

Faculty Senate Minutes of Meeting

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

Thursday, September 25, 2025

12:15 - 1:50 PM

Slaughter Hall 2220-2240

Attendance: See Below

Agenda Item No. 1: Call to Order; R. Zanibbi (12:17)

Agenda Item No. 2: Approval of Agenda; R. Zanibbi (12:17)

Approved by Acclamation

Agenda Item No. 3: Communications Officer's Report/Approval of Minutes; S. Aldersley (12:18)

Minutes of 9/11/25 Meeting, Approved by Acclamation

[September 11, 2025 Meeting Minutes](#)

Agenda Item No. 4: Executive Committee Report; R. Zanibbi (12:20)

Congratulations to everyone on the new US News report rating. Many of us don't totally trust how to interpret that but there's no denying that as our rankings go up we benefit directly in terms of enrollments and quality of students and the faculty we attract. We're #88 and I want to thank the faculty at large because we are the reason this happened. The Game Design program is listed at #3, Co-ops and internships at #5. And the Computer Science Department jumped 10 spots to #54.

In addition to the news about our rankings, tomorrow will be Dr. Sanders' inauguration. On Saturday, October 25th, we will have the second multi-senate retreat after the very successful inaugural one in April, when faculty leaders from 13 different institutions across the state participated in productive conversations about governance practice and challenges.

S. Aldersley: The retreat will be on the University of Rochester campus. In April we limited participation to the executive committees of faculty assemblies and senates across Western and Central New York, but we are not going to be so restrictive this time. So if you are interested in attending, please let me know. We don't have it fixed on the agenda yet, and we're still juggling the organization but we're hoping to have 50 or more attendees. We'll have an update closer to the time.

R. Zanibbi: You should have received two emails asking you to vote on the proposed committee name changes that have to be reflected in B2. Policy B5 requires a two thirds vote from the RIT faculty. As a reminder, we're changing DEIC to Access, Engagement and Success (AESC), and the RABC to Budget

and Planning (BPC). The associated minutes and motions, etc. are directly in the ballot itself. I contacted Ryan Raffaele about Dr. Thomas' question regarding the possibility of using the benchmark numbers in computing summer salary amounts on grants. He directed me to an administrative policy from the controller's office which says that summer salary cannot be more than one third of your base salary. So unfortunately that is not possible. On the faculty senate Google Drive, documents tab, you can find updates including time stamps on the status of policies under review, whether they have been approved and whether they are currently awaiting approval by the administration. This is now visible to all RIT faculty and staff so that if you are curious about the status of the policies that Senate is looking at currently and what actions have been decided on, you can find it here. Lastly, regarding H1B actions that the federal government is currently investigating: as you know the initial proposal was that a \$100,000 fee should be attached to employers applying for each of these visas. I don't need to tell you that higher education has a lot of H1B holders and potential holders both among faculty and students. I have had faculty reach out to me and tell me that they are impacted by this personally. It's not just the policy, but ripple effects on travel and other related decisions that people need to think about if they're not American-born. I was once an H1B holder myself and I have two students right now who have been hired by META and because they're brand new employees their H1B process hasn't begun. Clearly, this is something touching a lot of our own graduates.

B. Thomas: I exchanged emails with Denis Charlesworth recently because my postdoc is on an H1B visa, and there's a new research scientist being hired that's going to be on an H1B. He told me the university is not willing to file any new H1B applications at the moment. We know what we're going to do.

R. Zanibbi: Are we still in the comment period? This hasn't been ratified yet. Isn't it still simply a suggestion from the government?

B. Thomas: I think it's done.

A. Kwasinski: It's not yet clear how that is going to be implemented, for example, whether it will be \$100,000 per year or \$300,000 up front. From what I hear, and I'm sorry I don't have the source, it's possible that universities may be exempt. It's still up in the air because they haven't defined how they are going to implement it.

R. Zanibbi: That's my understanding as well. But as Bolaji points out, there are direct impacts in the short term. If anybody has concerns that they think Senate can speak to you or should be informed of, please do let us know.

Agenda Item No. 5: Staff Council Update; N/A (12:29)

No Report

Agenda Item No. 6: Student Government Update; Igor Polotai (12:29)

Hello everyone. I'm the student senator for GCCIS and I will be the SG representative this year, hopefully every week. So if you need a student perspective on any of your charges, please let me know. Every so often I'll provide updates on what's SG is doing.

Agenda Item No. 7: Standing Committee Charges; R. Zanibbi (12:30)

R. Zanibbi: You should have had access to a Google sheet that showed all of the current charges we're considering for approval. For context, the practice in recent years has been to bring all the charges to the full body for approval before they're given officially to the committees. We've shared the charges with all the committees, so there has been some discussion already and last week at the committee lunch we made some changes and found out some charges have been completed or wouldn't be able to be executed. In terms of process, we collected charges from the standing committee reports submitted in May. This included both continuing charges and new ones they proposed. There were 51 of those. The ExComm then opened a Qualtrics survey that closed on September 2nd and from that we initially had 82 charges, many of which were duplicates, some we combined because they had shared concerns and some we declined. If you had a charge that was declined or you have constituents whose charge was declined, we will be emailing them to let them know why that occurred. So in the end we had 88 charges that were reviewed last Thursday at the standing committee lunch. From that discussion we ended up with 68. So now we need to approve the charges asap because we want the committees to start their work and they need an official mandate to do so.

So here's the game plan. You can see the complete accounting on tab 3C. We're going to be presenting groups of charges and instead of voting on them one at a time, we're going to vote on them by committee. Our goal here is to first approve charges as currently worded wherever possible. The reason is that if the intent of a charge is clear, even if it's not worded clearly, it's not a good use of Senate's time to wordsmith it. But if there is a charge that needs closer consideration, we'll defer that for now. We're trying to do the easy stuff first basically so that we can get through the charges relatively quickly.

M. Laver: I would like to make a motion that we approve all charges as listed.

R. Zanibbi: I desperately want to second that.

M. Laver: The executive committees has looked at them, the standing committees have looked at them. I mean what are we going to do?

R. Zanibbi: The only reason I do want to go through them is I just want to make sure nothing slips through the cracks. But we'll try and be quick about it.

P. Padmanabhan: If the committee wordsmiths them, do they have to come back to us for approval?

R. Zanibbi: No? If it really is just a restatement and the intent's the same, we don't care. So first we'll look at charges for the ICC and Grad Council.

H. Ghazle: There's a motion on the floor and we didn't ask for a second.

B. Thomas: Second.

R. Zanibbi: So the motion is to approve all 68 charges in a single block.

C. Hull: I'm sorry, I believe that the charges do have to be presented on the floor of the Senate and not simply emailed before they can be voted on. We could however vote on all of the charges as one block at

the end of the presentation. I think that would be fine.

R. Zanibbi: I'm going to present charges and we're going to vote on them in blocks of three to five at a time. We're not going to be going charge by charge.

H. Ghazle: There's a motion on the floor, even if it's against policy.

M. Laver: I'll withdraw my motion.

H. Ghazle: The motion doesn't belong to you any more. Once it's been seconded, it belongs to the floor.

R. Zanibbi: I think Clyde's point is well taken but we will hold the vote now.

Senator ?: If we're voting to go against policy, I believe it requires a two thirds majority.

R. Zanibbi: It's been suggested that we bring up the spreadsheet and just quickly scroll through all the charges.

Senator ?: That doesn't feel like a good idea.

B. Thomas: The majority of these charges are carry-over charges from last year. Why are we discussing them again?

R. Zanibbi: We're discussing them for two reasons: because we want to ensure that everyone is clear on what is being charged and because we want to be mindful of the limited time the committees have to do what they are charged to do.

C. Hull: I would love for us to be done with all these charges today. I would totally support that. I like the idea that the executive committee is already proposing to do an expedited review that gets us to all of them quickly. I believe that's consistent with policy. Also the idea of let's not drag this out. The discussion that we're having right now is actually dragging it out. It's counter-productive. I would like to vote on the motion now. Let Richard do his thing without any further interference.

L. Villasmil: I've had my AI assistant look at the senate policy and I don't see how Senate has to approve the charges. The policy says that the executive committee reviews the charges and assigns them. So although I disagree with approving them in one block, I say let's go fast.

H. Nickisher: I agree with Larry. I'm looking at B2.9.2.1 and 9.2.2. It doesn't seem readily visible that they have to be presented as described.

R. Zanibbi: I'm going to call the question on the motion at this point.

Motion failed: 16/19/3

R. Zanibbi: We will now go through the sets of charges as quickly as possible. For ICC, we have one carry-over charge: getting new policy language in B2 to reflect the current voting practice, which is the colleges run the elections for all committees, including subcommittees of ICC. Okay, so we just want the policy to reflect that. Second, explore a possible framework for the performing arts curriculum at RIT that accounts for NYSED, Gen Ed standards along with Middle States Accreditation standards. The program has been growing quite a bit and there are some curricular consistency questions that have been raised and there's a concern that this may impact workloads, hiring and resource allocation for the entire

Institute.

Next charge: Graduate Council. Only one charge that was proposed at last week's meeting: to collaborate with the Provost in collecting information about Master's programs with low enrollment and to work through considerations for merging and sunseting Master's programs. This is a priority for the Provost this year. Work is ongoing and this is the best body to do that work.

Motion to approve the previous three charges for ICC and GCC.

Seconded by ?

Motion passed by Acclamation

Next, charges for the General Education and Honors Curriculum committees. First, contribute to the implementation of the course management system within the new Course Leave system that requires general education approvals and records. And related to this is updating course outline forms suggesting more detailed instruction for filling out the forms. This will need to be done in collaboration with the other curriculum committees. Next, a new charge from the last year's committee report proposing to continue the work with the Educational Effectiveness Assessment Office on the general education framework. There are no new charges for the Honors Curriculum committee.

Motion to approve the two charges for the GEC.

A. McLaren: Second

Motion passed by Acclamation

Next, carry-over charges for the University Writing Committee: develop writing intensive course recertification requirements and a policy to make that happen; support faculty development based on writing intensive faculty survey data. This is ongoing with workshops already having been given related to things like scaffolding writing. There are plans to disseminate resources this year. New self charges: develop a clear process for writing intensive and course recertification, including integration with the Course Leaf system; expand faculty development offerings focused on linguistic bias and address linguistic bias in writing assessment particularly for the STEM and technical disciplines; develop and post guidelines for AI use in writing intensive courses and work with the Academic Affairs committee on a related charge around syllabi, language and policy changes related to AI.

Motion to approve the five charges that we just saw for the UWC.

S. Johnson: Second

Motion passed by Acclamation

Next, the Academic Affairs Committee. A carry-over charge re: Policy D.8 revisions on academic integrity and related updates to policy D18.2 on student appeals to align with proposed revisions that were presented at Senate in May. The D.8 revisions have already been examined but need to be reviewed because the changes are quite substantial and 18.2 has to be revised to reflect them. Next, a modified charge: Develop language for AI use in syllabi and associated RIT policy to clearly define student and instructor expectations. The language needs to appropriately reflect the needs and responsibilities of both groups and include a framework that fully considers differing levels of AI use including zero AI use.

S. Aldersley: How does this charge interact with the charge we just approved for the UWC?

R. Zanibbi: The UWC charge is specifically related to designated writing intensive courses. This is broader. Next, review the numerical criteria for graduation with honors and benchmark against peer institutions and make recommendations to adjust. There are concerns from the person who submitted this that grade inflation over time has increased the number of graduates with honors.

Motion to approve the three charges that we just saw for the AAC.

P. White: Second

L.Villasmil: If we approve this we will have approved 13 charges without any discussion. I would like to ask everyone a question: who read the charges before coming and who has any objection to any of the charges.? I presume you know where I'm going?

R. Zanibbi: No, I don't.

L.Villasmil: My proposal to approve all 60 charges in one go.

R. Zanibbi: Right and we rejected that.

L.Villasmil: Now we are on number 14 and we are going to keep approving them.

R. Zanibbi: We're almost done with this for today. We're going to come back next time. We are not going to go through 68 today.

L.Villasmil: But that's my point. That will be one week or two weeks that the committees are not working because we have not approved their charges.

R. Zanibbi: Right. But I'm afraid this is the procedure we're following. We've even had a vote to stipulate this will be the procedure.

L.Villasmil: I just read the policy and it says we don't have to approve.

R. Zanibbi: Right. But we tried to approve it as a block and that failed.

L.Villasmil: I just want to think of people's time and everybody crying because the charges haven't been approved.

R. Zanibbi: I understand.

Motion passed by Acclamation

R. Zanibbi: We now have one last charge to consider and I have a question about it. Do we have a representative from the AAC here? There was a charge put forward and it simply said contact hours versus credit hours for direct instruction. Can you elucidate on the motivation for this, Joe?

J. Lanzafame: This has come up several times, most recently when Ellen was Provost and there is always this question about how different colleges treat workload calculations. Some use contact hours and some use credit hours. And so the issue is generally labs which are like one credit hour but three or four contact hours or studios which are sometimes one credit hour and six contact hours. I don't know if the Provost's

office is interested in opening this particular can of worms.

R. Zanibbi: But it was put forward as a carryover charge from the AAC, so apparently they want to take it up.

P. David: This is the first time I'm coming across this. Chris is here. Do you have any insight on this charge, Chris?

C. Licata: I didn't hear.

P. David: This charge is about contact hours versus credit hours. I'm sure we've dealt with this in the past.

C. Licata: We have to follow the federal and Middle States definition of credit hour, which is very specific about the number of hours, contact hours that constitute credit hours. That's what we follow. How we calculate faculty workload based on credit hours versus contact hours is not something that falls under the purview of the credit hour definition. What does fall under the purview is how we count contact hours into the designation of credit hours when assigning to a course. I don't know if that helps. Was that your question?

P. David: Yes. Thank you. This is new to me. I can meet with the committee. Chris or I can meet and get back to you with something more concrete.

R. Zanibbi: That would be helpful. I think Joe's clarified that it does relate to how workloads are computed for faculty.

Motion to approve the final charge today for the AAC.

Dan Johnson: Second

J. Zlochower: It's an incomplete sentence. I know we're not wordsmithing but it's not a motion.

R. Zanibbi: I think it would be correct to understand this as contact hours versus credit hours as they impact the identification of workload. I agree the language is not great but this is the language we've been given.

J. Zlochower: If this isn't irresponsible to send forward then I withdraw my objection.

R. Zanibbi: I think the committee understands this is about workload related to credit hours.

P. Padmanabhan: I agree with Joseph. I think this is vague. Is it possible that we ask the committee to write the charge before we vote on it?

R. Zanibbi: Shall we move to table?

H. Ghazle: There was a motion on the floor which was seconded by Dan. So we have to vote.

Motion to vote by acclamation fails on an objection.

Motion to approve the charge as written.

Motion passed: 23/12/3

[Standing Committee Charges Presentation](#)

Agenda Item No. 8: Faculty Evaluation Ratings and Frequency Discussion; P. David (12:55)

R. Zanibbi: Dr. David is here to talk to us about the proposed changes to the evaluation cycles and ratings for faculty that Senate passed last year. In spring, there was a conversation between the deans, the Provost, some other administrators and the senate executive and there were some objections raised. Dr. David has come back to talk to us about that and to continue the conversation around these important issues. I also want to thank members of FAC for being here today.

R. David: I tried to recruit some reinforcements. The deans and department chairs said they didn't want to come. This is really important work. I know a lot of work went into both of these motions. Faculty Senate voted on them and there was a lot of support from faculty and the Senate for both of these proposals. So when they came to me, I had to think about them and my goal today is to explain my thought process. The goal is not to persuade you to change your opinion, but to give you my perspective and hopefully how we're going to proceed.

Before I do that, I've been thinking a lot about what's happening in the country today and I've been reading Jonathan Haidt on the subject of polarization. He says that there are two kinds of polarization. One is more of a functional kind which has to do with differences of opinion based on ideas and thought. And that's what we have here. That's what the academy is all about, and certainly we should have disagreement if we have a robust marketplace of ideas. He also says the more corrosive dysfunctional aspect of polarization is affective polarization, which is the moral outrage that we see not just in our country but around the world. Everybody staking a claim and there's just no room for the other side and I hope we don't get there. Our campus should be about robust discussion of ideas, agreement and disagreement. I hope we won't attribute motive and turn this into something much bigger than what it should be.

I want to walk us through the motions that were passed and see where we go with problem solving. The italicized portion of this slide is from the FAC proposals. Proposal #2 is a longer appraisal cycle for top rank faculty (full professors, principal lecturers, and research professors) and #3 is reduce the merit review rating from five categories to three categories.

In #2, the performance rating would be optionally extended over a three year review period. So one year senior faculty would be able to opt for a three year cycle instead of one year. You can see about 60% of the faculty were in favor of this process, then it came to the Senate and you voted overwhelmingly in favor. I struggled with this idea and when I discussed it with the deans, two were in favor and 12 opposed. The Council of Chairs discussed this and although they did not vote on it they were opposed to it. The FAC rationale was first to promote trust in faculty and second, and I think this is their real motivation, a longer review cycle gives people more time to pursue longer projects. For example, a book project is rarely completed in a year. It may take two, perhaps even three. So it gives people the freedom to go at it without being constrained by a yearly cycle. Third, to reduce administrative burden on faculty and academic unit heads which I think is also a fairly strong point. However, when we discussed this with department chairs and deans, they saw it as a responsibility. The fact that they signed on to do this and a yearly review is just part and parcel of the fabric of every workplace, including the academy. So they did not see this as much of a burden. They were not extremely perturbed by having to do a few extra reviews. The concern they expressed was lack of an opportunity to give timely advice to underperforming faculty. But the most important point for me here is the potential for disputes. The proposal leaves it to the chair and the faculty member to negotiate if it's going to be a one, two or three year cycle. But if there is disagreement, how do you solve it? It just leads to unnecessary grievance processes. The same is true, if, after you agreed to a three year cycle, a faculty member has a very good year and wants to go back to a

shorter term. They have a lot of flexibility and freedom to do that.

It's a good thing but when you have outliers or edge cases, you're going to have disagreement which leads to a lot of challenges. So the possibility of disputes is one of the biggest challenges here and there's longer term projects and how we can fit into the plan work. That's the key concern. You can certainly address that. And annual reviews are the norm was another reason. So given all of this, I don't think the longer review cycle benefits the institution or even the individuals. It may benefit a few individuals. I also worry a little bit about the optics. This benefits only senior faculty, whereas people who are lower in rank including staff don't get the same kind of option. That leads to broad inconsistencies, and I really don't want to get into that. If the concern is the longer review cycle gives people a chance to do good work or pursue long-term projects, we can sort that out, deal with that in the plan of work. I'm willing to work with FAC on this but otherwise I am not supportive. I've talked with the president, he too believes that this is not a helpful change.

The second proposal is to reduce the merit review categories from five to three. The pros include, it would give more transparency to the process and faculty development. And why do we need an annual review, it's a formative assessment. There's the workload for administrators to do the rating. So we want a more elegant and less stressful evaluative process and all ratings are highly subjective. Those are the reasons why we want to go to a three point scale. Other reasons are the merit raises are so small so why quibble over these ratings? They really don't translate to dollars and cents. What happens to those high performers who get an outstanding rating in a year where there is no money to be given? So all kinds of concerns along those lines. And finally the zero sum game where high performers get the reward if you have a five point scale and take up all the resources. On the faculty survey, a majority of a little over 50% supported trimming the five point scale to three points. In Senate, 22 voted in favor and 11 voted against. On the provost council, three deans supported it and 11 did not. And after discussion with the council of chairs, 80% did not support the change, while 11% supported it and 8% were indifferent. The people who supported it said it potentially simplifies the process and they wouldn't have to explain the difference between exceeds and outstanding.

Most were concerned about the loss of granularity and the demotivation of high performing faculty. Even if you don't have money, people want to be told that you really had an excellent year. As for the concern about merit raises and exceptional performance, most colleges now have a process that does acknowledge exceptional performance, even if it's a 0.1 or a 0.2, and they have policies written to fit the five point scale. So leaving out exceptional performance is one of the biggest concerns.

The last one, which worries me, is we'll reduce it to a three point scale, but exceptional performance can be annotated in the annual review, so a qualitative description that would say you had an outstanding year, but it doesn't translate to a rating, it just says 'exceeds'. But that to me puts us in a bind because it's not very transparent. Say two faculty are rated as 'exceeds', one person gets a 2.2%, another gets a 2.8%, because they had an amazing year, then there is no transparency, there is no rating to go by. It's all written in the letter. So the argument that outstanding is not helpful and not used is not true. If you look at the 2022 and the 2023 ranking numbers, they look similar. Let's look at the most recent one. In fact, 'exceeds expectation' is the norm. I think in part the department chairs and everybody believes, look, we do a lot of work, we don't have very much money to give, people are excellent and we want to give them that. And that's perfectly fine. If there is a distribution 'needs' and 'outstanding' are also being used. So the proposal is to use these three points and then all of a sudden those who are used to getting outstanding or who are getting outstanding now don't have a category to fit it. They get squished up.

This is something to think about. I want to work with the FAC or the Senate to come up with a plan. Many colleges have a policy based on the five point scale. Now we're going to change a whole bunch of stuff. I'm willing to negotiate on this if you can come up with a solution more than willing to do that.

Z.Tang: I'm the co-chair of FAC this year and the former chair, Corinna Schlombs, and the other co-chair, Cristian Linte are here with me. I really appreciate the Provost sharing his thinking on this and I don't envy your position. I just want to make a few very brief points. Number one is about the process. So I really want everybody to know that FAC worked on these two charges for more than three years,

meeting weekly. We have done all types of data collection, multiple runs around all stakeholders. We have considered all of the Provost's points and we believe we have successfully addressed those concerns.

One thing I'm really encouraged about is it seems both administration and faculty do not deny the benefits of the two proposals. It's mainly about details of implementation. If that's the case, we should focus on the principle and that's what university policy is about. So when we are thinking about denying a proposal that more than three quarters of the faculty and the vast majority of the Senate supported it is not sufficient to simply show the counter points, but also Provost David, I'm sorry, you ought to show why one stakeholder group's opinion overrides the opinion of the vast majority of the faculty who are actually doing research, teaching and service in the colleges. We are all scholars, scientists. We respond to not just data but also to compelling points. So if there's good reason to override the majority of the faculty's preferences as well as our belief that this is the best system to improve our performance, I think it should be shared with the faculty. Otherwise we're going to just sow more distrust, discontent, probably even anger on this campus.

My second point is the deans and the chairs need to be told, there's quite a few mismanagement conceptions here. One big one is the focus on the 5% for lack of a better word, 'underperformers'. All systems have 5% under performance. One of the biggest failings of managers and leaders is focusing on the very small minority and denying the legitimate requests of the majority. I hate to say it, but eventually that will just lead to anger on both sides.

Thirdly, I'm very surprised when we believe it's the norm. It's actually not the norm. FAC has the list of many universities, both private and public, who use five to seven years for evaluation. Also the annual evaluation only works for a certain type of work. Work that can be counted, which is not usually the best system to evaluate objective-driven tasks. Usually in a university setting, scholars are evaluated by external standards which normally takes more than one year, two years, three years. If we are being evaluated by external standards, we need to give faculty the room to really receive feedback from external sources. In public companies, employees are sometimes evaluated less than a year, sometimes more than a year. The most famous example is Elon Musk, one trillion dollar pay package to cover the next 10 years. Annual evaluations are definitely not the norm, especially for what we do.

Lastly, I want to talk about one size fits all. Our proposal is actually optional. If a college believes faculty are ready, it should let them have the chance to experiment. You said there are two deans who like this proposal. So let them experiment with it..

R. Zanibbi: Dr. David, would you like to respond?

P. David: I think those are all valid points. Look, if I didn't respect the faculty vote, I wouldn't be here. I see the merit and the reasons why the FAC and the faculty voted for this. But you may not have talked through all the other dimensions. In light of that, let's see what we can do in terms of finding a compromise.

S. Aldersley: Dr. David, when I was a chair, the then provost said, we can't all be outstanding. And so I took that message to heart and I started to not give everybody outstanding. So outstanding to me as I would explain this to faculty, it has a meaning. So does exceptional. Exceptional means exceptional. And yet over the last three years, the number of outstanding faculty at RIT has risen, and we now have a third of our faculty who are exceptional, which sort of doesn't make sense to me. I mean linguistically. Faculty have not had a merit increment over 2.5 for I don't know how many years and sometimes it's been zero. And I think you can't discount that it's not likely to change despite Senate's plea that it do so. We have to accept that. So you're arguing about decimal points, very small decimal points. And your fifth argument there on that slide was that you don't like the idea that somebody will be exceptional and somebody will not be exceptional and they'll argue about what the justice of that is. So that seems to disregard the context at RIT. I mean in the abstract, maybe so, but in the context that we've been faced with over the last few years, I don't think it has a whole lot of validity.

One last thing while I have the floor, thank you for the performance rating charts for 2022 to 2024. Can you also please send out the equivalent charts for the merit increments for 2023 and 2024. Is that possible? T I've seen one from 2022. I would like to see the more recent ones.

P. David: OK. I'll explore. I will do that.

L. Villasmil: The most important thing is the time we dedicate to completing the annual evaluation. I agree that tenure track faculty, when they are starting, of course they have to be evaluated every year. But as soon as you're associate and you get tenure it's because you have a vision, you have a plan, you have a track record. Probably for an associate professor, we can do it every two years. And then as my friend over here eloquently presented, when you are a full professor, when you have established your career, and people outside know you, then every three or four years, I mean at that point, you are part of the institution, and the institution knows you and you are giving back to the institution. So as regards timing, I completely agree that every year is too frequent. Seriously, I spend no less than a week on my evaluation and when I multiply that by the thousand faculty we have, how many hours are we talking about? So that's my position. To conserve our time for more important activities, like working with our students.

P. Padmanabhan: I think this was the first time I saw the data when the email went out, and I agree with Stephen that if outstanding is one third of the faculty, that seems like there's something wrong with the annual evaluation system itself and that needs to be reviewed. I also agree with Stephen that the FAC has worked on these proposals for many years and they present a lot of data and really a lot of back and forth and it seems like the discussion among the deans and the provost or the council of chairs did not have that kind of depth. If we don't have every stakeholder working together on the same charge, it seems like it's a waste of time. The faculty work so hard and put together the recommendation and the rationale, yet it doesn't seem to have had the same kind of depth of discussion when it comes back to us.

C. Hull: I agree with Larry's point. I have informal conversations with my chair multiple times a year and those are much more productive than the formal annual review process. If there were no annual review process for me, ever again, I would still get valuable feedback from the chair. The bigger thing I think is the process. It seems to the faculty that we worked on this for three years, we gathered a lot of research, we worked very hard only to realize that the administration watched it go for three years and then at the end they had two meetings, one with the deans and one with the chairs. And after these two meetings, with probably other things on the agenda, so I'm going to guess it was maybe 15 minutes here, 20 minutes there, and they said nope, we're going to overrule the three years worth of work.

I have seen a lot more administrative overruling of things coming out of Senate in the last couple of years than in previous years. One of the reasons might be I remember when I was chair of Senate, the Provost would go to the FAC and say, I spoke to the deans, this part of what you're doing is problematic before you bring it to Senate. Do you think you could try to address this so that when it comes through Senate you've already solved the problems that the deans would have with it? I'm not sure if that's happening now, but every time the faculty work really hard on something, it gets up to a certain point and the administration just says, Nope, we're done. It pushes us away. It makes us feel like this is not actually shared governance. This is pretend shared governance. This is we're the workers and the Administration are the bosses and that leads to places that nobody wants to go. So my biggest objection here is the process and the apparent comfort with which the deans, the council of chairs, the administration in general is comfortable just saying, Nope, you guys all voted for that, but we're going to say no and that's how it's going to be.

P. David: So for the last two years, I have not attended the FAC and I didn't know about these things that were coming in.

C. Schlombs: You were present when we presented at Senate

P. David: That's what I'm saying. The first time I saw it was when it came to the Senate as a big policy. That was the first time I was seeing it. So I agree 100% that it should be a collaborative process from the very beginning. Stakeholders should be involved. One quick point on 'outstanding,' the way the deans do it, they put people into two or three groups. That's the first thing they do. So outstanding means people who are doing it and most people get to exceeds. And then a third group, which is we sort people into three groups essentially. So each of the groups gets a certain percentage. If it's a 2% raise, they may say, okay, 2.2 for outstanding, be 1.8 for needs and 2.0 for exceeds.

R. Zanibbi: Dr. David, I apologize for interrupting, but we are already over time and I want to make sure we can get to two more comments and then I'm going to ask you to come back if that's okay.

T. Worrell: Thank you for sharing your thoughts on these proposals. A lot of what I was hearing from you seems to suppose that all the colleges are doing things in an equitable and similar way and that is simply not the case. I know there are entire departments where everyone gets an outstanding because they all agree on it together. So that's really inflating these outstanding numbers. It's skewing all of the data. And I believe that the FAC looked at all the variability across the colleges and I think that it would be important to go back and look again at how colleges are so very different. Your response maybe doesn't account for all that variability across the different colleges.

B. Lapizco-Encinas: Just to echo what everybody has said. The faculty voted for this, the faculty who are the ones that are doing the teaching, and yet it is the administration that declined these two proposals. We voted for a longer review cycle, it was declined. It's very important how much training the department chairs are getting on faculty evaluation. Because we just said evaluations are very important. Perhaps something that we should focus on is training resources for people that are doing the evaluations. In some departments very new and inexperienced department heads are doing these evaluations. If you are going to decline these two proposals and we're going to continue to evaluate everyone every year with the same rating scale, you need to ensure that the people doing the evaluations are much better prepared to do so.

R. Zanibbi: I want to thank Dr. David for coming. Originally, the deans were going to be here too because we do need to have all the stakeholders involved in this conversation. One of the things I think needs to be clarified in this conversation going forward is, are these evaluation ratings just about a cost of living increment? We call it the merit pool. It's the cost of living increment. And then there's this market and exceptional performance increment. One of the things a lot of faculty are not clear on, including myself, is that in fact a fixed percentage shaved out of a total pool and if so, how big is it? And these evaluations, I believe we are all imagining only talk about that merit pool cost of living increment that we're shading in percentages. And so I think there's a way to maybe separate those two things in this discussion.

[Faculty Evaluation Ratings Presentation](#)

Agenda Item No. 9: Research and Scholarship Update: Administrative Policy Charging Graduate Tuition on Grants; P. Padmanabhan (1:30)

P. Padmanabhan: I was chair of RSC last year and this charge came up in the middle of the year. In August, 2024, faculty suddenly realized there was a new page on the SRS website that changed policy such that faculty applying for external grants had to put in graduate tuition remission. It was definitely a shock. There was not much communication, no explanation of how it would work. And RSC's charge was to investigate and report on this and compare it to policies at other institutes. We did a survey in the fall and this brought up a number of different concerns.

This was the list we presented to Senate. I'm not going to focus much on this other than to say that there's a lot of faculty concern about how this would shift the way we allocate our resources so that maybe we'd want to have more postdocs than PhD students. That will take us away from the goal of becoming an R1 institution because the one thing that's stopping us from becoming R1 is the number of PhD students we graduate. This policy seems to really directly stand in the way of reaching that goal, which will in turn prevent us from getting better students and doing better research. The change was approved in February, so we had two months to work on it. It was very challenging to find data published on university websites. But we are all faculty, we all review grants and we have friends at other institutions, so we decided to email them and get the necessary data that way. In some cases we were able to find official policy language, but not all of the data comes from that. In any case, these are the numbers that are being used in practice. We wanted to compare the data with RIT's ranking on HERD (Higher Education, Research and Development), a spreadsheet that is published by NSF which ranks universities based on the research output. The HERD ranking ranges from 4 (I think that was the University of Michigan) to 269. We have data from 20 different universities, publics and privates, R1 and R2. I believe the cutoff in the HERD ranking between R1 and R2 is somewhere around 170-175. So here's the data. I think it's pretty convincing. There is a lot of variation in the policies of different institutes. It's true that many universities charge tuition, but it definitely appears that the amount RIT is charging is way, way higher than what other universities are charging. So among these 20, we are charging top four while we are bottom four in terms of ranking. In the data we collected, there's a wide variety of approaches. Some universities charge a fixed amount per semester. Some provide a stipend, others, base it on number of courses taken. For example, if a student passes their candidacy exam, then they're taking fewer courses. So the amount drops over time for them. Some don't charge tuition and others charge healthcare. So there's really a diversity of practices and it's not clear how RIT has come up with this number. However, it's clear this number is way larger than it should be. Our recommendation was for the administration to meet with the task force and get input from faculty who are reviewing grants, writing grants and conduct a thorough investigation of existing practices. That was where we left off in April. Over the last couple of weeks I've heard from faculty that there are other policies the Administration is talking about. Again, there's a great lack of communication.

A. Kwasinski: I am the PhD director for the Electrical Computer Engineering program. As you mentioned, this came as a surprise to the faculty. We never had any official communication about it from the Administration. And I say this not only in terms of what it says about communication, but what it says about consulting the stakeholders in advance of making this decision. The question is how the Administration came up with this policy and this decision. And by the way, this is contrary to what the Administration committed to when these programs were approved in Senate. The approval process for each PhD program includes commitments and plans in terms of the program's financials, including tuition.

S. Aldersley: I want to take issue with the phrase 'with input' on your last slide. Andres just used the term 'consulting'. We are supposed to be the core of the university. We should be doing more than just providing input to somebody else. I don't know what a more fitting phrase might be, but I suggest you raise the stakes a little bit on how much the Administration needs to listen to faculty on an issue like this as with many other issues too.

Q. Song: *inaudible*

P. Padmanabhan: I don't remember the exact details, but the policy was going to be spread out over three years. The first year it was a relatively small amount then it's 10% and ultimately it's going to go to 35% of tuition. What is shown here is what it would be when it's fully implemented.

S. Chung: This table is really informative. I have a clarifying question: do you have any revenue data and the number of students per school? That could influence how we interpret the data.

P. Padmanabhan: We didn't look at that.

S. Chung: We cannot just raise or lower tuition just because students want that, right? We need to know the financial status.

P. Padmanabhan: This is not for students, it's what faculty would contribute.

C. Hull: I echo what Stephen was saying. I think maybe we should see if we can have this policy be a faculty policy rather than an administrative policy. I would also like to point out that RIT has been losing money on the margin. We had a student apply who had full tuition. It was like \$80,000 per tuition and then a \$20,000 per stipend. The stipend is supposed to be more than that. So we said we could admit this student if RIT would be willing to give us enough money out of the hundred percent tuition to cover the gap in the stipend and RIT said, no, you'll have to find some other way to cover the gap. Go ahead and admit. We'll take the 80,000 and we won't give you any of it. So we were not able to admit the student because we had no way to close that gap. So we lost \$80,000 for 15,000. And in general, I feel like whatever the margin is, if the student has funding for more tuition than the minimum, then some of that should go into the discretionary fund of the advisor.

L. Villasmil: To support what Clyde just said, if I understand correctly, this is going to make my PhD student more expensive for me. That means RIT is making it more difficult for me to do research when our goal is to go up in rankings by doing more research. So this is yet another measure going against what we are trying to do.

C. McCalley: So RIT is basically saying if we want to put a graduate student on our grants, we have to pay the tuition. But as far as I can tell, what RIT is not doing, which I would bet most of those universities are, is saying if your graduate student is working as a teaching assistant teaching labs, their tuition is covered. And that's the flip side that I'm not seeing. I went to one of those highly ranked dots up there and almost all of my time as a PhD student was paid as a teaching assistant and that included my tuition and that's the other half of what those R1 are doing that I don't see RIT doing. That's the other piece of the pie that I would like to see considered.

S. Aldersley: You may recall if you were on the Senate last year that Atia, the then chair, managed to get the word 'research' into B2 as one of the primary responsibilities of faculty. That that only happened last year speaks to how quickly we've come without catching up with our policies. So I would put this in the context of faculty beginning to take more control over research policies. Right now we have none, and that's not going to help RIT move forward towards R1 status. So I think the context for this needs to be clear. We need to have more say in all research policies.

R. Zanibbi: Poornima, are you moving for us to vote to approve the creation of this task force

P. Padmanabhan: Yes.

C. Hull: Second.

Motion to create a task force to conduct a thorough investigation of existing practices and to consider a significant revision of current policy in line with those practices.

Approved unanimously.

[RSC Presentation](#)

Agenda Item No. 10: New Business; R. Zanibbi (1:45)

M. Reisch: On September 12th through the 14th, RIT lowered its flag to half staff for the killing of Charlie Kirk. Before going any further, I am adamantly opposed to solving any of our complaints or disagreements with violence. It was a horrible thing. And for those of you who miss Charlie Kirk, my sympathies go to you. President Trump issued a proclamation for the flags to be at half staff but such proclamations are only advisory and not legally binding mandates for state and university actions. The New York state guidance (New York State Executive Law Article 19, section 400) was for flags to remain at full staff from the 12th to the 14th. Because of the flag's significance as a symbol of our country and the feeling that our citizens have towards it, the flag should not be a vehicle for the expression of political, social, economic philosophy as some groups and individuals have used it. Our core values here at RIT require us to respect diversity and pluralism in student-centeredness. We are to make decisions that demonstrate the importance of students as the primary constituents of the university. And we try to treat every person with dignity.

Almost 35% of RIT student population identifies as a gender or sexual minority. 1,826 international students represent a hundred countries. When I looked into why our flag was set at half mast, it was made known to me that after considerable thought and discussion it was the decision of the RIT president's team. It was in line with longstanding policies of following federal and state guidance for lowering the flags at half staff. The reason why I think that decision was a mistake is that Charlie Kirk's work includes a number of inflammatory and bigoted comments. And I don't think that RIT should stand behind his body of work when so much points to the contrary. I have quotes if anybody needs them.

P. David: I think Mark summarized RIT policy correctly. If there's a federal proclamation on the flag, they follow that. And if there is a state proclamation, they'll follow that. The federal takes precedence over the state and if it's a federal proclamation, the national flag comes to half mast. And when the national flag is at half mast, then the state and RIT flags should automatically go down to half mast. If it's a state, then the New York flag is local. So we were just following policy. Our main intent here is, I think most of you would agree, we want to stay apolitical, because every time a flag proclamation comes, to sort it out, that is a really difficult task for an institution to take on.

M. Reisch: Melissa Hortman was murdered on June 14th and RIT's response was not to lower the flag. We are in New York State, and if the state is saying we should have our flag at full staff, then we should follow that first. If the federal is not a mandate but a guidance, it goes against the core principles of what RIT stands for.

J. Lanzafame: Well, I'm not sure about the Melissa Hortman case because New York State did have guidance and if as the Provost has said, we follow both federal and state guidance, we would've lowered the state flag at that time. I don't know if we did, because I don't pay that much attention to flags. I know nationally there has been a controversy that there was no federal guidance at the time. But the issue with

the state that I think the Provost was trying to say, is that if you lower the US flag, you have to lower the state flag because it's not allowed to fly higher than the federal. So I don't know that there's necessarily an issue there, but I do want to say I do agree with the President and Provost on this. You either have to accept all guidance or no guidance because as soon as you start arguing over any particular guidance, you're going to politicize every single event, which is unfortunate.

Agenda Item No. 11: Adjournment; R. Zanibbi (1:52)

Attendance 9/25/2025

Name	Relationship to Senate	Attended	Name	Relationship to Senate	Attended
Adrion, Amy	Alternate CAD Senator	X	Liao, Wenjie	Alternate CLA Senator	
Aldersley, Stephen	Communications Officer/ SOIS Senator	X	McCalley, Carmody	Alternate COS Senator	X
Alm, Cecilia	CLA Senator	Excused	McLaren, Amy	CAD Senator	Excused
Anselm, Martin	CET Senator		Newman, Christian	GCCIS Senator	X
Arena, Jason	Alternate CAD Senator		Nickisher, Heidi	CAD Senator	X
Barone, Keri	Vice Chair/CLA Senator	X	Officer, Cindy	Alternate NTID Senator	
Boedo, Stephen	Alternate KGCOE Senator		Olles, Deana	COS Senator	X
Brady, Kathleen	NTID Senator	X	Olson, Rob	Alternate GCCIS Senator	
Brown, Jeremy	GCCIS Senator	Excused	O'Neil, Jennifer	Alternate CET Senator	X
Brown, Tamaira (sub Kara Grace)	Senate Coordinator	X	Osgood, Robert	Alternate CHST Senator	
Butler, Janine	NTID Senator		Overby, Katrina	Alternate CLA Senator	
Butler, Joshua	Alternate NTID Senator	X	Padmanabhan, Poornima	KGCOE Senator	X
Chiavaroli, Julius	GIS Senator	X	Perry, Andrew	Alternate SOIS Senator	
Chung, Sorim	SCB Senator	X	Puchades, Ivan	KGCOE Senator	Excused
Cody, Jeremy	COS Senator	X	Ray, Amit	CLA Senator	
Coppenbarger, Matthew	COS Senator	X	Reinicke, Bryan	Alternate SCB Senator	
Crawford, Denton	CAD Senator	X	Reisch, Mark	CAD Senator	X
Cromer, Michael	Alternate COS Senator		Rich, Lexi	Alternate CET Senator	
Cui, Feng	Alternate COS Senator		Ross, Annemarie	NTID Senator	X
David, Prabu	Provost	X	Sanders, Cynthia	NTID Senator	X
Davis, Stacey	NTID Senator	X	Shaaban, Muhammad	Alternate tKGCOE Senator	
De Wit Paul, Alissa	Alternate GIS Senator		Song, Qian	SCB Senator	X
DiRisio, Keli	CAD Senator	Excused	Staff Council Rep		
Eirikur Hull, Clyde	SCB Senator	X	Student Government Rep	Igor Polotai	X

Ghazle, Hamad	Operations Officer/CHST Senator	X	Sweeney, Kevin	Alternate SCB Senator	
Ghoneim, Hany	Alternate KGCOE Senator		Thomas, Bolaji	CHST Senator	X
Hardin, Jessica	CLA Senator	X	Tsouri, Gill	KGCOE Senator	
Hartpence, Bruce	Alternate GCCIS Senator		Villasmil, Larry	CET Senator	X
Jadamba, Basca	COS Senator	X	Warp, Melissa	Alternate CAD Senator	
Johnson, Dan	CET Senator	X	Weeden, Elissa	GCCIS Senator	X
Johnson, Scott	GCCIS Senator	X	White, Phil	Alternate GCCIS Senator	X
Kavin, Denise	Alternate NTID Senator		Wiandt, Tamas	Alternate COS Senator	
Krutz, Daniel	Alternate GCCIS Senator		Worrell, Tracy	Alternate CLA Senator	X
Kuhl, Michael	KGCOE Senator	X	Zanibbi, Richard	Chair/GCCIS Senator	X
Kwasinski, Andres	Alternate KGCOE Senator	X	Zlochower, Yosef	COS Senator	X
Lanzafame, Joseph	Treasurer/COS Senator	X			
Lapizco-Encinas, Blanca	KGCOE Senator	X			
Laver, Michael	CLA Senator	X			

Interpreters: Nicole Crouse-Dickerson and Sonya Chavis

Student Assistant: Ella Kolodziej

Presenters: Prabu David and Poornima Padmanabhan