



**Meeting of the Council on Postsecondary Education**  
Wednesday, February 12, 2025

**Rhode Island College**  
**600 Mount Pleasant Avenue**  
**Providence, RI 02908, Alger Hall, Room 110**  
**Meeting Minutes**

Chair David Caprio called this meeting to order at 5:45 p.m. and acknowledged that a quorum was present.

**Council on Postsecondary Education members present:**

David Caprio, Chair, Council on Postsecondary Education  
Dennis Duffy  
Rachelle Green  
Michael Grey  
Michael Mello  
Lawrence Purtill  
Marcy Reyes  
Jeffery Williams  
Gianna Rose, Student Member

**Council on Postsecondary Education members absent:**

Thomas Izzo

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

Shannon Gilkey, Ed.D., Commissioner  
Beth Bailey, Chief Communications Officer  
Ronald Cavallaro, Esq., General Counsel  
Anne Marie Coleman, Esq., Assistant Commissioner, Human Resources and Labor Relations  
Jailene Colon, Part-Time Administrative Assistant  
Molly Cote, Esq., Chief Policy Officer  
Greg Ebner, Assistant Commissioner of Academic and Student Affairs  
Jessica Key, Assistant Commissioner of Workforce and Executive Director of the Rhode Island Higher Education & Industry Centers  
Zachary Saul, Chief Financial Officer  
Jackie Xiong, Executive Assistant to the Commissioner and Liaison to the Council on Postsecondary Education

**Rhode Island College (RIC) participants:**

President Jack Warner

Kimberly Bright, Executive Director of Strategic Initiatives

Sara Enright, Interim Vice President for Administration and Finance

Shelia Flemming, Interim Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs

Jenifer Giroux, Vice President of Corporate Relations and Professional Studies

Cindy Kozil, Vice President for Student Success

Margaret A Lynch-Gadaleta, General Counsel/Interim Assistant Vice President of Human Resources

Anastasia Rodriguez, Interim Controller, Division of Administration & Finance

**Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) participants:**

President Rosemary Costigan

Amy Kacerik, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs

Amy Kempe, Senior Advisor to the President & Chief of Staff, Marketing and Communications

Barbara Nauman, Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs

Alix Ogden, Vice President of Institutional Equity, HR & Organization Development

Rich Sullivan, Vice President, Administration & Finance

Additional CCRI Staff Members

**Additional Attendees:**

Kristine Zayko, Attorney, Husch Blackwell (Zoom)

**1. Acceptance of the Agenda**

Chair Caprio asked for a motion to accept the agenda for the meeting of February 12, 2025.

On a motion made by Lawrence Purtill and seconded by Michael Mello, it was:

VOTED:	THAT	The Council on Postsecondary Education accept the agenda for the meeting on February 12, 2025
	VOTE:	8 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.
	YEAS:	David Caprio, Dennis Duffy, Rachelle Green, Michael Grey, Michael Mello, Lawrence Purtill, Marcy Reyes, and Jeffery Williams.
	NAYS:	0
	ABSTAINS:	0

**2. Approval of the minutes**

A. Minutes of the December 11, 2024, CPE Meeting.

Chair Caprio asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting that took place on December 11, 2024.

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

VOTED:	THAT	The Council on Postsecondary Education approve the minutes for the meeting on December 11, 2024
	VOTE:	8 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.
	YEAS:	David Caprio, Dennis Duffy, Rachelle Green, Michael Grey, Michael Mello, Lawrence Purtill, Marcy Reyes, and Jeffery Williams.
	NAYS:	0
	ABSTAINS:	0

### **3. Open Forum**

Chair Caprio then announced that the Council will move into Open Forum.

Executive Assistant Jackie Xiong indicated that there were requests from two individuals to speak at Open Forum. Introduced first was Mazin Adam, President of the CCRI Faculty Association. Mr. Adam spoke on behalf of the CCRI Faculty Association regarding coalition bargaining. Following, Mikaila Mariel Lemonik Arthur, RIC faculty and President of the RIC/AFT, the union of full-time faculty at RIC, spoke on behalf of the union to request to bargain with the Council as a coalition of unions over wages and benefits.

### **4. Report from the Commissioner**

Commissioner Shannon Gilkey informed the Council that Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner was closely monitoring the executive orders from the federal government relating to higher education. Commissioner Gilkey then deferred to Chief Financial Officer Zachary Saul, who gave a high-level overview on the suspended federal grants, loans, and other financial assistance programs.

Council Member Jeffery Williams inquired about whether or not recipient institutions and programs had been notified of the potential effects due to the suspension of federal grants. Chief Financial Officer Saul reported that the institutions have been notified, and their financial departments are collecting and managing incoming information. Council Member Williams then inquired about federal delegation, to which Commissioner Gilkey responded that RIOPC is working closely with the Governor and state leadership to understand the fiscal impact on education and the economy.

Council Member Lawrence Purtill inquired about the percentage of students who will be affected by the suspension of financial assistance programs. Chief Financial Officer Saul

responded that due to the limited amount of information at this time, he would have to provide a follow up at a later date.

## **5. Report from the Committee Chairs**

### **A. Finance and Facilities Committee**

Chair Dennis Duffy, reported that the Finance and Facilities Committee has not met since the last Council meeting.

### **B. Academic Affairs and Student Success Committee**

Chair Michael Mello reported that the Academic Affairs and Student Success Committee met prior to the Council Meeting that night, on February 12, 2025. At the meeting, the Committee discussed the following notices of change at CCRI:

- a. Creation of Associate in Science, Criminal Justice
- b. Creation of Associate in Science, Legal Studies, Paralegal
- c. Creation of Certificate Program: Legal Studies, Paralegal Studies

It was also reported that the Committee discussed the Hope and Promise Scholarship program.

### **C. Personnel Committee**

Chair Rachelle Green reported that the Personnel Committee met prior to that evening's Council Meeting on February 12, 2025. The Committee met to discuss updates regarding the CCRI Presidential Search.

### **D. Joint Alternate Retirement Plan Committee**

Chair Zachary Saul reported that the Joint Alternate Retirement Plan Committee last met on December 12, 2025. At the meeting, the Committee received the quarterly update for the period ending on September 30, 2024, and discussed plan assets and allocations. CAP Trust, the investment advisor also provided a market update and investment analysis.

## **5. Reports from the Presidents**

### **A. Rhode Island College**

President Jack Warner gave a brief overview of his report highlighting RIC's spring enrollment, which has increased in comparison to the previous year. Although it was reported that new student applications have increase, there was a slight decrease in transfer applications. Finally, President Warner shared updates regarding student life on campus life which was described as robust and revitalized.

### **B. Community College of Rhode Island**

President Rosemary Costigan gave a brief overview of the college's fall enrollment which decreased by 2%. Spring enrollment was reported to be consistent with the previous year. President Costigan informed the Council of the upcoming open house event and concluded that the Joint Admission Agreement (JAA) program continues to increase.

**6. Discussion Items**

- A.** Discussion regarding an Amendment to the Council's Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures (P-17, s-17) Section VIII (D), Exhibit B.

Chair Caprio called upon General Counsel Ronald Cavallaro to introduce Attorney Kristine Zayko, Senior Counsel from Husch Blackwell. The Council was informed of the Dear Colleague letter issued by the U.S. Department of Education indicating that the 2024 Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures regulations were no longer in effect and the 2020 regulations should be used going forward. General Counsel Cavallaro informed the Council of the technical revisions made to the policy in order to comply with the department's guideline, as well as the updated contact information that reflects the new coordinators, offices, etc. He noted that these revisions will be an Action Item on the agenda of the Council's next meeting.

**7. Action Items**

- A.** Approval of proposed amendments to Policy P-13, Non-smoking policy, and creation of Policy S-26, Non-smoking policy for students.

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

VOTED:        THAT        The Council on Postsecondary Education approve the proposed amendments to Policy P-13, Non-smoking policy, and creation of Policy S-26, Non-smoking policy for students.

VOTE:        8 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS:        David Caprio, Dennis Duffy, Rachelle Green, Michael Grey, Michael Mello, Lawrence Purtill, Marcy Reyes, and Jeffery Williams.

NAYS:        0

ABSTAINS:   0

Council Member Williams questioned if there was an existing Non-smoking policy, to which Commissioner Gilkey responded yes.

Council Member Duffy inquired about designated outdoor smoking areas at the colleges. General Counsel Cavallaro and Interim Vice President for Administration and Finance Sara Enright clarified on behalf of the colleges according to their campus rules.

- B.** Approval of the operations of Empower Training Academy, a proprietary school, within the State of Rhode Island, as recommended by the Academic Affairs and Student Success Committee.

On a motion duly made by Lawrence Purtill and seconded by Michael Mello, it was:

VOTED:        THAT        The Council on Postsecondary Education approve the operations of Empower Training Academy, a proprietary school, within the State of Rhode Island, as recommended by the Academic Affairs and Student Success Committee.

VOTE:        8 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS:        David Caprio, Dennis Duffy, Rachelle Green, Michael Grey, Michael Mello, Lawrence Purtill, Marcy Reyes, and Jeffery Williams.

NAYS:        0

ABSTAINS:   0

**8. Executive Session**

Chair Caprio called for a motion that the Council enter 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).

On a motion duly made by Michael Mello and seconded by Lawrence Purtill, it was:

VOTED:        THAT        The Council on Postsecondary Education 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).

VOTE:        8 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS:        David Caprio, Dennis Duffy, Rachelle Green, Michael Grey, Michael Mello, Lawrence Purtill, Marcy Reyes, and Jeffery Williams.

NAYS:        0

ABSTAINS:   0

**The Council entered Executive Session at 6:12 PM.**  
**The Council reconvened in Open Session at 7:48 PM.**

Chair Caprio called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education seal the minutes of the Executive Session held on December 11, 2024.

On a motion duly made by Marcy Reyes and seconded by Jeffery Williams, it was:

VOTED:	THAT	The Council on Postsecondary Education seal the minutes of the Executive Session held on February 12, 2025.
	VOTE:	8 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.
	YEAS:	David Caprio, Dennis Duffy, Rachelle Green, Michael Grey, Michael Mello, Lawrence Purtill, Marcy Reyes, and Jeffery Williams.
	NAYS:	0
	ABSTAINS:	0

#### **10. Additional Comments from the Chair- Diversity Moment**

##### **A. Recognizing Black History Month.**

Chair of the Board of Education Michael Grey highlighted Black History Month and gave a brief overview on the origin/creation of this celebration.

#### **11. Next Meeting**

Chair Caprio announced that the next Council on Postsecondary Education meeting will be on March 19, 2025, at 5:30 PM at the Rhode Island Nursing Education Center.

#### **12. Adjourn**

Chair Caprio called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

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

VOTED:	THAT	The Council on Postsecondary adjourn the meeting of Wednesday, February 12, 2025.
	VOTE:	8 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.
	YEAS:	David Caprio, Dennis Duffy, Rachelle Green, Michael Grey, Michael Mello, Lawrence Purtill, Marcy Reyes, and Jeffery Williams.
	NAYS:	0

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ABSTAINS: 0

The meeting adjourned at 7:52 PM.