



**Council on Postsecondary Education Meeting
Wednesday, April 21, 2021, 5:30 p.m.**

**PURSUANT TO
GOVERNOR MCKEE'S EXECUTIVE ORDER 20-46,
THIS MEETING WAS HELD REMOTELY.**

MINUTES

Chair Timothy DelGiudice called this remote special meeting to order at 5:32 PM and acknowledged that a quorum was present via the Zoom webinar platform.

Council on Postsecondary Education members present:

Timothy DelGiudice, Chair, Council on Postsecondary Education
Barbara Cottam, Chair, Board of Education
Dennis Duffy
Rachelle Green
Thomas Izzo
Michael Mello
Mackenzie Raimond
Jeffery Williams

Council member absent:

Marianne Monte

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
Susan Mansolillo, Chief Financial Officer
Tammy Warner, Ph.D., Assistant Commissioner, Academic and Student Affairs
Beth Bailey, Director of Communications
Jill Olson-Crowley, Executive Assistant to the Commissioner

Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) participants:

Meghan Hughes, Ph.D., President
Alix Ogden, Associate Vice President, Administration

Rhode Island College (RIC) participants:

Frank Sánchez, Ph.D., President
Clark Greene, Executive Director for Strategic Initiatives, Chief of Staff
Stephen Nedder, Vice President, Administration and Finance
Helen Tate, Provost/Vice President, Academic Affairs

Guests:

Attorney Joe Rodio, Dennis Littky, and Adam Bush

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

Chair DelGiudice announced that during the meeting, the Council will move into Executive Session. At that time, non-Council members will be placed on hold. When the Executive Session ends, the Council will return to the open session and the meeting host will release the hold to allow all other attendees to rejoin the meeting.

1. Acceptance of the Agenda

Chair DelGiudice called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education accept the agenda for the meeting of April 21, 2021.

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

VOTED:	THAT	The Council on Postsecondary Education accepts the agenda for the meeting of April 21, 2021.
	VOTE:	7 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, and Jeffery Williams
	NAYS:	0
	ABSTAINS:	0

2. Approval of the Minutes

Chair DelGiudice called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education approve the minutes of the meeting that took place on March 31, 2021, as presented.

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

VOTED:	THAT	The Council on Postsecondary Education approves the
--------	------	---

minutes of the meeting that took place on March 31, 2021, as presented.

VOTE: 7 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, 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.

No report.

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

No report.

4. Report from the Commissioner

Commissioner Gilkey provided a COVID update. He shared that there will be onsite vaccination clinics at both the Community College of Rhode Island and Rhode Island College for students, faculty, and staff to receive their vaccines. The Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner (OPC) will furthermore work with the Rhode Island Department of Health and all of the institutions to develop a state policy on student vaccination for fall 2021.

Commissioner Gilkey reported that with the strategic emphasis on equitable attainment and alignment with Rhode Island's economy, OPC started meeting with many local leaders across the state, intending to connect with all 39 communities. The goal is to begin long-term relationships with communities, to ensure that there is equitable attainment, and that the needs of our employers across the state are being met.

OPC also identified moving the institutions forward by ensuring that Rhode Islanders have a seamless pathway from the community college to a four-year degree, by continuing to align efforts with the Rhode Island Department of Education to focus on smooth transitions from K - 12 into post-secondary, and by helping Rhode Islanders

understand the importance of the connection between post-secondary and attainment, the workforce, and the economy.

OPC has secured a long-term weekly commitment with NBC 10 education reporter, Ashley Cullinane, to talk about higher education. The segments being taped will air three times a week during the 6 PM broadcast. Getting information to local Rhode islanders to ensure that they understand the value of higher education and what our institutions have to offer, is a priority.

Providence Business News has announced that OPC Director, Amy Grzybowski, has been named as one of Rhode Island's Women to Watch, noting her work over the past year at the Westerly Education Center, Woonsocket Education Center and overseeing Higher Education's response to COVID while serving as the Interim Executive Director of the Governor's Workforce Investment Board.

Commissioner Gilkey reported that there is an updated list of signature authority. OPC is responsible for updating the signature authority list and for bringing notice to the Council anytime changes have been made to the list of individuals with signing authority at the Community College of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College, or The Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner. The list has been updated to reflect a personnel change of the new Commissioner at OPC.

The Commissioner shared that a notice was received regarding a new program at Rhode Island College. They have established a new minor in Web Development. Since the establishment of this program is within the role and scope of Rhode Island College, council approval is not required.

5. Report from the Presidents

A. The Community College of Rhode Island

President Meghan Hughes shared updates on the plan for returning to campus. The Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) anticipates a phased return of employees to coincide with the start of the college's summer session and will continue to scale up throughout the summer. COVID precautions, including mask-wearing, social distancing, utilizing virtual meeting platforms, limiting interaction with others, and frequent hand washing and use of hand sanitizer will continue to be employed.

CCRI's college enrollment for summer 2021 includes two summer sessions to be held on May 24 – July 2 and July 6 – August 16. Registration for both sessions opened on April 5th. As of April 20th, 2,803 students are registered for summer for a total of 16,790 credits. The prior year data, to which to compare, is not yet available because the opening of summer registration was delayed last year due to COVID. CCRI expects approximately 30% of summer courses to be held in-person, spread out across the four campuses, with an emphasis on health sciences, lab sciences, and high enrolled courses in each department.

CCRI's fall 2021 registration opened on April 12th. Applications for new students – a leading indicator of fall enrollment – is down 24% as compared to 2020. To counter the decline CCRI is planning on hosting multiple information sessions weekly targeting potential Promise Students, increasing scholarships and institutional grants, and building deeper partnerships with the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE), OPC, and Providence Public Schools (PPSD). The goal is to identify and connect with potential students, particularly those eligible for COVID scholarships as well as strategically segmenting audiences to deliver targeted messaging across multiple advertising platforms.

CCRI's Commencement for 2021 will be a special "Virtual Commencement" for graduates and their families, which will include many elements of a traditional commencement. The ceremony will be held at the Knight Campus from April 19–24. It will be filmed to create a video that will go live on Friday, May 21st for graduates and their families. A formal invitation to the Virtual Commencement will be shared in the coming weeks.

CCRI's 5th annual Raising Opportunities virtual benefit will be held Thursday, May 20th, from 6:00 - 6:30 pm. All proceeds will support the CCRI Foundation's endowed Comeback Scholarship for working adults to return to CCRI to continue their postsecondary education.

CCRI's Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Council has been working in a very intentional manner for the past year in the areas of Brand and Visibility, Strategy and Structure, Programming, and Metrics on how to measure the progress of the college's identified DEI initiatives.

CCRI has launched a strategic planning process that will result in the development of the college's 2022–2025 strategic plan. This plan will guide the college over the next three years, building on accomplishments while ensuring the college is well poised for continued improvement in the years to come.

In December, the college community authorized the formation of a Faculty Senate at CCRI. The Faculty Senate is comprised of members of the faculty from the college's various academic disciplines. Senators serve on standing Sub-Committees, along with Ex-officio members of the college community.

The college recently announced the appointment of campus leadership positions on the Flanagan, Liston, and Newport campuses. These positions are important for supporting effective communication; building community with students, each other, and the local community; and advancing commitment to creating a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive college.

CCRI's Phi Theta Kappa chapter, Pi Omicron, had strong showings at both the PTK regional and international competitions. Individuals and teams earned 11 awards between the two competitions, both of which were held virtually this year due to the pandemic. PTK is the national honor society for two-year colleges with more than 250,000 members nationwide, providing opportunities for students to grow as scholars.

B. Rhode Island College

President Frank Sánchez shared that Rhode Island College (RIC) will host a combination of in-person and virtual commencement ceremonies. They are taking every precaution with the in-person ceremonies. There will be six (6) touchless in-person graduation ceremonies over 4 days, May 13 - 16, 2021. The ceremonies were modeled after Patterson College's successful touchless graduation held in 2020. They are confident that they can proceed safely and will continue to follow RIDOH guidance. The ceremonies are for graduates only, no guests will be allowed, and they will be live-streamed. Every ceremony is limited to 250 - 300 persons.

For summer 2021, RIC essential staff will be on campus as there is some preparation for the fall with grounds and buildings. There will be some in-person classes, however, classes are predominantly remote. The library and dining center will be open. There will also be a handful of students in the dorms. Athletics will not start until the fall. The school will continue with testing and tracking for COVID, but on a smaller scale. RIC will not be hosting any major events, although it is likely that there will be sports camps.

RIC will look to OPC and DOA for guidance at the point on continued allowance of work-from-home arrangements. They will also review testing requirements with RIDOH.

For fall 2021, the goal is to provide students with the full college experience at RIC, and if allowed, they will be fully open. They are in process of updating the RIDOH approved fall 2020 opening plan. RIC was successful with keeping the rate of infections low mostly because they were predominately remote, but also because they excelled at executing the right measures at the right time to protect their community. They do not know what COVID will hold for the fall, but they will do the best they can to protect their community and provide the best experience for students.

6. Discussion Items

A. Discussion of the GEER Public Higher Education Sub Grant Opportunity through RIOPC

Commissioner Gilkey shared that under the governor's emergency education relief (GEER), The Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner (OPC) was awarded resources to support higher education educational services. GEER funding supports institutional efforts that address COVID's impact on enrollment and other focus areas that are outlined in the Governor's award memo. OPC received a proposal from Rhode Island College (RIC) that focuses on these types of educational services.

President Sánchez thanked Commissioner Gilkey and asked Provost Tate to speak about the GEER proposal. Provost Tate indicated that that the focus of the proposal is capacity and infrastructure building that will help serve students better.

The proposal has four (4) parts: **Market Analysis, Update to RIC’s Learning Management System, Support and Professional Development** (four key areas that will propel work already underway at RIC which includes articulation working groups, revising general education to be learning outcomes-based, transfer of general education and prior learning assessments - coming soon, a proposed bachelor of professional studies for the adult degree population), and **Marketing the Program**.

Senator Izzo commented that the proposal sounded comprehensive and timely, and shared that he does wonder about liberal arts education, especially given the focus on attainment. Provost Tate responded that with the market analysis data RIC will be able to track those degree programs that don't necessarily have the title of a job in the major.

7. Action Items

A. Approval of the awarding of degrees

1. Chairman DelGiudice called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education approve the awarding of undergraduate and graduate degrees, diplomas, and certificates to the candidates who will have completed their requirements at the conclusion of the Spring 2021 semester at the Community College of Rhode Island.

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

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education approves the awarding of undergraduate and graduate degrees, diplomas, and certificates to the candidates who will have completed their requirements at the conclusion of the Spring 2021 semester at the Community College of Rhode Island.

VOTE: 7 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, and Jeffery Williams.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

2. Chairman DelGiudice called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education approve the awarding of undergraduate and graduate degrees, diplomas, and certificates to the candidates who will have completed their

requirements at the conclusion of the Spring 2021 semester at Rhode Island College.

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

VOTED:	THAT	The Council on Postsecondary Education approves the awarding of undergraduate and graduate degrees, diplomas, and certificates to the candidates who will have completed their requirements at the conclusion of the Spring 2021 semester at Rhode Island College.
	VOTE:	7 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, and Jeffery Williams.
	NAYS:	0
	ABSTAINS:	0

B. Approval of the Awarding of a Posthumous Degree

Chair DelGiudice called for a motion that the council on Postsecondary Education approve the awarding of a Posthumous Degree to Mr. Lucas Verardo, to recognize and commemorate his achievement as an undergraduate student enrolled at the time of his passing. Mr. Lucas Verardo, who sadly passed in March, was within three courses from the completion of his B.A. in Anthropology, met all other eligibility requirements, and was scheduled to graduate this May.

On a motion duly made by Thomas Izzo and seconded by Dennis Duffy, it was:

VOTED:	THAT	The Council on Postsecondary Education approves the awarding of a Posthumous Degree to Lucas Verardo, at the conclusion of the Spring 2021 semester at Rhode Island College.
	VOTE:	7 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, and Jeffery Williams.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

C. Approval of the Awarding of Faculty Tenure

1. Chair DelGiudice called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education approve the awarding of faculty tenure at the Community College of Rhode Island to: Jana Knibb, Social Sciences; Basile Panoutsopoulos, Physics and Engineering; Marilyn Salvatore, Performing Arts; Timothy Stewart, English; Tara Swift, Dental Health.

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 The Community College of Rhode Island, effective July 1, 2021, as presented.

VOTE: 7 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, and Jeffery Williams.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

2. Chair DelGiudice called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education approve the awarding of faculty tenure at Rhode Island College to: Deryl Bissonnette, Adams Library; Todd Borgerding, Music, Theater and Dance; Bethany Coia Undergraduate Nursing; Jenlyn Furey, Counseling, Educational Leadership, and School Psychology; Dragan Gill, Adams Library; Deborah Kutenplon, Undergraduate Nursing; Qian Liu, Computer Science; Tamara Nopper, Sociology; Sankeerth Rampa, Management and Marketing; Carrie Shippers, English; Susan Weiss, Accounting

On a motion duly made by Michael Mello and seconded by Thomas Izzo, it was

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education approves the awarding of faculty tenure at Rhode Island College, effective July 1, 2021, as presented.

VOTE: 7 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, and Jeffery Williams.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

D. Approval of Proposed amendments to the Council's title IX Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures

On a motion duly made by Michael Mello and seconded by Dennis Duffy it was:

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education approves the Proposed amendments to the Council's title IX Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures

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

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

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 1 Jeffery Williams (was not present for discussion)

E. Approval of the application from College Unbound to operate as an institution of Higher Education in the State of Rhode Island

Chairman DelGiudice acknowledged College Unbound (CU) President, Dennis Littky. President Littky shared that during the evaluation process College Unbound was viewed as a community-based organization and a college and that they are very proud of that. He also shared that in fall 2021, they will have their largest graduation ceremony with 23 graduates.

College Unbound Vice President of Academic Affairs, and Provost, Adam Bush shared that CU has a 94% degree completion rate for the first cohort of students that began in spring 2016. The retention rate has remained consistent at 84%. Provost Bush shared that their program begins with the student and they have a 100% response rate from alumni for a survey conducted this fall. The results were: 93% of

alumni reported their CU project had demonstrated a positive impact on their life, workplace, and organization. 17% of alumni have been accepted into graduate programs throughout the state. 97% reported they're more marketable. 90% drive change in the organization where they are employed. 75% report that they are unlikely to have completed their degree at any other institution.

On a motion duly made by Jeffery Williams and seconded by Dennis Duffy it was:

VOTED:	THAT	The Council on Postsecondary Education approves the application from College Unbound to operate as an institution of Higher Education in the State of Rhode Island.
	VOTE:	7 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, and Jeffery Williams.
	NAYS:	0
	ABSTAINS:	0

F. Approval of a Position Upgrade at CCRI: Assistant Director – Talent Acquisition Specialist from grade 1- to grade 11.

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

VOTED:	THAT	The Council on Postsecondary Education approve a position upgrade at CCRI: Assistant Director – Talent Acquisition Specialist from grade 1 – to grade 11
	VOTE	7 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, and Jeffery Williams.
	NAYS:	0
	ABSTAINS:	0

8. Executive Session

Chair DelGiudice advised attendees that they would be placed on hold for the duration of tonight's Executive Session; the hold will be released once the Council is back in Open Session.

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

- A. Discussion regarding potential litigation, and pending litigation- Howard Union of Teachers, Local 1171 et al. v. R.I. Department of Education et al. (Superior Court, Providence, SC.), pursuant to R.I.G.L. §42-46-5(a)(2).
- B. Discussion regarding collective bargaining – all bargaining units, pursuant to R.I.G.L. §42-46-5(a)(2).
- C. Discussion regarding the acquisition or lease of real property for public purposes, or the disposition of publically held property, pursuant to R.I.G.L. §42-46-5(a)(5)

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

VOTED:	THAT	The Council on Postsecondary Education enter into Executive Session for the following items: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Discussion regarding potential litigation, and pending litigation- <u>Howard Union of Teachers, Local 1171 et al. v. R.I. Department of Education et al. (Superior Court, Providence, SC.)</u>, pursuant to R.I.G.L. §42-46-5(a)(2).b. Discussion regarding collective bargaining – all bargaining units, pursuant to R.I.G.L. §42-46-5(a)(2).c. Discussion regarding the acquisition or lease of real property for public purposes, or the disposition of publically held property, pursuant to R.I.G.L. §42-46-5(a)(5).
	VOTE:	7 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, and Jeffery Williams

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

The Council entered Executive Session at 7:09 p.m. Virtual public access was paused.

The Council reconvened in Open Session at 8:12 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 is now 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 April 21, 2021.

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

VOTED:	THAT	The Council on Postsecondary Education seal the minutes of the Executive Session held on April 21, 2021.
	VOTE:	7 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.
	YEAS:	Timothy DelGiudice, Barbara Cotham, Dennis Duffy, Rachelle Green, Thomas Izzo, Michael Mello, and Jeffery Williams.
	NAYS:	0
	ABSTAINS:	0

9. Upcoming Meetings

The next meeting of the Council on Postsecondary Education will be **Wednesday, June 23, 2021 (5:30 pm)**

Remaining 2021 Meetings

July 21, 2021	October 13, 2021
September 15, 2021	December 8, 2021

10. Adjourn

Chair DelGiudice called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

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

Rhode Island Council on Postsecondary Education
April 21, 2021 remote meeting minutes

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education adjourn the meeting of April 21, 2021.

VOTE: 7 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

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

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.