



**Council on Postsecondary Education Special Meeting
Tuesday, June 8, 2021, 4:30 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 4:35 p.m. 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
Marianne Monte

Council members absent:

Mackenzie Raimond
Jeffery Williams

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

Shannon Gilkey, Commissioner
Ronald Cavallaro, Esq., General Counsel
Anne Marie Coleman, Director of Labor Relations
Tammy Warner, Ph.D., Assistant Commissioner, Academic and Student Affairs
Susan Mansolillo, Chief Financial Officer
Amy Grzybowski, Director of Workforce Development
Beth Bailey, Director of Communications
Catherine McConnell, Director of Strategic Initiatives
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 for Administration

Rhode Island College (RIC) participants:

Frank Sánchez, Ph.D., President
Clark Greene, Executive Director for Strategic Initiatives, Chief of Staff
Marie Wilks, Director of Student Health Services

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.

1. Acceptance of the Agenda

Chair DelGiudice called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education accept the agenda for the special meeting of June 8, 2021.

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

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education accepts the agenda for the special meeting of June 8, 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 Marianne Monte

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

2. Discussion Item

Chairman DelGiudice introduced Amy Grzybowski, Executive Director – Rhode Island Higher Education and Industry Center(s) and Policy Director for Workforce Development with the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner (OPC) who has been leading Higher Education’s response to the pandemic, to lead the discussion regarding the proposed Vaccination Policy and its implementation. Chairman DelGiudice stated that all council policies are discussed at one meeting and voted on at the following scheduled meeting.

Amy Grzybowski stated that the Council is being asked to consider the Vaccination Policy that requires students to be vaccinated before in-person learning. She shared that within the policy, there are two exemptions for students; those with recognized medical exemptions and/or recognized religious accommodations. She also stated that in alignment with the majority of Rhode Island’s other public and private higher education institutions, at this time, this policy does not require faculty or staff to be vaccinated however, it is strongly encouraged.

Amy stated that Rhode Island College completed an informal survey and of the respondents over 90% of the faculty and staff committed to becoming vaccinated by the fall semester. She also shared that there are presently over 470 colleges across the country that are requiring vaccination for students. In Rhode Island, six of the institutions of higher education have already stated they will require vaccination. The goal is that this policy will create a safer environment for our students, faculty, and staff. Amy then asked both the Community College of Rhode Island and Rhode Island College to present their implementation plans.

Alix Ogden, Associate Vice President for Administration at the Community College of Rhode Island, shared the main elements of CCRI's plan which includes communication, monitoring, and enforcement. There are ongoing emails and social media campaigns as well as CC Weekly, which is a normal weekly communication for students. This is also being integrated into admissions. CCRI is gathering data on the summer of 2021 students and will continue to monitor both enrolled and prospective students throughout the summer as well as have a targeted follow-up with students in the enrollment process. Students who are not able to produce proof of vaccination will be moved to remote learning classes. Two vaccination clinics were held in April and May on campus and four more are scheduled in Warwick and three in Providence throughout the summer.

Marie Wilks, Director of Student Health Services at Rhode Island College shared that they conducted vaccination clinics in May and June that provided vaccines to 111 students in the RIC community. She shared that there are also Pfizer vaccine clinics booked for June 29 and July 20. In April RIC conducted a student focus group and they supported a vaccine mandate for students, and the faculty union leaders also supported the vaccine mandate as well. RIC is prepared to provide rapid testing on campus through BinaxNOW and PCR testing through East Side Clinical Laboratories. RIC's fall plans include limiting residential students on campus to 600 from 1,100 available rooms. In preparation for the fall return, the message will be sent out in late June to students to get signed up for vaccination clinics.

Chair DelGuidice shared that he received a letter from the faculty at RIC that supported the policy. He thanked the faculty for reaching out with that communication.

Dennis Duffy shared that to avoid confusion it would be beneficial to have a consistent set of policies for the public institutions and recommended reviewing URI's website which already includes the specific procedures for the school's policy.

Chair DelGuidice shared that he had heard from Bishop Williams, who was unable to attend the meeting, and he wanted to share a couple of points from his perspective. He wanted to share that he is fully vaccinated and he encourages everybody, students, faculty, and staff to all get vaccinated as quickly as possible. Bishop Williams also shared that he has a concern about using the term mandatory, particularly now that vaccinations are being required with students, but not required, at this time, of faculty and staff. He also asked if there is any room in the policy for any type of conscientious objector. Amy Grzybowski replied that it was considered in the discussions with the two institutions, but the Department of Health has issued guidance in that they support requiring a mandatory vaccine. The thought was why to have the requirement if you're going to allow folks to opt-out.

3. 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 item:

2a. Discussion regarding President Hughes' contract renewal, pursuant to R.I.G.L. 42-46-5(a)(1)

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

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education enter into Executive Session for the following items:

Discussion regarding President Hughes' contract renewal, 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: Timothy DelGiudice, Barbara Cottam, Dennis Duffy, Rachelle Green, Thomas Izzo, Michael Mello, and Marianne Monte

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

Chair DelGiudice shared that President Hughes has been notified that she has a right to have this discussion take place in an Open Session and that no objection to proceeding in an Executive Session was received. The Council entered Executive Session at 4:54 p.m. Virtual public access was paused.

The Council reconvened in Open Session at 5:52 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 June 8, 2021

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 June 8, 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 Marianne Monte.
	NAYS:	0
	ABSTAINS:	0

4. Additional Action Item

- a. Approval of, and authorization of the Chair regarding, the renewal of President Hughes' employment contract.

Chair DelGiudice called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education approves the renewal of President Hughes' employment contract, and authorizes its Chair to negotiate and execute the new contract on behalf of the Council, as discussed in Executive Session.

Rachelle Green, who made the motion, explained that in the process of reviewing President Hughes' contract, conversations occurred with a cross-section of business leaders, students, staff and faculty, and even people who have left the college to understand and analyze President Hughes' leadership. Through those discussions, there was consistent enthusiastic support shared about President Hughes and her leadership team, and that includes interviewing and talking to people that were not solicited by anyone at CCRI. She stated that she consistently heard that President Hughes is mission-driven and mission-focused and that is also seen in the data and the dramatic improvements made at CCRI during her leadership. What was captured is that she is a transformational innovative leader who is nationally recognized.

Marianne Monte, who seconded the motion, shared that through the review process she also interviewed a cross-sectional group of individuals and there was a resounding sense of support for President Hughes' leadership. The term change agent was used several times about President Hughes. She stated that she would look for President Hughes to continue to reach out to those constituencies and beyond in a shared leadership structure with her leadership team.

Michael Mello, who also seconded the motion, indicated that he was looking forward to three more years of President Hughes' continued leadership and continued advancement at CCRI.

Dennis Duffy, who also seconded the motion, said he fully supported the renewal of President Hughes' contract and that she has done an admirable job during difficult times. He stated that there have been very good results with the outcome of students and that this is a time that we need continuity and he looks forward to continuing the progress.

Barbara Cottam, who also seconded the motion, shared that she credits President Hughes for CCRI's advancement during her term, and noted that the success is shared with the administration and the faculty for making tremendous progress on behalf of the students. She stated that this is recognized through what others say, and President Hughes should very proudly take credit for leading the charge to the two-year college of the year designation, a year ago, as well as several other successes during her tenure that have transformed the college. She is looking forward to her continued shared leadership with other administrators and faculty at CCRI.

Chair DelGiudice stated that with both local and national recognition due to her transformational leadership, he is enthused to support the renewal of President Hughes' contract.

On a motion duly made by Rachelle Green and seconded by Marianne Monte, Michael Mello, Dennis Duffy, and Barbara Cottam, it was:

VOTED:	THAT	The Council on Postsecondary Education approves the renewal of President Hughes' employment contract and authorizes its Chair to negotiate and execute the new contract on behalf of the Council, as discussed in Executive Session.
	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 Marianne Monte.
	NAYS:	0
	ABSTAINS:	0

5. Upcoming Meetings

Chairman DelGiudice announced that the next meeting of the Council on Postsecondary Education will be Wednesday, June 23, 2021, at 5:30 pm.

<u>Remaining 2021 Meetings</u>	
July 21, 2021	September 15, 2021
October 13, 2021	December 8, 2021

6. Adjourn

Chair DelGiudice called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Rhode Island Council on Postsecondary Education
June 8, 2021 remote special minutes

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

VOTED:	THAT	The Council on Postsecondary Education adjourn The meeting of June 8, 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 Marianne Monte
	NAYS:	0
	ABSTAINS:	0

The meeting adjourned at 6:03 PM