



Meeting of the Council on Postsecondary Education
Wednesday, April 15, 2026

Community College of Rhode Island
400 East Avenue
Warwick, RI 02886, Room 4090
Meeting Minutes

Chair David Caprio called this meeting to order at 5:41 p.m. and acknowledged that a quorum was present.

Council on Postsecondary Education members present:

David Caprio, Chair, Council on Postsecondary Education
Dennis Algieri
Lawrence Purtill
Marcy Reyes
Jeffery Williams
Gianna Rose, Student Member

Council on Postsecondary Education members absent:

Dennis Duffy
Rachelle Green
Michael Grey
Michael Mello

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

Shannon Gilkey, Ed.D., Commissioner
Ronald Cavallaro, Esq., General Counsel
Anne Marie Coleman, Esq., Assistant Commissioner, Human Resources and Labor Relations
Jailene Colon, Administrative Assistant
Catherine McConnell, Chief Strategy Officer
Zachary Saul, Chief Financial Officer
Jackie Xiong, Executive Assistant to the Commissioner and Liaison to the Council

Rhode Island College (RIC) participants:

President Jack Warner
Jenifer Giroux, Vice President of Corporate Relations & Professional Studies
Cindy Kozil, Vice President for Student Success
Anatasia Rodriguez, Vice President for Administration & Finance

Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) participants:

President Rosemary Costigan

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Amy Kacerik, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs

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

Greg LaPointe, Executive Vice President & Chief Strategy Officer

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

Marianne Raimondo, Vice President for Academic Affairs

Rich Sullivan, Vice President, Administration & Finance

1. Acceptance of the Agenda

Chair Caprio asked for a motion to accept the agenda for the meeting on April 15, 2026.

On a motion made by Jeffery Williams and seconded by Dennis Algiere, it was:

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education accept the agenda for the meeting on March 18, 2026.

VOTE: 5 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: David Caprio, Dennis Algiere, Lawrence Purtill, Marcy Reyes, and Jeffery Williams.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

2. Approval of the minutes

A. Minutes of the March 18, 2026, CPE Meeting.

Chair Caprio asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting that took place on March 18, 2026.

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

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education approve the minutes for the meeting on March 18, 2026.

VOTE: 5 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: David Caprio, Dennis Algiere, Lawrence Purtill, Marcy Reyes, and Jeffery Williams.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

3. Reports from the Presidents

A. Community College of Rhode Island

President Costigan reported on a successful professional development event recognizing faculty and staff. She noted strong nursing outcomes with 93% RN and 100% LPN NCLEX pass rates. It was announced that the college recently hosted an open house attended by nearly 700 prospective students and their families, signaling strong interest in the incoming class. Finally, the President Costigan addressed Item 9 regarding campus safety and the arming of campus police, emphasizing the institution's responsibility to ensure community safety. The President noted that campus police responded effectively during a recent lockdown despite being unarmed, and that a campus-wide survey showed over 60% support for arming officers. Based on these factors, the President expressed support for moving forward with arming campus police, alongside appropriate policies, training, oversight, and continued investment in preventive and mental health resources, and requested Council consideration of the matter.

B. Rhode Island College

President Jack Warner reported on a successful Accepted Students Day with strong attendance, noting positive enrollment trends including a 25% increase in deposits despite a slight decline in applications. He also highlighted student support for the Hope Scholarship and expressed appreciation to event participants and leadership. Finally, President Warner addressed campus safety, citing recent incidents and increased concerns about response times. Based on evolving circumstances and campus survey input, the President expressed support for arming trained campus police officers, emphasizing the need for proper training, oversight, and community trust.

4. Report from the Commissioner

Commissioner Shannon Gilkey thanked the presidents for their leadership and continued support of their campus communities. The Commissioner noted the Council's ongoing, structured efforts on campus security. He also provided an update on a new statewide campus security initiative launched earlier that day in partnership with Governor McKee, which brought together campus security teams across Rhode Island for collaborative training and preparedness efforts. He expressed appreciation to all participants and highlighted the importance of coordination across institutions.

5. Open Forum

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

Executive Assistant Jackie Xiong indicated that there were fifteen requests from the public to participate in Open Forum. Additionally, Chair Caprio noted that written comments were received via email from Soumyadeep Mukherjee and Katherine Lacasse, who were unable to attend the meeting but wished to express their opposition to arming campus police.

Ms. Xiong called upon the following:

Dr. Mikaila Arthur, President of the RIC AFT, who addressed the Council on behalf of faculty, including those unable to attend. Dr. Arthur raised concerns regarding the

reliability of the survey noting issues such as unrestricted participation, the potential for multiple submissions, lack of demographic data, and question framing that could influence responses. The speaker expressed opposition to arming campus police and urged the Council to proceed with caution before taking action.

Judith LaRose, representative of RIC Student Community Government, expressed concerns regarding the survey, noting issues with the methodology and lack of accessibility. Ms. LaRose indicated that Student Community Government had developed its own survey intended to address these shortcomings but was advised not to distribute it. She stated that many students have expressed feelings unsafe with the prospect of armed campus police and advocated for alternative safety measures, including enhanced mental health support and physical security improvements to campus facilities.

Dante DiGregorio, President of the Student Community Government, who expressed concern that students were not meaningfully included in the decision-making process regarding arming campus police. Mr. DiGregorio raised issues with the use of survey data, noting that results were not shared with students as promised and questioned its reliability.

Ben Tomany, Political Science student, expressed concern about the expedited timeline for considering the arming of campus police, emphasizing the importance of informed decision-making and hearing perspectives from all sides. Mr. Tomany recommended that the Council delay action to allow for additional input and discussion.

Miguel Hoyos, Economics major and Resident Assistant at RIC, highlighted concerns regarding campus police response times, noting delays in arriving at incidents in residence halls. Mr. Hoyos suggested that increased coordination with nearby municipal police could improve efficiency and response effectiveness.

Val Odiembo, nursing student and Resident Assistant at RIC, expressed concerns about inconsistent and, at times, unsupportive interactions between students and campus police. Ms. Odiembo noted that this has contributed to hesitancy among students to seek assistance and emphasized that greater trust and supportive engagement are needed before considering arming campus police.

Jamie Goldberg, RIC student and Chief of Staff for Student Community Government raised concerns about the validity and reliability of survey data used to inform the decision on arming campus police, citing issues with open access and limited representation. He urged the release of survey data and methodology or the development of a more rigorous survey before proceeding with any action.

Malcom Mann, Political Science, Public Administration, and Philosophy major at RIC, expressed strong concerns regarding the survey used to assess student views on arming campus police noting overly broad and misleading, questioning its ability to accurately reflect student opinion. Mr. Mann asserted that more rigorous and properly designed survey methods would likely lead to different results and urged the institution to reconsider its approach before relying on the current data for decision-making.

Alexandra Howellett, Social Work major at RIC, cited research on mass shootings to express concerns about the effectiveness of policies involving armed presence. She emphasized that such measures could create a climate of fear rather than support student well-being and urged the Council to reconsider the proposed action.

Ray Blinn, expressed being in support of arming campus police, emphasizing the goal of protecting students and saving lives. Drawing on extensive law enforcement experience, he highlighted the importance of preparedness and the ability to respond effectively in emergency situations. Mr. Blinn acknowledged that prevention is difficult to measure but stressed that equipping campus police enhances the ability to mitigate harm in the event of a serious incident.

Tess Sullivan, Social Work Major and Vice President of Student Community Government at RIC, addressed the Council in opposition to arming campus police raising concerns about the survey methodology, noting issues with data reliability, lack of student engagement, and qualitative feedback. Ms. Sullivan also expressed concern about the financial cost of the proposal and suggested that resources could instead be allocated toward counseling services and other preventative safety measures.

Maria Colonis, RIC student and Secretary of Student Community Government addressed the Council, emphasizing the importance of creating a safe learning environment for students. She stated that foundational safety measures should be prioritized before considering significant changes like arming campus police.

Cassie Neff, RIC student and President of the Debate Council emphasized the importance of using evidence-based approaches when considering campus safety measures. The student advocated for prioritizing preventative and protective measures, including securing building access, installing interior door locks, improving emergency preparedness training, and increasing access to safety resources such as first aid equipment.

Brian Rice, RIC student and representative of the Accessibility Council, expressed opposition to arming campus police, citing concerns about insufficient data, and a rushed decision-making process. He highlighted potential risks, particularly for individuals with disabilities, and urged the Council to rely on evidence and careful deliberation before taking action.

Owen Soly, student at CCRI, expressed opposition to arming campus police, citing concerns about limited student input and the potential for increased fear and risk. Owen urged the Council to consider alternative approaches to ensuring campus safety.

6. Reports from the Committee Chairs

A. Finance and Facilities Committee

On behalf of Chair Dennis Duffy, Chief Financial Officer Zachary Saul, reported that the Finance and Facilities Committee has not met since the last Council meeting.

B. Academic Affairs and Student Success Committee

On behalf of Chair Michael Mello, Council Member Lawrence Purtill reported that the Academic Affairs and Student Success Committee last met on April 1, 2026. During the meeting, the committee discussed the following notices of change:

- Notices of Change—Program Suspensions (CCRI)
 - Physical Education, Personal Trainer- Certificate
 - Public Safety- Certificate
- Notices of Change- New Joint Admissions Agreement Programs (CCRI)
 - Psychology Transfer, Behavioral Health Science B.A.- Associates in Arts (RIC)

In addition, the committee also approved the operation of the Rhode Island School of Medical Massage as a proprietary school in Rhode Island and William James College as an institution of higher education in Rhode Island.

C. Personnel Committee

On behalf of Chair Rachelle Green, Assistant Commissioner of Human Resources and Labor Relations Anne Marie Coleman reported that the Personnel Committee has not met since the last Council meeting.

D. Joint Alternate Retirement Plan Committee

Chair Zachary Saul reported that the Joint Alternate Retirement Plan Committee last met on April 1, 2026. At the meeting the committee discussed the following items:

- CAPTRUST update on current industry matters and the Quarterly Investment Review for the quarter ending December 31, 2025
- The replacement of the MFS Value R6 Fund (MEIKX) with the Putnam Large Cap Value R6 Fund (PEQSX). The Committee also approved the replacement of the Allspring Special Small Cap Value R6 Fund (ESPRX) with the DFA US Small Cap Value I Fund (DFS VX)
- An update in executive session regarding security

7. Action Items

- A.** Approval of Rhode Island School of Medical Massage to operate as a proprietary school in 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 Marcy Reyes, it was:

VOTED:	THAT	The Council on Postsecondary Education approve the Rhode Island School of Medical Massage to operate as a proprietary school in the state of Rhode Island, as recommended by the Academic Affairs and Student Success Committee.
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VOTE:	5 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.
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YEAS:	David Caprio, Dennis Algiere, Lawrence Purtill, Marcy Reyes, and Jeffery Williams.
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NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

- B.** Approval of William James College to operate as an institution of higher education in 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 Marcy Reyes, it was:

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education approve William James College to operate as an institution of higher education in the state of Rhode Island, as recommended by the Academic Affairs and Student Success Committee.

VOTE: 5 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: David Caprio, Dennis Algiere, Lawrence Purtill, Marcy Reyes, and Jeffery Williams.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

- C.** Approval of a 3.5% across the board salary increase for all non-union non-classified Council employees effective July 1, 2026.

On a motion duly made by Marcy Reyes and seconded by Lawrence Purtill, it was:

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education approve a 3.5% across the board salary increase for all non-union non-classified Council employees effective July 1, 2026.

VOTE: 5 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: David Caprio, Dennis Algiere, Lawrence Purtill, Marcy Reyes, and Jeffery Williams.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

- D.** Approval of the conferral of degrees, diplomas, and certificates at Rhode Island College.

On a motion duly made by Jeffery Williams and seconded by Lawrence Purtill, it was:

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education approve the
 awarding of conferral of degrees, diplomas, and certificates
 to the graduates of RIC's Class of 2026.

VOTE: 5 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in
 the negative.

YEAS: David Caprio, Dennis Algiere, Lawrence Purtill, Marcy
 Reyes, and Jeffery Williams.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

- E. Approval of the Facilities Use and License Agreement, by and among the Community College of Rhode Island, its governing board, the Rhode Island Council on Postsecondary Education, and DESIGNxRI for the non-exclusive use of an electronic classroom at the Community College of Rhode Island Newport County Campus Building.

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

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education approve
 the Facilities Use and License Agreement, by and among
 the Community College of Rhode Island, its governing
 board, the Rhode Island Council on Postsecondary
 Education, and DESIGNxRI for the non-exclusive use of an
 electronic classroom at the Community College of Rhode
 Island Newport County Campus Building.

VOTE: 5 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in
 the negative.

YEAS: Dennis Algiere, Dennis Algiere, Lawrence Purtill, Marcy
 Reyes, and Jeffery Williams.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

- F. Approval of the awarding tenure at the Community College of Rhode Island.

On a motion duly made by Lawrence Purtill and seconded by Marcy Reyes, it was:

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education approve of the awarding tenure at the Community College of Rhode Island, effective July 1, 2026, to the following staff:

- Kristine Ferro
- Melissa Orsinelli
- Gina Villarica

VOTE: 5 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: David Caprio, Dennis Algiere, Lawrence Purtill, Marcy Reyes, and Jeffery Williams.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

G. Approval of the awarding tenure at Rhode Island College.

On a motion duly made by Marcy Reyes and seconded by Dennis Algiere, it was:

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education approve of the awarding tenure at Rhode Island College, effective July 1, 2026, to the following staff:

- Veronica Denison
- Emily Campbell
- Theodore Jenkins
- Perri Leviss
- Kimberly Martin
- Janice Okoomian
- Alia Hadid
- Annette Griffin
- Esperanza Gutierrez
- Joan Walsh
- Lawrencia Okai
- Megan Smith
- Vilna Tejada

VOTE: 5 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: David Caprio, Dennis Algiere, 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 potential litigation, pursuant to R.I.G.L. §42-46-5(a)(2).
- B. Discussion regarding the Commissioner's contract renewal, pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5(a)(1).
- C. Discussions regarding the matter of security at CCRI and RIC, pursuant to R.I.G.L. § 42-46-5(a)(3).

On a motion duly made by Marcy Reyes and seconded by Lawrence Purtill, it was:

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education enter into Executive Session for the following:
 A. Discussion regarding potential litigation, pursuant to R.I.G.L. §42-46-5(a)(2).
 B. Discussion regarding the Commissioner's contract renewal, pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5(a)(1).
 C. Discussions regarding the matter of security at CCRI and RIC, pursuant to R.I.G.L. § 42-46-5(a)(3).

VOTE: 5 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: David Caprio, Dennis Algiere, Lawrence Purtill, Marcy Reyes, and Jeffery Williams.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

Chair Caprio noted that the Commissioner was notified, in writing, of his right to have the discussion in Item 8B held in Open Session, and that no objection to proceeding in Executive Session has been received.

The Council entered Executive Session at 6:44 PM.

The Council reconvened in Open Session at 8:07 PM.

Chair Caprio called for a motion that the Council on Postsecondary Education seal the minutes of the Executive Session held on April 15, 2026.

On a motion duly made by Jeffery Williams and seconded by Lawrence Purtill, it was:

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education seal the minutes of the Executive Session held on April 15, 2026.

VOTE: 5 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: David Caprio, Dennis Algiere, Lawrence Purtill, Marcy Reyes, and Jeffery Williams.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

9. Additional Action Item

- A.** Authorization for campus/college police officers at CCRI and RIC to carry firearms, as per R.I.G.L. §16-52-2.

On a motion duly made by Dennis Algiere and seconded by Lawrence Purtill, it was:

VOTED: THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education approve and authorize the campus/college police officers at CCRI and RIC to carry firearms, as per R.I.G.L. §16-52-2; and that the Council call on the presidents of CCRI and RIC to initiate the arming process in accordance with the advice and guidance of the security consultant, and in accordance with applicable statutory and regulatory requirements, industry standards and best practices.

VOTE: 5 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: David Caprio, Dennis Algiere, Lawrence Purtill, Marcy Reyes, and Jeffery Williams.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

Council Member Purtill expressed reservations about firearms, he stated support for moving forward with the process, citing the importance of safety and confidence in institutional leadership. Council Purtill encouraged continued collaboration among college leadership, unions, students, and campus police to ensure successful implementation and to strengthen trust within campus communities.

10. Next Meeting

Chair Caprio announced the next Council on Postsecondary Education meeting will be on

Rhode Island Council on Postsecondary Education
Wednesday, April 15, 2026

Wednesday June 17, 2026, at 5:30 PM.

11. Adjourn

Chair Caprio called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

On a motion duly made by Dennis Algiere and seconded by Lawrence Purtill, it was:

VOTED:	THAT	The Council on Postsecondary adjourn the meeting of Wednesday, April 15, 2026.
	VOTE:	5 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.
	YEAS:	David Caprio, Dennis Algiere, Lawrence Purtill, Marcy Reyes, and Jeffery Williams.
	NAYS:	0
	ABSTAINS:	0

The meeting adjourned at 8:13 PM.