



**Meeting of the Council on Postsecondary Education  
Wednesday, September 15, 2021, 5:30 p.m.  
Rhode Island College  
Roberts Hall Auditorium  
600 Mt. Pleasant Avenue Providence, RI 02908**

**Meeting Minutes**

Chair Timothy DelGiudice called this meeting to order at 5:43 PM and acknowledged that a quorum was present and that Rachelle Green would be arriving late.

Council on Postsecondary Education members present:

Timothy DelGiudice, Chair, Council on Postsecondary Education  
Barbara Cottam, Chair, Board of Education  
Dennis Duffy  
Rachelle Green arrived at 5:50 PM.  
Thomas Izzo  
Michael Mello  
Mackenzie Raimond

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  
Tammy Warner, Ph.D., Assistant Commissioner, Academic and Student Affairs  
Beth Bailey, Director of Communications  
Catherine McConnell, Director of Strategic Initiatives  
Jill Olson-Crowley, Assistant to the Commissioner

Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) participants:

Meghan Hughes, Ph.D., President

Rhode Island College (RIC) participants:

Frank Sánchez, Ph.D., President

**1. Acceptance of the Agenda**

Chair DelGiudice called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education accept the agenda for the meeting of September 15, 2021.

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

VOTED:	THAT	The Council on Postsecondary Education accept the agenda for the meeting of September 15, 2021.
	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:	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 July 19, 2021, as presented.

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

VOTED:	THAT	The Council on Postsecondary Education approve the minutes of the special meeting that took place on July 19, 2021, as presented.
	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:	0

Chair DelGiudice called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education approve the minutes of the special meeting that took place on September 9, 2021, as presented.

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

VOTED:	THAT	The Council on Postsecondary Education approve the minutes of the special meeting that took place on
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September 9, 2021, as presented.

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: 0

### **3. Open Forum**

Chair DelGiudice noted that individuals interested in providing public comment were encouraged to submit written comments to the Council, and indicated that no written comments were submitted.

Chair DelGiudice stated that no one signed up to speak during the Open Forum.

### **4. Reports from the Chairs**

#### **A. Council on Postsecondary Education – Updates and issues affecting local and national higher education.**

Chair DelGiudice stated that under Article IV of the Council's By-Laws, which sets out the authority of the Council Chair to establish standing committees to carry on the work of the council, three committees have been re-established to focus on the critical areas of Personnel, Finance and Facilities, and Academic Affairs and Student Success. Chair DelGiudice noted that the Council and its predecessors have established and used committees to assist them going back at least to the early 1980s.

All committees have held their initial meetings and are developing a working cadence to support the detailed work of the Council. The committees' substantive work has begun, and their recommendations will be coming to the full Council for approval, starting with the Council on Postsecondary Education meeting on October 13, 2021.

Per our policy, the Chair of the Council is an Ex-officio voting member of each committee. There is also an OPC staff member assigned to coordinate and support the committees' work. The expectation is that this committee structure will allow for more focused and more in-depth attention to the details of the work occurring across the system that is within the Council's supervisory authority, allowing for more time at Council meetings to be focused on issues and opportunities that will advance public postsecondary education for Rhode Island. The committee chair reserves the right to redirect any item to the full Council for discussion and any Council member can request an item be pulled out of the consent agenda and considered independently by the Council.

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

Barbara Cottam reported the state’s focus on preparedness for postsecondary work, particularly with math, is a priority. 75% of local education agencies have adopted high-quality curriculum, which will be implemented throughout the state. All Providence K-8 schools have adopted the same high-quality curriculum.

RIDE received a great honor in being one of eleven grantees of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Balance the Equation Grant. There were over 400 applicants and RIDE was the only government agency that was selected.

**5. Report from the Commissioner**

Commissioner Gilkey shared that the second meeting of the Advisory Committee was taking place on September 24, 2021. The meeting is focused on equitable outcomes.

The Commissioner shared some upcoming priorities include the work of the seamless transfer workgroup that will be presenting to the Academic Affairs and Student Success Committee in October. OPC is also working closely with RIDE on how we support the transition between high school and postsecondary education. OPC was recently selected to join the SHEEO Communities of Practice focused on aligning K-12 and data systems to better inform student transition and success.

**6. Reports from the Presidents**

**A. Community College of Rhode Island**

President Hughes stated that it has been two weeks since students came back to campus. To return to campus, students had to have vaccinations or approved medical or religious exemptions. Students with exceptions had to show proof of negatives tests and screen daily. There is testing provided on campus, both rapid and PCR. There are systems in place for contract tracing and staff dedicated to this as it is key to slowing the spread.

President Hughes stated that enrollment is down and further decreases are expected as drop class, payment due dates, and vaccination non-compliance will have a negative impact on the decreased enrollment numbers. It is anticipated that enrollment will be 16% down over last year.

GEERS funding updates included that CCRI has already allocated \$3.75M for additional student support, including debt forgiveness, boot-camp support, and vaccination awareness. It is believed that this will reduce barriers for students to return, prepare them for academic success, and promote a safe learning environment.

President Hughes shared that the staff has worked tirelessly since the beginning of the pandemic and she is both proud and grateful for their work. She also noted that going to college during a pandemic is hard and gave praise to the health services team and their dedication.

**B. Rhode Island College**

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President Sanchez shared that Rhode Island College received a one million dollar grant through the US Department of Health and Human Services to support mental health service over the next five (5) years. This will impact Master of Social Work students interning across the district. President Hughes gave thanks to the Dean of Social Work. He shared that the social work master's program at RIC is ranked in the top 100 out of over 600 institutions and is one of only three (3) colleges in New England to have made the top ten (10).

President Sanchez stated that with the students back on campus there is high energy. Second-year students are helping the freshman with their social and academic transition to campus. There has been a lot of preparation for academic classes, especially with safety protocols. An assumption was made last spring that the fall return would not be impacted and therefore they only offered some online classes. Things changed due to the delta variant. Presently 76% of classes are in person or hybrid and 24% are online. He thanked the faculty, staff, and students for their hard work and dedication during this unprecedented time.

He stated that once the vaccination policy is approved that staff will have to mask and test if they have approved exemptions. Any positive case will be referred to the contact tracing team and any noncompliance will be referred to human resources.

Enrollment is currently down 9.6%, which is in line with the national decline. Transfer and graduate students are slightly up. New undergraduate enrollment is down 13.8%. Overall there is an expected decline of 10%.

GEERS funding has been spread to address the school's needs. Priorities include Emsi Analyst - a web-based software product used for the analysis of industry, occupation, and education data, as well as job postings and workforce profile data; Hiring for the vacant Learning Management System Manager to review recommendations and make a proposal for a new LSM; General Education Revision Support; Articulation Working Group and Marketing.

Senator Izzo mentioned an article that was recently published in Go Local Providence about the Banister Gallery that recognized the fine work of the faculty at Rhode Island College with their focus on the arts, value, and the quality it adds to our lives as a community. Mackenzie Raimond shared that coming back to Rhode Island College, in person, has been great for all students. She acknowledged and thanked the faculty and staff for their hard work and dedication that went into making things great for all students.

## **7. Discussion Item**

### **A. Proposed amendment to Council's Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures - section XXIII (F).**

Chair DelGiudice framed why this amendment was being discussed then asked General Counsel Ronald Cavallaro to share the details. General Counsel Cavallaro stated that on August 24, 2021, the Federal District Court in Massachusetts vacated one part of the 2020 Title IX regulations (live hearing requirement for the Title IX grievance process at postsecondary institutions only). Section XXIII(F) of the RIOPC policy is based upon that part of the regulation, and the proposed amendment addresses this issue. Chair DelGiudice recognized Attorney Kristine Zayko who joined the CPE meeting remotely for her work with General Counsel Cavallaro for the proposed language change. Attorney Zayko shared that the proposed language was based on what is being

used by other agencies that also need similar policy amendments.

There was some discussion with Council members and a request to further fine-tune the language of the proposed amendment to Council's Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures - section XXIII (F). Chair DelGiudice asked General Counsel Cavallaro to work on a revised amendment and determine when this would be ready for a CPE vote.

## **8. Action Items**

### **A. Approval of the Third Amendment to the Lease between the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner/Council on Postsecondary Education and the Royce Family Fund, Inc. for the Westerly Education Center.**

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

VOTED:	THAT	The Council on Postsecondary Education approve the Third Amendment to the Lease between the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner/Council on Postsecondary Education and the Royce Family Fund, Inc. for the Westerly Education Center, as presented.
	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:	0

### **B. Approval of the reclassification of the position of Associate Vice President of Administration to Vice President of Administration and External Relations.**

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

VOTED:	THAT	The Council on Postsecondary Education approve the reclassification of the position of Associate Vice President of Administration to Vice President of Administration and External Relations.
	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: 0

**C. Approval of the appointment of Alix Ogden, as Vice President of Administration and External Relations at the Community College of Rhode Island.**

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

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education approve the appointment of Alix Ogden, as Vice President of Administration and External Relations at the Community College of Rhode Island.

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: 0

**D. Approval/adoption of proposed COVID-19 Vaccination of Council Non-Classified Employees Policy.**

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

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education approve/adopt the proposed COVID-19 Vaccination of Council Non-classified Employees Policy, as presented.

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: 0

**E. Approval of Northcentral University's application to operate in Rhode Island as a non-SARA, non-profit institution.**

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

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education approve Northcentral University's application to operate in Rhode Island as a non-SARA, non-profit institution.

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: 0

## 9. Executive Session

Chair DelGiudice called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education enter 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).

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:

- 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).

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: 0

**The Council entered Executive Session at 7:12 PM.**

**The Council reconvened in Open Session at 7:36 PM.**

Chair DelGiudice called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education seal the minutes of the Executive Session held on September 15, 2021.

On a motion duly made by Rachelle Green and seconded by Dennis Duffy, it was:

VOTED:	THAT	The Council on Postsecondary Education seal the minutes of the Executive Session held on September 15, 2021.
	VOTE:	6 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.
	YEAS:	Timothy DelGiudice, Barbara Cotta, Dennis Duffy, Rachelle Green, Thomas Izzo, and Michael Mello.
	NAYS:	0
	ABSTAINS:	0

## 10. Upcoming Meetings

The next meeting of the Council on Postsecondary Education will be **Wednesday, October 13, 2021 (5:30 pm)**

### Remaining 2021 Meetings

December 8, 2021

## 11. Adjourn

Chair DelGiudice called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

On a motion duly made by Rachelle Green and seconded by Dennis Duffy, it was

VOTED:	THAT	The Council on Postsecondary Education adjourn the meeting of September 15, 2021.
	VOTE:	6 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:
	YEAS:	Timothy DelGiudice, Barbara Cottam, Dennis

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Duffy, Rachelle Green, Thomas Izzo, and Michael Mello.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

The meeting adjourned at 7:41 PM