

## Faculty Senate Minutes of Meeting

Regularly scheduled meeting of the Faculty Senate of Rochester Institute of Technology

Thursday, April 10, 2025

12:15 - 1:50 PM

Slaughter Hall 2220-2240

Attendance: See Below

Agenda Item No. 1: Call to Order; A. Newman (12:15)

Agenda Item No. 2: Approval of Agenda; A. Newman (12:15)

**Approved by acclamation**

Agenda Item No. 3: Communications Officer's Report/Approval of Minutes; S. Aldersley (12:16)

**Minutes of the meeting of 4/3 approved by acclamation**

[April 3, 2025 Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes](#)

Agenda Item No. 4: Executive Committee Report; A. Newman (12:17)

- Earlier this year, HR agreed to add a senator to the Benefits Advisory Group (BAG). Later this month, we will ask Deanna to tell us what deliberations are underway with regard to Benefits planning.
- In recent years, one of our practices has been ask the college cohorts to report on governance activity in each college. This year, by way of variation, we are asking cohorts to share notable governance efforts in their particular units. We know the Saunders College of Business cohort has a good story to share and we'd like to have two or three other cohorts share case studies of their own. This will be part of the April 24th agenda, which by the way, is now activated.
- Last Saturday (4/4) NYS AAUP held their spring conference on the RIT campus and several of us attended. Dr. Munson opened the conference and shared his perspective on the current state of affairs surrounding funding and academic freedom. During his talk he mentioned that it's very likely that our administration will need to make big decisions over the summer months.
- We're receiving some troubling news from a number of different sources. It seems a number of our international students have been notified that their student visas have been revoked. We're hearing similar reports from other universities. It sounds like the students are being contacted directly. If you happen to hear of a student who is concerned about this, please recommend that they talk to International Student Services, before they respond to any government request.

- Additionally, I know there are international faculty who have been receiving emails from the Office of Compliance and Ethics asking them to register with the Department of Homeland Security if they meet certain criteria. If you hear of anything like that, please ask them to reach out to the provost's office.

- The B2/ICC motion is set to return. The task force was forced to work partially electronically mostly because my schedule is insane. I ended up working primarily as the ExComm representative and it was hard to find a second person to represent the ICC in the group. However, we have come to an agreement which involves making a couple of small edits to the motion, but otherwise we're good to go. This vote is probably going to be run electronically to allow us to send the package of B2 changes out to the university faculty before the summer.

- I was informed by a couple of senators about a procedural mistake I made last week. It seems if someone calls the question, there has to be a two thirds majority before the question can be moved on.

B. Thomas: Isn't it the case that members of the BAG cannot reveal discussions within the group? And regarding international faculty being asked to register with the State Department. Does that refer to holders of green cards or H1B or J1 visas? And why hasn't the Provost's Office announced this?

A. Newman: Regarding your question about the BAG. HR has agreed to lift the previous requirement for secrecy. Regarding the Provost's Office – they only just found out. I discovered it because I received one of the emails myself even though I am no longer international faculty.

D. Olles: Joe is also a member of the BAG. We've come to the end of our meetings and decisions have been made. It's a good idea for me to address this next week before emails go out from HR. The fact that emails will go out at all was a result of Joe and I and a staff member suggesting that communication needed to happen.

A. Newman: One final addition to the executive committee report: the lecturer working group has been collecting information from various stakeholder groups on a revised proposal. In addition, a survey will be going out today to all lecturers to canvass opinion. So please reach out to the NTT faculty in your colleges and encourage them to participate.

Agenda Item No. 5: Staff Council Update; R. Hisert (12:24)

We haven't met in a couple of weeks because of the award ceremonies, but during our last meeting we had presentations on nepotism, military leave and the Title IX policy. I do have a question for the BAG members here, did they lift the confidentiality rule just for senate members or was it removed entirely.

?: It was removed entirely.

Agenda Item No. 6: Student Government Update; J. Anderson (12:25)

Forms for committee chair and director interviews have gone out and interviews will take place over the next couple of weeks. So if you know students who want to get involved with student government, there's still an opportunity to join student government for next year. At our last senate meeting, one Pawprint got passed, which was to make the gender inclusive changing rooms actually gender inclusive. Then there was a response submitted to tell RIT to stop supporting Lockheed Martin.

Agenda Item No. 7: Senate Executive Committee Nominations; C. Hull (12:26)

C. Hull: We have a slate of candidates, including two people running for chair. The other four positions are uncontested. Hamad Ghazle for Operations; Stephen Aldersley for Communications; Joe Lanzafame for Treasurer and Keri Barone for Vice-Chair. Each of the candidates for chair will now have one minute to speak.

S. Johnson: I am a senior lecturer in the Department of Computer Science. This is my fourth year in Senate and I've served all four years on University Council. My goal is to basically rein Senate back a little bit. The last few years have been crazy with the B2 changes, Covid, all of that and we've been pushing things through that should not be pushed through as quickly as they have been. So my goal is to get back to basically discussing things in one meeting, and then voting on them the next. I want to get us back to what we do and that is looking at policy, voting on policy and informing our constituents. I also want to look at getting more credit for service.

R. Zanibbi: I was invited to apply for this position. At first I was not totally persuaded. I'm a professor in the Department of Computer Science. I've served on a number of senate committees that include the Institute Writing Committee which I chaired, Future Faculty, Research and Scholarship. I was also on the President's search committee. There are a number of themes related to actualizing the potential of this faculty that I'd like to continue to support. And while I share some of the concerns about the pace at which some things have happened and the way communication happened, I do think the Senate's direction in recent years is the right one and I would like to continue that in the future.

C. Hull: We will not yet proceed to the vote. When it's time, you'll get your own personalized link to a Qualtrics survey.

Agenda Item No. 8: Strategic Plan Update; E. Cardinal (12:31)

If you've been to University Council or Student Government, I apologize that the slide deck is the same although I have added a little bit of information. We spent the summer and fall semester working to gather stakeholder feedback and input to help inform the directions that we want to move forward with. I'll share with you what we've heard so far. This is an aggregation of the survey that we put out plus some themes that we've seen in the concept papers and that came through the discussions we've had with advisory groups, college leadership, departmental leadership teams, and emails.

The most common theme that came even through advisory groups, the alumni board and non-internal stakeholders was around faculty, staff and student wellbeing. That includes mental health concerns for

everyone, not just students, stress levels, but then also on the faculty and staff side concerns about compensation, workload, fatigue and the pace at which things have moved.

On the positive side there's been a highlighting and embracing of the culture here at RIT and wanting to make sure that continues, that inclusive and diverse culture and that sense of belonging.

We heard a lot about the need to work smarter, not harder. One of my favorite quotes was 'death by a thousand paper cuts' which speaks to some of the layers of paperwork and the need to look for opportunities for efficiency. Stress around resource availability, whether that be staffing levels or finances, and an emphasis on collaboration and interdisciplinary work. And that was across the board. Regarding the desire to be able to work more seamlessly and transparently across units, communication comes up a lot as a challenge with so many modes available.

Another really strong theme that came through with every stakeholder group relates to the value of NTID and our need to embrace that and elevate that as part of our culture as part of who RIT is. We consistently heard feedback regarding challenges around space and infrastructure despite the new construction, and the need to enhance and renovate existing structures and residence halls comes up pretty regularly. We've also heard a lot of comments around a desire for community connection both internally but also externally and a reminder to really embrace the 'R' in RIT and the challenges associated with that given that we are located in Henrietta and Rochester is about 15 minutes away by vehicle, if you have one. Three different concept papers mentioned the ability to get to the community by public transit. We heard concerns about the rising cost of tuition from every stakeholder group and a desire to really clearly articulate the value proposition of RIT and be mindful of costs.

We heard a desire to maintain the curricular innovation that RIT has been known for and the challenges that some are faced with in trying to do that. We also heard from a couple of stakeholder groups about challenges with co-op, including being able to find co-op, and a desire to make sure the co-op pathway is accessible for anyone at RIT regardless of degree or college. We also heard about the need for more support for non-traditional students: as we look towards the future, what are we going to do to support them. There was a lot of enthusiasm around research and graduate programs, but a strong desire to see, again, more resources and more financial support for them.

AI came up with every stakeholder group and comes up in pretty much every single strategic planning committee meeting. The plan will absolutely have elements addressing AI..

There's a desire to have stronger connections across the global campuses and opportunities for more exchanges for students. There isn't always a synching of schedules and if students want to come here and continue their progress towards a degree they sometimes can't get into classes. And a desire more broadly to think about how we can positively have impacts globally and what kind of partnerships that might occur even beyond the global campuses. We've consistently heard a lot of comments about communication, with a lot of support for our branding efforts, such as in Grand Central and other major cities, for example, but our advisory and external stakeholder groups have emphasized a need for more brand awareness.

One of the other things we've been looking at is our core values (Policy P.04), which were last updated in 2003. Typically as part of a strategic planning process, you want to look at your values to make sure that they're still consistent with who you are today and the direction you want to go. So one of the things we've started to do is to reevaluate and propose some new value statements. This is still at the proposed statement stage, but I just wanted to share with you where we are with that and I welcome comments either afterward or via email.

One of the concerns I heard early on during my listening tours was the timing isn't in synch with the arrival of our new president. Dr. Sanders has now joined our strategic planning committee and he is very engaged. As a result, we've reshaped the structure of the plan. Very different from what we've done in the past, I would say it will arguably look more like an actual strategic plan. In the past we had something like 120 goals, but this one will have four or five with some strategic actions attached. It will be structured with pillars under which there will be a strategic goal accompanied by a set of from three to five strategic actions. The items in orange on the slide will come forward to the governing groups as part of the official strategic plan before going to the Board of Trustees for final approval. The parts in gray are tactics that are going to be driven by the university and developed over time. This is a 10-year plan and it's very hard to develop ten years worth of tactics. So it's going to be a living document. Underneath the tactics there will be outcomes identified, some qualitative, some numeric. We will also be looking at overarching success indicators, like graduation and retention rates, research dollars, and recognition, so higher levels than we've been tracking in the current plan.

As of now, we have identified four pillars that we're fairly certain about, though the exact names are still to be determined. First, student success and experience. Second, research and scholarship. Third, community wellbeing and belonging. Fourth, global perspective. And there is still space for a fifth.

We heard a lot of feedback from folks saying that they couldn't see themselves in some elements of the current plan. So the intent is that with this plan you will be able to develop strategies within your own departments and colleges around the university's higher level goal statements.

With regard to timeline, we originally intended to have a final draft ready for governance groups to review, comment on and approve by October. Dr. Sanders wants to make sure he has a chance to come to campus, talk to stakeholder groups for himself so that he can feel like we are making more informed decisions that he better understands. So we will be working from now through September to draft the goal statements and the strategic actions. During the fall semester we will be coming back to groups for feedback and for input and then come back to the governance groups to get final blessing in the late January/February timeframe. And then we would start work on the tactics. They're going to be developed internally and many of them will probably involve working groups. For example, if we have a goal to identify and implement high impact practices to drive undergraduate and graduate student success, we don't have the right people at the strategic planning committee table to make that determination. So we would create some small working groups to determine what the most reasonable tactics might be.

I know this has been a little bit less traditional of a strategic planning process, but we are going to come back and look for full community engagement to help us shape the final version of the plan.

R. Zanibbi: I think it's a common concern in this body that we have aspirational goals, but we don't always consider making sure our operations are adequate to support them. I'd like to propose a possible pillar for consideration that is critical if you want to achieve things, and that's investing in the foundations of academic work by faculty and staff. I think the most common frustration in this body is that faculty and staff don't feel seen. I think if you want buy in, you need to acknowledge that.

E. Cardinal: Thank you, I appreciate that. We heard that a lot, yes, student wellbeing is extremely important, but we can't ensure that if we're not taking care of our own faculty and staff.

R. Zanibbi: Making it explicit is very important.

E. Cardinal: You don't feel that this one here encompasses that sufficiently?

R. Zanibbi: No. Students need mentioning, but I think faculty need mentioning too. If you want to succeed, I think that's where the gap is.

E. Cardinal: OK, thank you.

H. Ghazle: I'm sure you listened to me talking at the University Council. Today you've sparked another thing in my mind about another pillar. But first I'm going to reiterate something I discussed earlier at different meetings, namely, the addition of alumni. Very crucial in the process. You may be able to insert that under pillar #1. We get donations, funding, many other things from our alumni. We should be able to get back and say, we're going to invest in you. Second, in the previous strategic plan, the president was talking about academic facilities and capital planning. I'm not sure where that fits in this new strategic plan, but we need to consider that. The other thing, the university talks about focusing on healthcare within RIT and the community. But I see nothing about healthcare in the plan.

E. Cardinal: When I met with Dr. Sanders last night, we did have a conversation about that and where it might fit. I don't foresee it being a separate pillar. Rather, I think it will be an element in these other pillars. To address your question about the infrastructure and the buildings, we will not be making that a goal or strategic action. It may however be a tactic that the university would identify and bring forward for approval.

B. Thomas: Before this gets to the point where we have to vote, can you ask the president to come to each of the colleges, and not just for 30-45 minutes with five minutes to ask questions. Because we do have a lot of questions that we'd like to see addressed.

E. Cardinal: I absolutely will. I do believe that Dr. Sanders' intent is to go on a pretty deep listening tour, but I don't want to speak for him. He doesn't want us to put something forward for perfunctory approval. That's why he built in the whole fall semester to make sure we are actually getting authentic feedback.

A. Newman: We're out of time, so if you have any more questions or comments, please direct them to [strategic\\_plan@rit.edu](mailto:strategic_plan@rit.edu).

[Strategic Plan Update Presentation](#)

Agenda Item No. 9: RIT Libraries, Transformative Agreements & Open Access Publishing; E. Sherwood, F. Andreu (12:54)

We're going to talk to you very briefly today about transformative agreements. RIT libraries has been asking the question: What will it take to be an R1 library on day one? Traditionally we have had our collection development focused around the academic mission of the institution and that's not going to change. But what we need to do is come up with more creative ways to support our graduate students and researchers. One of the ways we've been looking to do that is around our collection development strategy. We've been thinking about how research services and collection development overlap. In the library world, we've seen a lot of progress in transformative agreements. So why would we take on open access publishing agreements? The number one reason is that it reduces cost to individual researchers. If we are negotiating some of these transformative agreements on the institute's behalf, you don't have to pay an

individual pay-for-play open access publishing cost. It also often includes greater access to other journals and back files, which means that you get access to your content more quickly. You don't have to wait for interlibrary loan, you don't have to wait for offsite storage. We're hoping to get you access at point of need. Sometimes publishers are just moving to this model, for example, last year, we accepted ACM's open agreement and if we had not accepted that agreement, we would've lost access to ACM.

When we think about whether or not we take a transformative agreement, we look at the potential cost savings versus the cost of taking the agreement. Sometimes these agreements are cost neutral, which is a no-brainer. Sometimes it costs more money and then we have to balance other factors. We look at current use for those journals, the history of faculty publishing in those areas and whether we would be getting access to journals we wanted for a really long time, for example, The Journal of Fluid Dynamics. And now we have access to that journal because we received it as part of the additional content for one of our transformative agreements. We also look at potential content and how it aligns with our current needs and new programs. For example, if we're building healthcare programs, are we starting to look at transformative agreements that might get us more access to journals in those areas. We do a lot of review of denials. Every time you try to access an article and we don't have access to that article, the publishers log that and send us denial reports that say you've had this many people who have tried to access this journal. Publishers estimate that our denials are really about three times the number of the requests that we receive, partly because you might be looking at two different articles and partly because if you've once received a denial from the journal, you don't go back and look again. We also look at interlibrary loan requests and we factor in how much each request costs us. We consider all of that in making a decision about entering into a new transformative agreement.

Out of the open access movement, we saw two main models emerge. That is the APC (Article Processing Charge) model where the individual author pays the author processing charge in order to make their work available for free. The other model is Diamond Open Access, where journals and publishers are free at both ends: authors don't pay, readers don't pay. RIT libraries is a DOA publisher, but the majority of the traditional publishers, Elsevier, Wiley, Springer, they've all adopted the APC model, which requires payment on the author's end if you want to make your work open and the cost can be several thousand dollars. The transformative agreements we've entered into are sometimes called read-publish agreements, where like how you're able to access journals through our free subscriptions, they have been rolled in where the APCs are waived for institutional authors.

Right now we have four transformative agreements. There's ACM, Cambridge University Press, *inaudible*, and Springer Nature, which, just to be clear, does not include Nature journals, so if you are the corresponding author on an article, you will have your APC waived the first three years. Springer does have an annual cap that we will be keeping track of. For the most part it's most journals, but we do have an info guide that has all the specific information as to exactly which journals or which conferences they apply to, and how to have that applied when you submit your article. We do have some other discounts separate from the transformative agreements, for example, the American Society of Microbiology have certain journals where the APCs are waived. And for the International Journal for Optics, we have a 25% discount on APCs.

If you are not able to do the APC publishing route, there is also green open access, which is where you deposit your Preprint or accepted manuscript into the RIT institutional repository. All of the information about these open partnerships we have are in our info guide, or you can scan a QR code.

B. Thomas: Most of the journals we're publishing in the Life Sciences fall under Springer Nature. We cannot publish in a place like that without paying. So we are not covered, at least I can speak for CHST,

and maybe other people like in Biology and Bioformatics. So where are we going from here? None of our journals are covered.

E. Sherwood: We will continue to review other transformative agreements as they come up. As we've looked at them, some we've turned down either because they were with a publisher where we didn't have a lot of faculty publishing in that area, or to your point, the journals that are covered within a package are not necessarily relevant to our specific audiences. To be frank though, we have to write our collections budget before we can take on more financial obligations. We are not able to take on things that cost significantly more right now, but our hope in the future is that that's a cost value we can get back to university.

B. Thomas: Do you have a faculty group that advises you on which of these agreements to enter into?

E. Sherwood: We currently do not have a faculty advisory group but I will be reconstituting it this fall. I've been here eight months and I wanted to make sure I had the questions I want to bring to a faculty advisory group before getting a bunch of people together. Reviewing those could be one, but I think your question is also really important because many of these agreements actually have a broader institutional reach than we were originally anticipating, for example, Cambridge. We thought we knew what the focus was and when we started to look at the journal subscriptions, they were actually much wider than what we had originally anticipated. The calculus is a little all over the place, but we are looking to continue accepting these as we have the funds to do so. We did an analysis of last year's publishing numbers just for these four transformative agreements and based on faculty publishing numbers in those journals, we are estimating that if the publishing and the research numbers are the same this year we will save the institute \$235,000 just for these four agreements.

J. Capps: Do you see any variations among different colleges or departments in terms of their use of interlibrary loan journals? It seems to me that different colleges might use these resources in different ways and to different degrees and I was wondering if you've seen any patterns there in usage or reliance on these kinds of resources. Second, could you say more about how much Interlibrary Loan costs on a per item basis or a general?

E. Sherwood: On average we pay about \$15 per inter-library loan. Some of them are more expensive at \$50-\$60 and some of them are free so it averages out at about \$15. As to patterns, we don't really look at that. For example, if someone in the College of Science wants to read a history book, we're going to get that for you. We look at it from a content perspective, not from the point of view of what college the faculty member is in. If we see a bunch of history books being requested in a given year, we begin to ask whether we are meeting the needs of our history department in terms of purchasing decisions. For example, we're seeing a lot of history-related requests right now that are related to artificial intelligence. We don't have a lot of content there, so there's clearly a demand there.

S. Aldersley: Have you had an opportunity to look historically over the last few years at the library appropriation from Central and whether that's been flat, whether it's been declining, or whether it's possibly getting higher?

E. Sherwood: Historically it's been pretty flat. We've seen small inflationary increases, but our inflation costs are pretty high. When we do budget estimates for our library collection development, we look at between 4 and 6% of inflationary increases and we haven't been seeing those consistently over the last few years. So when you consider inflationary increases, that means we're losing money. One of the things we anticipate next year is we'll have to cut our collections in order to get to net zero on our budget. We'll



not be able to do things like take transformative agreements that cost more money because we're going to have to size our collections budget first.

E. Williams: Related to that, I welcome of course the expansion of open access. It's going to cost money. Has the administration expressed an interest in this effort and increasing your budget to be able to do that?

E. Sherwood: Yes. One of the permanent increases we had last year was to support the ACM transformative agreement. We know that GCCIS is continuing to grow and that's where a lot of their faculty publish. And so that is one area where the Institute came back and said we see continued growth in this area so we'll support this open access development.

C. Hull: Most of the journals in my college are not on the list. Are there plans to add publishers like Wiley, that publish in my field? Most of the journals we want to publish in do have an open access offer, which usually costs in the region of \$5,000.

E. Sherwood: As I said, we will continue to review transformative agreements as they come to us. Sometimes publishers bring them to us, sometimes our consortiums bring them to us, and when that happens, we will review them and see what is financially feasible, and we'll look at where there are areas of need and try and make sure we have coverage across the Institute.

I. Puchades: Point of order. Can we clarify the election process? Are we voting now? It wasn't on the agenda.

A. Newman: It was. When Clyde listed the executive committee nominations, he said he would send out a link for a vote during the meeting. And because it's a secret ballot, we can't do it as a motion. We would like to be able to announce the results by the end of this meeting, so when you get the link, please vote.

[RIT Libraries Presentation](#)

#### Agenda Item No. 10: DSO Updates; S. Williams and K. Kamish (1:11)

S. Williams: Good afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity to provide some updates regarding the Disability Services Office. I serve as the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and I'm joined by Kelly Khamish, Associate Director in the Disability Services Office. I'd like to start by saying I really appreciate the work that's been done over the last three semesters.

We did have a leadership transition and as a result there's currently shared leadership between myself, Kendra Evans, director of the Spectrum Support Program and Kelly Kamish. We are searching for a director for the department and it's going well. I do have faculty involved in the process and Keri Barone and Pam Beach have been identified to do that work. In addition, it was recently announced that there is a DSO faculty fellow and Keri is stepping into that role. We're excited to have the constant consultation of a faculty member to be available to support the work we're doing. I just received notice yesterday that the senior access coordinator position has also been approved which will increase our access coordinators by one. This individual's responsibility will be to support the remediation of materials. We're seeing a lot of

students who need materials remediated, and that will be the primary responsibility for this position.

Last Friday was the kickoff of the faculty advisory committee. This committee has representatives from each of the colleges. The purpose of the meeting was to review DSO processes and provide feedback. Kelly had the opportunity to share information about how we manage our exams in the DSO and also to give some examples of how we are trying to streamline the accommodations language. I really appreciated the opportunity to meet with the faculty advisory committee which will be in place as we move forward. DSO agrees that any new releases will be presented to the faculty advisory committee, but we have Keri as well who will assist us as it relates to new technology specifically, but other processes as well.

**Informed accommodations:** This is something we heard very loudly over the last couple of semesters, specifically, faculty concerns that some of the accommodations perhaps that are assigned to a student may not be for whatever reasons appropriate in particular settings. What we're doing is ensuring that our access coordinators are educated regarding the context in which a student might apply an accommodation. I do want to be clear that it doesn't mean that a student does not have that accommodation. It just means that the access coordinator will talk to that student about the appropriateness of applying an accommodation in a particular context.

**Faculty accommodation appeals:** We're trying to develop a formal process so that if a faculty member has a concern regarding an accommodation in their specific class, they can express that. Currently it's via email. Kelly, who is a tech genius behind the scenes with the system, is working with Dave Kai trying to figure out how our current system can support us in the communication process around an accommodation appeal that a faculty has every right to express. We want to ensure that there's a formal process by which that can occur.

**K. Kamish:** We've listened to faculty feedback and one of the things that came back to us over and over again was that faculty want to do the best they can, but they don't know how to facilitate specific accommodations, or they don't understand what this is going to look like in their class. When we approve an accommodation, we approve an accommodation for a student, but that student may have classes in COS, CAD and KGCoE. That's going to look different everywhere. So one of the things we did was we actually created these faculty drop-in hours at the beginning of the semester. So right at the time when faculty are getting their accommodation notices they're able to come to us and sit with someone on our team who can talk them through what that would look like. We recognize people are busy and not everybody can make it to the drop-in hours that we scheduled so we held a lot of one-on-one meetings as well. We've updated our accommodation language to specifically say that all accommodations are determined through an interactive process. That's what the law requires of us. We are also currently in the process of doing an audit of our language for our accommodations. We've gotten feedback that some of the language around them is very lengthy. A lot of it is written to be more legal than educational.

Then there are some accommodations where the descriptions just aren't enough. They don't make sense. So we're auditing all our accommodations, updating and streamlining and merging them where we can, to make them easier to understand. We have changed the physical configuration of our office. We can't make more space. It's an issue that I think a lot of people are facing, but we reconfigured things, we changed the flow to make it a little bit more accessible, but also to make it a little more welcoming and friendly for folks coming in. We see a lot of traffic and we need a lot of space for folks who are coming in to ask questions or take exams. We have increased the number of student workers from five to nine. We really depend on them to proctor exams for us. We've also added a process for an expedited application. We have a large number of students who've had accommodations from the time they were very young. They may have a disability that was diagnosed with when they were in third grade, and, for example, they've always had extended testing time. That's a very common accommodation. Traditionally,

to go through our process, they apply and provide their documentation, then wait about a week to get an appointment, at which point we set up their accommodations. By creating an expedited process, we've created an application that is more robust and allows students to explain their access needs. They still have to provide documentation to us, but we can approve them in just a couple of hours without the need for a meeting. This helps students get things quickly and get this information to their faculty quicker. For example, when we're in the middle of the semester, we may have a student who is struggling because they didn't apply for their accommodations when they first got here. Now they won't have to go another two or three weeks before they're approved.

We've also updated our academic dishonesty policy. Unfortunately, academic dishonesty does happen. We proctor about 4,000 exams every semester. And we do catch people doing things they aren't supposed to be doing. All of our exams are proctored by cameras in the ceiling looking down on the students, and we monitor this on a big screen. If they're using one of our computers, we monitor everything they're doing on the computer as well. Some of our students really like ChatGPT. So we take a screenshot and send it to the faculty, but we've taken it a step further and we're now including student conduct and conflict resolution as well. Every faculty member has the choice of how they're going to address academic dishonesty. We don't make that determination in our office. If we send the message to a professor and we say, this student is in the middle of their exam and this is what happened, and the professor emails us back right away and says, 'just stop them, there's no point having them continue the exam'. At that point, we'll stop them, but otherwise we're going to give you the information and let you decide what to do with it.

Some of the things we're working on this summer. One being instructional videos of common processes that happen in our office, like completing flex plans, acknowledging accommodations, doing test agreements, etc. so that folks can see the step-by-step instructions. We've been sending out a monthly newsletter, called Access Matters. We just sent out our third issue. That is to provide faculty specifically with vital information about things that are going on in our office at that time. We're updating our website. We're working on creating a faculty resources page that faculty can go to and see things like sample flex plans and all the structural videos in one place. And then we're going to be collaborating with our faculty fellow who is going to be very busy, because we have a lot of things that we want to do and we want to make sure that we're putting things in place that will actually be useful for faculty. We look at this stuff all day long. We look at accommodations all day long. We understand what these things mean, but we're not in your classrooms and we don't know what goes on in your classrooms. So there has to be faculty support in order to make sure that we are properly accommodating folks and properly explaining the accommodations we're putting in place.

S. Malachowsky: In the last couple years because of your efforts, we've seen the tone and the interaction with DSO to go from confrontational to something that's collaborative. I'm very appreciative of that so thank you.

D. Olles: Thank you so much, because everything that has happened in the last few months has been just this exponential growth of communication. We've gone from a lot of hostility between the faculty and DSO to a lot more communication. I just recently did a tour of the DSO and had the chance to talk with Shelitha afterwards. I hear a lot of what you're going to do for faculty but I don't hear a lot of what you need to do better for students, to increase student success, and that's what I want to know. The DSO has problems and it's nothing that you can fix without money. I have a student that came to me today after she took a quiz, and told me about the drums. I had to email Morgan and say, I'm giving her permission to use noise canceling headphones even though it's not on her accommodations. I have students that say they wait too long to get their test and then they run out of time because sometimes the line's too long. That's because you don't have enough people. What do you need to do better for the students?

S. Williams: It's a timely question since we're entering proctoring. We have partnered with the Math Department and we have faculty who are actually supporting the proctoring of exams, and that's huge. There's 4,000 in the semester and a little over 1200 of those happen in a six day period. So when we're talking about proctoring exams right now, that's primarily staff who can't necessarily answer the questions. We then communicate rather quickly in order to obtain answers. But that would be one way in which faculty could support the department. Certainly as it relates to space, we are in a very tight location and we're continuing to be creative in the ways in which we do our work. We have three access coordinators in cubicles talking to students about their disability. That's very challenging. And so we're rotating through a hoteling office. Great that we have a new senior access coordinator position but I don't have a seat for that person. So as it relates to space, it's a challenge. We're continuing to elevate the need for space, but it hasn't been our reality for sure. Continuing to have these collaborative conversations are really important. There's a new director coming in and I don't want my stepping back to result in a halt in the work that we've done so far. This team has been doing phenomenally and unfortunately they were in the shadows. They were not the individuals with the voice. It's very important to ensure that there are ongoing collaborative efforts as it relates to this service that is in support of our students.

S. Johnson: I've noticed a trend lately that the number of accommodations is going up drastically. I teach in GCCIS, which is really high in accommodations. Of my 240 students this semester, probably 55 of them have accommodations. And it is getting to be a lot of work to keep track of all of this and filling out an individual flex plan for each one of them. In the past, I believe we used to do it per course, and now have to fill out 20 of these at the beginning of the semester. And I've had issues trying to get feedback from your office. I mentioned something at the beginning of the semester and I got a response four weeks later which asked, 'do you still have these questions'? I said, 'yes', and I've heard nothing since. It's become difficult to deal with this. I'm glad all this is going on. But yes, I definitely agree you guys need more support because I'm seeing a huge number of students who are getting accommodations, accommodations I've never seen before.

K. Kamish: A lot of faculty are saying, I'm seeing more students with accommodations. You are absolutely right. That is actually what is happening. And the reason for that actually has to do with K-12 access to education. The IDEA, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act was put in place twenty years ago. And this was the law that said that every public school needs to provide a free and appropriate education and an IEP or an individual education plan for students. So we're seeing students make it to college who previously would not have had the opportunity because they weren't getting the support they needed in K-12. That also means when they come to us, they're coming to us with an IEP full of accommodations they've had and that has grown and changed with them from the time they were very little and they can show us these were the goals that were set for me and I met these goals because I had these accommodations. So that means we're seeing folks who are advocating for themselves, which is fantastic, that have had more complex access needs that previously K-12 schools weren't really great about addressing. Since they had accommodations and they can demonstrate that they worked for them, we have to make every effort to give them as close an experience as we can because we know what's worked in the past. There are definitely accommodations that students come here with and we're like, I can't have your professor give you non-visual cues if you're not focusing in class. I understand how that works in K-12. It doesn't work here. That's not an accommodation we can add. But there are students that are coming to us with accommodations for things like breaks or things like being able to have food in class that previously you wouldn't have seen. And so we are seeing more complex access needs. About 18-19% of all of our students on campus have accommodations and are registered with our office. And so when you said you have about 50 out of 250, I was thought, yes, that math checks out almost perfectly. Everything you've said is absolutely true. As of this afternoon, we have 3,253 students registered with our office and we have three access coordinators with caseloads of about 900 to a thousand students each. So we're working through these more complex access profiles. We're working

through more numbers and we're seeing more people though actually have an opportunity in education that wouldn't have had it before. So this is a good thing, but it also is a tough thing. And we do recognize that for faculty, that you are being given accommodations that you've never seen before and oftentimes we're being given things we've never seen before too. And we have to figure out how to work together to make those things work.

A. Newman: We are ridiculously over time, so if you wouldn't mind receiving some emails about some of your questions, I would ask our senators to go that route. Thank you so much for coming.

C. Hull: I glitched. The first email distribution for the vote that I sent out did not seem to go. I waited for a while and it never showed up in my inbox so I gave up, and sent a second one. But apparently some people got the first one. I don't think anybody voted twice, but I want the Senate to tell me what to do about this. I can delete the first distribution. Everybody running unopposed has been elected. So if you want me to run a new election for just the chair, I could also do that.

S. Aldersley: Would you please do that? I got both. I responded to the first. I've erased the second.

C. Hull: I'm fine doing that if nobody objects, that's what I'll do.

A. Newman: Okay, that's the way we'll do it. Please keep an eye on your email. There's going to be one more ballot just for the contested seat.

[DSO Updates Presentation](#)

#### Agenda Item No. 11: Policy E34.0 (Military Leave Policy) Edits; M. Polowchak (1:34)

I'm here to talk about some proposed edits to E 34.0, our Military Leave policy. The purpose of the policy is to grant military leave to employees who enter the uniformed services. The changes we're proposing primarily concern reconciling the language in the policy with the verbiage that is in the statute, the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 or USERRA. We're editing for inclusivity and consistency with the statute, highlighting some of the relevant benefits and resources for employees here at RIT and then clarifying some of the language in the policy. We're removing the word 'regular' because this is a statute that applies to all employees. We updated the name of the Act, and defined military terms according to the statute. There are no changes to the timeframes or the benefits. The policy as it's written would say that employees are to be restored to their former position or position of similar status unless the university's employment situation has so changed to make it impossible. We've clarified the meaning of 'similar status' to mean the position they would've held if they had been in continuous employment. This is to go along with the spirit of the law, which is to basically make people whole who have engaged in military service as if they never left.

We're also clarifying some of the things in the eligibility for benefits section to be consistent with the statute. And adding a statement that points people to relevant RIT benefits that may complement or coincide with the military leave. In the procedures section, we're highlighting the resources available to folks and clarifying the notice types that are permitted under the statute as well as clarifying the language pertaining to the numbers of days.

None of this changes what they're eligible for, the timeframes that are permitted or the benefits that

they're entitled to.

I. Puchades: Does this only apply to the US military? We do have some international professors that may be required to do military service back in their countries. Does it apply to them as well?

M. Polowchak: That's a really interesting question. I believe it only applies to United States military service.

J. Lanzafame: I don't think your clarifying statement about 'similar' works. It says a similar position or whatever you would've had if you had never left. We discussed this in University Council. It could mean if you left the year before you were going to get tenure, you could come back with tenure because you would've had it had you stayed. I think the idea is for them to keep seniority, the idea that they could automatically get promotions that might be due is almost implicit in the wording. So I don't think it really clarifies the word 'similar'.

M. Polowchak: Evan Thompson spoke to that question at University Council. The policy does not automatically grant tenure, a person would still have to meet the requirements of tenure. Crafting a policy like this is not an exact science because every situation is different. The language here is meant to capture the spirit of the law, to convey the intent that we're trying to keep people whole.

B. Thomas: I asked this question at University Council also. The last line on slide #2 talks about provisions for leave duration and associated procedures including reinstatement after discharge. What happens when a person receives a dishonorable discharge?.

M. Polowchak: We looked into your question and found that the statute does not require an employer to take back with the same benefits and rights of employment a person who has been dishonorably discharged. However, because our policy does not currently bar that, we didn't choose to make that change and exclude dishonorable discharge.

E. Williams: There's an important difference between what's on the slides and what's on the Word document and I want to know what we're voting for. The line 'they would have held similar status to what they would have held if there had been continuous employment' is crossed out in the Word version, but it is not crossed out in the PowerPoint version. Is it intended to be crossed out or not?

M. Polowchak: It's highlighted because it was added. I can't tell you why the strikethrough is there. I know that the intent of the highlight is to show it was added. There should not be a strikethrough and it would be in the new policy that we're proposing in the motion.

A. Newman: We should have this come back with an updated document just so that there's no confusion about what people are voting on.

[Policy E34.0 Presentation](#)

[Policy E340. Edits](#)

Agenda Item No. 12: New Business; A. Newman (1:46)

M. Anselm: In your ExComm report, did you say the ICC and EC have come to some agreement on the

changes to the policy and that it will be voted on electronically?

A. Newman: I am considering putting it into an electronic vote because we have come to an agreement and that was the requirement in the motion that was approved previously. We've updated the motion based on the agreement. I'll send that language out to everyone and we will either do a really quick vote in person at the next meeting or we will do an electronic vote, whichever works better for the schedule because things are pretty packed.

Do we have any updates from our nominations officer?

C. Hull: Of the 43 people who could vote, 35 have done so. The uncontested candidates all got elected and Richard is our next chair.

Agenda Item No. 13: Adjournment; A. Newman (1:53)

Attendance 4/10/2025

<b>Name</b>	<b>Relationship to Senate</b>	<b>Attended</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Relationship to Senate</b>	<b>Attended</b>
Adrion, Amy	ALT CAD Senator		Lanzafame, Joseph	COS Senator	X
Aldersley, Stephen	Communications Officer/ SOIS Senator	X	Laver, Michael	CLA Senator	X
Anselm, Martin	CET Senator	X	Lee, James	ALT CET Senator	
Barone, Keri	Treasurer/CLA Senator	X	Liu, Manlu	SCB Senator	
Boedo, Stephen	ALT KGCOE Senator		Malachowsky, Samuel	Vice Chair/ GCCIS Senator	X
Brady, Kathleen	ALT NTID Senator	X	McCalley, Carmody	ALT COS Senator	
Brown, Tamaira	Senate Coordinator	X	McLaren, Amy	CAD Senator	X
Butler, Janine	NTID Senator		Newman, Atia	Chair/CAD Senator	X
Capps, John	CLA Senator	X	Newman, Christian	GCCIS Senator	X
Chiavaroli, Julius	ALT GIS Senator		Olles, Deana	COS Senator	X
Chung, Sorim	SCB Senator	Excused	Olson, Rob	ALT GCCIS Senator	
Cody, Jeremy	COS Senator	X	O'Neil, Jennifer	ALT CET Senator	
Coppenbarger, Matthew	COS Senator	X	Osgood, Robert	ALT CHST Senator	
Crawford, Denton	CAD Senator		Padmanabhan, Poornima	KGCOE Senator	
Cromer, Michael	ALT COS Senator		Puchades, Ivan	KGCOE Senator	X
Cui, Feng	ALT COS Senator		Ray, Amit	CLA Senator	X
David, Prabu	Provost	X	Reinicke, Bryan	ALT SCB Senator	



Davis, Stacey	NTID Senator	X	Ross, Annemarie	NTID Senator	X
Deese, Franklin	CAD Senator	X	Ruhling, Michael	CLA Senator	X
Dell, Betsy	CET Senator	X	Sanders, Cynthia	ALT NTID Senator	
DiRisio, Keli	CAD Senator		Shaaban, Muhammad	ALT KGCoe Senator	
Eddingsaas, Nathan	COS Senator	X	Song, Qian	SCB Senator	X
Fillip, Carol	ALT CAD Senator		Staff Council Rep	Ross Hisert	X
Ghazle, Hamad	Operations Officer/CHST Senator	X	Student Government Rep	Joshua Anderson	X
Ghoneim, Hany	ALT KGCoe Senator	X	Sweeney, Kevin	ALT SCB Senator	
Hardin, Jessica	ALT CLA Senator		Thomas, Bolaji	CHST Senator	X
Hartpence, Bruce	ALT GCCIS Senator		Tobin, Karen	NTID Senator	
Hazelwood, David	NTID Senator	X	Tsouri, Gill	KGCoe Senator	X
Hull, Clyde	ALT SCB Senator	X	Van Aardt, Jan	ALT COS Senator	
Jadamba, Basca	COS Senator	X	Warp, Melissa	ALT CAD Senator	X
Johnson, Dan	CET Senator	X	Weeden, Elissa	GCCIS Senator	X
Johnson, Scott	GCCIS Senator	X	White, Phil	ALT GCCIS Senator	
Kray, Christine	CLA Senator	X	Williams, Eric	GIS Senator	X
Krutz, Daniel	ALT GCCIS Senator		Worrell, Tracy	ALT CLA Senator	
Kuhl, Michael	KGCoe Senator	X	Zanibbi, Richard	GCCIS Senator	X
Kwasinski, Andres	ALT KGCoe Senator		Zlochower, Yosef	COS Senator	X

Interpreters: Nicole Crouse-Dickerson and Jennaca Saeva

Student Assistant: Ben Bui

Presenters: Enid Cardinal, Emily Sherwood, Shelitha Williams, Kelly Kamish and Michelle Polowchak