the existing process will continue with the matter addressed first by the Council as a discussion item and then as an action item at the following Council meeting.

Council Member Rachelle Green inquired if there would still be an opportunity to review these at the Council level, and if needed send a matter back to the committees. General Counsel Cavallaro replied yes.

Council Member Michael Mello stated this is a more robust process and that the committee members work more diligently at committee meetings with the institutions, they have more robust discussions and it is efficient. Council Member Dennis Duffy stated that he would not know about the discussion if he was not on the committee. Commissioner Gilkey shared that getting a committee report in advance of a Council meeting would mitigate that concern. He also shared that many policies need to be reviewed.

B. Discussion on the proposed Amendment to the Policy for Articulation and Transfer between Public Institutions of Higher Education in Rhode Island (S-6.0).

Chair Caprio called upon Council Member Michael Mello and Commissioner Gilkey to provide context for the item. Council Member Mello explained the discussion that occurred at the committee meeting regarding the topic. Commissioner Gilkey referred to the memo that was provided in the meeting packets referencing the statute, and explaining the proposed amendment. Council Member Lawrence Purtill stated that it

was a great discussion at the committee and this proposed amendment will be beneficial for students who are graduating from CCRI and will have credits that are automatically applied at RIC. He indicated that this is a good public policy, that will also help enrollment. Council Member Marcy Reyes asked if all general education requirements will be taken at RIC and Council Member Duffy inquired if the general education requirements were comparable between the schools. Commissioner Gilkey stated that all requirements will be accepted, and President Warner shared that the requirements are comparable, but not exact. Council Member Ana Duarte Spencer stated that the amendment of this policy would mitigate one of the barriers for students to transfer. Council Member Duffy inquired about URI transfers. Commissioner Gilkey stated that there is not a policy for that at this time, however, he is happy to work with URI, RIC, and CCRI to establish an agreement.

8. Action Items

- A. Approval of Fielding Graduate University, Santa Barbara, California as a Non-SARA Institution as recommended by the Academic Affairs and Student Success Committee.

Chair Caprio called for a motion that the Council approve the Fielding Graduate University, Santa Barbara, California as a Non-SARA Institution as recommended by the Academic Affairs and Student Success Committee.

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

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education approve the fielding Graduate University, Santa Barbara, California as a Non-SARA Institution as recommended by the Academic Affairs and Student Success Committee.

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

YEAS: David Caprio, Dennis Duffy, Rachelle Green, Thomas Izzo, Michael Mello, Lawrence Purtill, and Marcy Reyes.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

- B. Approval of Southern California University of Health Sciences as a Non-SARA Institution Committee as recommended by the as recommended by the academic Affairs and Student Success Committee.

Chair Caprio called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education approve Southern California University of Health Sciences as a Non-SARA

Institution, as recommended by the Academic Affairs and Student Success Committee.

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

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education approve Southern California University of Health Sciences as a Non-SARA Institution, as recommended by the as recommended by the Academic Affairs and Student Success Committee.

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

YEAS: David Caprio, Dennis Duffy, Rachelle Green, Thomas Izzo, Michael Mello, Lawrence Purtill, and Marcy Reyes.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

C. Approval of Scott Anthony Barber Academy as a Proprietary School as recommended by the Academic Affairs and Student Success Committee.

Chair Caprio called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education approve Scott Anthony Barber Academy as a Proprietary School as recommended by the Academic Affairs and Student Success Committee.

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

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education approve Scott Anthony Barber Academy as a Proprietary School as recommended by the as recommended by the Academic Affairs and Student Success Committee.

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

YEAS: David Caprio, Dennis Duffy, Rachelle Green, Thomas Izzo, Michael Mello, Lawrence Purtill, and Marcy Reyes.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

D. Approval of awarding of degrees

1. Community College of Rhode Island

Chair Caprio 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 2023 semester at the Community College of Rhode Island.

On a motion duly made by Rachelle Green and seconded by Michael Mello, 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 2023 semester at the Community College of Rhode Island.

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

YEAS: David Caprio, Dennis Duffy, Rachelle Green, Thomas Izzo, Michael Mello, Lawrence Purtill, and Marcy Reyes.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

2. Rhode Island College

Chair Caprio 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 2023 semester at Rhode Island College.

On a motion duly made by Rachelle Green and seconded by Michael Mello, 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 2023 semester at Rhode Island College.

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

YEAS: David Caprio, Dennis Duffy, Rachelle Green, Thomas Izzo, Michael Mello, Lawrence Purtill, and Marcy Reyes.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

E. Approval of awarding of tenure

1. Community College of Rhode Island

Chair Caprio called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education approve awarding of Tenure at the Community College of Rhode Island effective July 1, 2023.

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

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education approve the awarding of tenure at the Community College of Rhode Island effective July 1, 2023, to Maura Faulise – English, Julie Gelsomino – Mathematics, Kerri Germano – Allied Health, Katharine Harrison – Biology; Eileen James – English, Alison Kelley – Nursing Rita Koyame-Marsh – Social Sciences, Justin Moniz – Mathematics, Maureen Murray – Business & Professional Studies, Daniel O’Neill – Art, Art History & Design Kimberely St. Jean – English, Kerry St. Pierre - Nursing Kristen Swithers – Biology, Christine Turenus-Bell – Biology, Matthew Ulricksen – Social Sciences Christopher Zoto – Chemistry.

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

YEAS: David Caprio, Dennis Duffy, Rachelle Green Thomas Izzo, Michael Mello, Lawrence Purtill, and Marcy Reyes.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

Vice President Rosemary Costigan commented that this was a special group of individuals.

2. Rhode Island College

Chair Caprio called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education approve awarding of Tenure at Rhode Island College effective July 1, 2023.

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

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education approve awarding of Tenure at Rhode Island College effective July 1, 2023, to Michelle Crossley - Counseling, Educational Leadership, and School Psychology, Tommy Ender - Educational Studies/History, Justin Feeney - Management & Marketing, Natasha Feinberg - Elementary Education, Jennifer Fearon-Lynch - Undergraduate Nursing, Elizabeth Kiesewetter - Physical Sciences Melissa Marcotte - Psychology, Soumyadeep Mukherjee - Health and Physical Education, David Ramirez - Modern Languages, Natalie Rogol - Political Science, Jason Sawyer - Health and Physical Education, Anika Toorie - Biology, Traci Weinstein - Psychology

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

YEAS: David Caprio, Dennis Duffy, Rachelle Green Thomas Izzo, Michael Mello, Lawrence Purtill, and Marcy Reyes.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

Vice President Carolyn Masters thanked the Council and stated this was exceptional work by individuals and it was rewarding to see their commitment to their profession, the college, and students.

9. Executive Session

Chair Caprio called for a motion that the Council 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 Community College of Rhode Island, pursuant to R.I.G.L. §42-46-5(a)(1).

Chair Caprio stated that any individual to be discussed in Item 9C had been notified, in writing, of their right to have this discussion take place in Open Session, and that no objection to proceeding in Executive Session had been received.

On a motion duly made by Michael Mello and seconded by Rachelle Green, 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 Community College of Rhode Island, 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 David Caprio, Dennis Duffy, Rachelle Green Thomas
Izzo, Michael Mello, Lawrence Purtill, and Marcy Reyes.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

The Council entered Executive Session at 7:03 PM.

The Council reconvened in Open Session at 8:30 PM.

Chair Caprio called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education seal the minutes of the Executive Session held on May 3, 2023.

On a motion duly made by Lawrence Purtill and seconded by Rachelle Green, it was:

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education seal the minutes of the Executive Session held on May 3, 2023.

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

YEAS: David Caprio, Dennis Duffy, Rachelle Green Thomas Izzo,
Michael Mello, Lawrence Purtill, and Marcy Reyes.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

10. Additional Action Items

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

Chair Caprio called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education approve the appointment of Dr. Rosemary Costigan as interim president at Community College of Rhode Island, effective September 1, 2023, and authorize the Chair and/or the Commissioner to negotiate and execute any required documents or agreements with Dr. Costigan.

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

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education approve the appointment of Dr. Rosemary Costigan as interim president at Community College of Rhode Island, effective September 1, 2023, and authorize the Chair and/or the Commissioner to negotiate and execute any required documents or agreements with Dr. Costigan.

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

YEAS: David Caprio, Dennis Duffy, Rachelle Green Thomas Izzo,
Michael Mello, Lawrence Purtill, and Marcy Reyes.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

Chair Caprio asked Dr. Costigan to say a few words. Dr. Costigan thanked the Council, her colleagues, and President Hughes for the wonderful mentoring. She stated her journey with CCRI began in 1976, and she has served 25 years as a faculty member, and administrator. She stated that she is honored to lead the college while the presidential search is underway.

11. Next Meeting

Chair Caprio stated that the next meeting of the Council on Postsecondary Education will be announced soon.

12. Adjourn

Chair Caprio called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

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

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary adjourn the meeting of
Wednesday, May 3, 2023.

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

YEAS: David Caprio, Dennis Duffy, Rachelle Green Thomas Izzo,
Michael Mello, Lawrence Purtill, and Marcy Reyes.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

The meeting adjourned at 8:34 PM.