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Faculty Senate Minutes of Meeting

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

Thursday, January 22, 2026   12:15 - 1:50 PM   Zoom

Attendance: See Below

Agenda Item No. 1: Call to Order; R. Zanibbi (12:16)

R. Zanibbi: Review of the agenda and description of activities for today.

Agenda Item No. 2: Approval of Agenda; R. Zanibbi (12:16)

Motion to approve agenda (R. Zanibbi/K. Barone)
  -Approved unanimously by acclamation

Agenda Item No. 3: Communications Officer's Report/Approval of Minutes; M. Laver (12:17)

Motion to approve the minutes (R. Zannibi/A. McClaren)

   -approved unanimously by acclamation

January 15, 2026 Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

Agenda Item No. 4: Executive Committee Report; R. Zanibbi (12:19)

A list of resources is available for anyone who wishes to access them
   -previous minutes, Robert's Rules, policies coming up for review, etc.

Senate business items
   -policy board is updated to reflect the policy changes, edits, related discussions for every senate meeting
   -holdover policies from last year are a separate category
   -sorted in reverse order form the last time senate reviewed the policy

New proposed charge for FSEC
   -multiple student concerts about assignments being due on reading day
   -Charge: Review and , as appropriate, revise language related to Reading Day in Policy D11: (Final Examination Policies). Current Policy States: "Under no circumstances shall a final examination or a final assessment be scheduled on reading day.
   -Motion to send this to the AAC for review (R. Zannibi/M. Anselm)
     -M. Reisch: I meet with students one on one on reading day; will this be excluded? Can faculty do

nothing at all? If students initiate this, is this alright? R. Zannibi: Yes, in fact, faculty should be available for consultation on reading day. Deana Olles: We do a "math crash" as a review on reading day, how about that? Richard: Yes,this is optional so these sorts of review sessions are appropriate.
  -Motion Passes (34-0-0)

New Guidelines document to provide information and guidance for senate committees and their members
  -senate work should take about 4-5 hours of work per week maximum
  -request to senate committees to encourage election of next year's chair now so that the chair can act as convener. This allows the committee to get to work quickly and wrangling around selecting a chair at the beginning of the semester.
  -P. Padmanabhan: Have you communicated with chairs of the committees? Richard: We are going to do this today; this is coming to senate first.

LRPEC language revisions
  -in the final stages of checking edits. Very minor edits such as removing gendered languages, etc. By Policy B5, FSEC can correct such changes and send directly to the administration. We will send them to senate for transparency. If disagreement in FSEC, it will go to senate.

Ballot out for B2 revisions. Two questions about adding two students to ACC as voting members; adding clinical faculty to the voting faculty. Because it is achange to B2, ⅔ of the faculty who vote have to approve. Please vote!
  -C. Hull: Question from constituent: if the appointment of clinical faculty is only for one year, is it appropriate for them to vote? H. Nikisher: This rank was modelled after the lecturers. J. Lanzafane: 1 for assistant, 5 for associate, and 7 for full. J. Lanzafane: the language mentions all three links, but the actual policy revisions only include the two senior ranks, so a bit of confusion. R. Zannibi: thought about how to proceed. C. Hull: My constituent would probably vote yes, then. Heidi: number of votes in already? R. Zanibbi: over 140 so far. H. Ghazle: may be beneficial for us as an executive committee to look at this and bring back to senate. R. Zannibi: We can do this. Heidi N.:
  Motion to modify the language in the poll and then let people keep voting. (H. Nikisher/C. Hull)
    -most people would not have noticed the difference and would likely not change the outcome. B. Hartpence: As long as there is a mechanism to handle that, I'm fine. P. Padmanabhan: I object to changing anything because vote is already out there. Anonymous vote, so no way to know who would have changed their vote without anonymity. R. Zanibbi: Will speak with FSEC and get back to senate.
  -Clyde: Motion to table to motion (C. Hull/H. Ghazle).
  -Motion Passes with no objection.

Active Task Forces
  -student retention, academic freedom, graduate tuition, longer evaluation cycles for senior faculty,
  -P. Padmanabhan: We have been looking at how policy is being implemented and examining lack of uniformity across programs. Also trying to make sure money comes back to PhD program to benefit the program, like recruiting budgets, travel budgets for students, etc. R. Zanibbi: Are you looking at having more staff in these programs? P. Padmanabhan:Staff would be dependent on how overhead money is used, but it could be a consideration.   C. Hull: If you look at how overhead money gets dispersed on grants, some goes back to faculty, but much of it goes to the university, and students and faculty who need resources are harmed. I would like the taskforce to look at this to make sure that money goes not only to the university, but to the program and the chair/PI.

  -Student Retention: C. Hull: A bit of turnover on the taskforce; we are looking forward to bringing things to senate, just not today!

Reminder; Provost Town hall to give updates on programs, especially master's programs. February 12.

Agenda Item No. 5: Shared Governance Update; I. Politai/J. Prescott (12:37)

Student Government

-I. Politai next week the downtown bus will be in effect. SG trying to get the bus as a regular feature, but this is one time only. Please get the word out so we can get resources for a permanent bus.

Staff Council

J. Prescot: Reminder, we did endorse E27 after seeing some changes which we were pleased with. Only one vote against. [Presentation is later today, so no need for summary here].

Agenda Item No. 6: Policy C06.0 (Policy Prohibiting Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation) VOTE; R. Pelta (12:45)

R. Zannibi: changes are highlighted in the document vs. the version at senate, right? R. Pelta: changes are on both documents.

-R. Pelta: I will only speak to what is actually changing since last time at senate.

-we originally removed language about no contact order and interim accommodation measures, and all related process details, but based on feedback, these will remain in the document.

-added pregnancy status to list of protected categories

-complainant definition was made more specific. RIT is a complainant when there is an individual who wants to remain anonymous or not participate but RIT still elects to investigate because of safety concerns, or when the complainant is not a member of the RIT community.

-complainant cannot remain anonymous, thus reporting person can't be a complainant. Also a cross reference to the complainant person defined in section M.

-employee file: Question about why were we removing language about employee file being separate from confidential employee relations file. We have kept the language back in based on feedback. Originally removed because "file" was confusing language because all records are electronic and no longer kept in hard copy "files." Still, these two files are separate.

Questions?

B. Thomas: I think you are looking for a vote from senate. I do have a concern that I've raised multiple times. I feel that my concerns have not been taken into consideration. I had a student complain that I was spreading Covid in class. HR was investigating me, but it took some time, and in the meantime, I was very upset. HR did not know enough about Covid–I was informing them! There was no recourse for faculty who have complaints filed against them! What happens when people are falsely accused? Punishment for false accusations? R. Pelta: Policy on Policies says we have to review policies every 5 years, and make updates. We are not removing rights. We have to make some updates. HR does not

investigate under this policy, but Compliance and Ethics does. There are rights outlined for all parties. Documentation they receive also outlines rights. Both parties given the right to respond and be interviewed. There is an expectation of honestly and good faith, both are present in RIT policy. C. Hull: I am wondering if Bolaji has any suggestions as a way to improve the policy. B. Thomas: Maybe they need to put a small section (F section already from S. Aldersley) that says there can be a punitive action for filing false accusations. Example: if a team member files a complaint that impugns your reputation, the process is so long and there can be real damage. B. Hartpence: I have a colleague that wrote a book on sources of information. When you're updating a policy you can either insert language to reflect federal law, or you can reference federal law, or you can do both. Rather than having the language about protected categories, why don't we just reference federal law? R. Pelta: our definitions are consistent with federal law, and they are defined in many policies, mainly for ease of reading and reference. B. Hartpence: I understand, but if someone has a question about Title IX, they should just go to Title IX. A summary in policy is not the actual Title IX policy. M. Reich: With current political back and forth, if we are going to do that, we have to also look at what NYS is doing rather than just HHS. Clyde H.: I would like to have everything spelled out in policy because cross referencing can be frustrating. Also, we should not just have this policy come back again and again, but we can still address concerns in the future. R. Zanibbi: I agree and do not want to hold this up.

Motion to approve revisions to C6 (C. Hull/M. Laver)

Motion passes (28-4-7)

Policy C06.0 Presentation

Policy C06.0 Edits

Agenda Item No. 7: Policy E27.0 (Staff Performance Appraisal) VOTE; L. Burger (1:08)

L. Burger: Director of Learning and Organizational Development. Came to senate previously to present, although staff had not voted on yet. Now policy revisions were reviewed by staff, we answered staff questions, and made some revisions based on feedback.

   -Primary changes are: 1. Going into Workday, and there were a handful of adjustments: performance appraisals will be launched by my team for consistency. Standard appraisal process focused on goals and competencies. Approval process is streamline: today 2 approvals are needed, but now only direct supervisor. Still the opportunity for senior leaders to review, although. Also, update to proceed for 2 timelines: fiscal and calendar year; currently they can be at any time. Rating scale being updated from 5 to 4 scale.

   -Staff council suggestions had almost nothing to do with these proposals, but with policy verbiage. Made updates to rating definition (e.g, from always to often); a pilot in March with 500 staff members to make sure that new processes are working before whole thing is rolled out, but Staff Council wanted all staff to be on a 4 point scale even during the pilot. We are OK with that. A. Weeden: I am confused as to why staff would vote for a 4 point scale where there is only 1 option above meeting expectation, but two negatives below meets expectation. L. Burger: Ratings are inconsistently applied across the university (some give only 5s, some never give 5s). There is a tendency to not be able to differentiate between 4 and 5. J. Prescott: Yes, that is exactly why. R. Zanibbi: Reviews tend to cluster around 3 points, actually! Clyde: Faculty have been asking for a 3 point scale. Many want a positive, meets expectations, and a negative. I would want only one negative. R. Zanibbi: Want to keep

discussion on proposal for E27, and staff did approve. M. Laver: patronizing to think faculty know better what's good for staff than staff do. S. Aldersley: I really hope this 4 point rating scale is not mirrored for faculty; I am afraid it will.

Motion to accept revisions to policy (M. Anselm/P. Padmanabhan)

Vote Result: 38-1-3

Policy E27.0 Presentation

Policy E27.0 Edits

Agenda Item No. 8: Proposed Policy C03.0 (Intellectual Property Policy) Changes and VOTE; J. Eilertsen (1:20)

Was only one change suggested to the 4 changes proposed to the IP policy.

   - First change had some small revisions. Clear language that deals with those who wish to donate IP to RIT. Added a provision that if RIT chooses not to commercialize it, we can assign the IP back to the donor.

   -Suggestion to second change: add a section D to address instances where students are supported by RIT but not employees or co-op students. We want them to retain their IP–such special agreements are OK and are covered by IP policy.

   -Third item: nothing substantively changes, except two things. Faculty own copyright and scholarly works. Also, staff should be treated the same way.

   -Fourth change, we want to get rid of the incentive payments that are given for patents.   R. Zanibbi: senate already voted to approve number 4. Third item: these edits are much more sane!

Motion to approve these changes (R. Zanibbi/S. Johnson)

A. Kwasinski: I am tempted to vote no because of the removal of the 500 dollar payment. Logic is not clear in my mind. On the one hand the message is that it is not enough to incentivize disclosure, but on the other hand, it is enough to encourage non-commercially viable inventions. It implies it is an intentional decision by faculty to apply for a patent even though they know this is not a viable invention. Logic doesn't click for me. J. Eilertsen: different people would have different motivations. RIT has a very generous IP revenue distribution policy regarding people who submit patents, so we want people to submit these things becuase it benefits faculty tremendously. Also distracts from another issue: faculty and staff are required to submit IP to our office, and so saying we want an incentive just distracts from this. M. Reisch: For the IP being given to RIT, in the legality of it, is RIT going to be paying for this IP, is it going to be donated? And also, if a student wants to have it back and there was payment, do they pay same price, or is there an increase if the value has gone up? J. Eilertsen: it will be donated. RIT will take on costs for filing patents, especially for students who may not have the means to pay for this expense. RIT would share IP revenue with students the same way they would be for faculty/staff. Also, they can say they have a patent application filed on their behalf, even if nothing happens with the patent, so it helps their career. RIT's motivation is to have patents in the portfolio that can generate revenue.   If a student can do this without RIT help, we would almost 100 percent likely assign this to the student–we just want the best path to commercialization. H. Ghazle: Many universities pay researchers for their IP, Does such a small

payment incentivize innovation? Can we recognize intellectual contributions? And can we use an incentive to attract faculty to RIT? If faculty are financially benefitted, university and faculty interests are more aligned. J. Eilertsen: If RIT puts money into the patent, would RIT then want more money back if a student wants to have it back?   We try to recover costs, but that being said, we have returned IP to faculty at no real markup because we don't have the capacity to try to commercialize it. R. Zanibbi: As someone who holds 3 US patents, the money is in the rollout not in the patent itself, especially given the long process.

Motion result: 35-0-4

[Policy C03.0 Presentation](#)

[Policy C03.0 Edits](#)

Agenda Item No. 9: AI Updates - current status and proposals: C. Collison (1:35)

C. Collison:

   -AI hub was set up in 2025 from a taskforce recommendation. Highlights summary: first year report is circulated through senate. The lead is that we have some aggressive timelines given new president and new strategic framework. BoT meeting on February 26 and I will present at provost's town hall.

   -Tutorbot was launched recently (CGPT 4 platform). Asks faculty how they scaffold their learning and how they frame questions in their classes. Collects student feedback. No data goes back to the model, so it is secure. Works across multiple programs. This tool is based on a socratic method. Bot will help them move towards the correct answer rather than just give the correct answer.

   -AI foundry: Vic Perotti is faculty advisor to the AI club. Student ideas can be fleshed out and put in front of users/faculty members. Shoutout to Sharma/ Kazanchi for their NSF proposal. Stakeholder Perspectives:

   -Marty Stazer set up meetings with parents council and AI was the topic that came up most. Lots of questions about what RIT will do for their students given the rapidly changing landscape. Ethical use, creative use, etc. How do we make sure students are not using AI to cheat? Parents expect RIT to take a strong stand in AI–preparing students to be competitive in entry level positions when they leave RIT. Focus group feedback: in spring 2024, students said they were caught between encouragement and prohibition. They do recognize that you can only learn by using! Students admit they use AI tools to cheat in courses they don't care for. Students want roles on committees. We ran a 300 person pilot of tutorbot in a classroom setting. Students gave lots of feedback and now we've rolled out version 2 in a group of smaller pilots. Students are sceptical about the fairness of AI use, especially technology coming out of large companies, but AI can also be a democratizing force. If we are to answer parents' questions, we have to know how AI can work within our respective disciplines. Takes a lot of upskilling and professional development for faculty. It is intimidating for all of us! Funding opportunities to integrate AI in teaching. Faculty survey will try to capture how faculty use AI to teach their courses. Results will be shared out in various venues.

M. Reisch: With tutorbot, you did testing: how much testing done on how much do students retain. Some research suggests that retention is not great. C. Collinson: We did get data on this and results were within the margin or error.   R. Zanibbi: Tamaira will send this to senate. K. Leblevec: Concern about academic dishonesty from my constituents. CTL and your shop doing a great job in guiding us,

but polices will be needed to guide AI use on campus, especially for people who are not in STEM fields. We do not have a lot of recourse: we know a paper is written by AI, but we can't do anything about it: how do we approach this? Clear guidelines for policy is needed. Question: who can use tutorbot? C. Collinson: Yes! Survey to faculty will begin to shed some light on these questions. We have about 10-12 pilot users for TurboBot so far. About 46 respondents, and if you write to me, we will send you information about workshops and other material.

[AI Presentation](#)

Agenda Item No. 10: New Business; R. Zanibbi (1:54)

C. Hull: Senate should discuss what the faculty would like to see in the replacement for Jim Waters. R. Zanibbi: I am on the committee, and I can be a conduit. Have already shared concerns about resources for faculty, staff, and students.

Agenda Item No. 11: Adjournment; R. Zanibbi (1:56)

Attendance 1/22/2026

Name	Relationship to Senate	Attended	Name	Relationship to Senate	Attended
Adrion, Amy	Alternate CAD Senator	X	Lapizco-Encinas, Blanca	KGCOE Senator	X
Alm, Cecilia	CLA Senator		Laver, Michael	Communications Officer/CLA Senator	X
Anselm, Martin	CET Senator	X	LeBlevec, Kevin	CLA Senator	X
Arena, Jason	Alternate CAD Senator		Liao, Wenjie	Alternate CLA Senator	X
Barone, Keri	Vice Chair/CLA Senator	X	Mardini, Ihab	Alternate CAD Senator	X
Beck, Makini	SOIS Senator	X	McCalley, Carmody	Alternate COS Senator	
Brady, Kathleen	NTID Senator	X	McLaren, Amy	CAD Senator	X
Brown, Jeremy	GCCIS Senator	X	Nickisher, Heidi	CAD Senator	X
Brown, Tamaira	Senate Coordinator	X	Officer, Cindy	Alternate NTID Senator	
Butler, Janine	NTID Senator	X	Olles, Deana	COS Senator	X
Butler, Joshua	Alternate NTID Senator		Olson, Rob	Alternate GCCIS Senator	
Chiavaroli, Julius	GIS Senator	X	O'Neil, Jennifer	Alternate CET Senator	X
Chung, Sorim	SCB Senator	X	Osgood, Robert	Alternate CHST Senator	
Cody, Jeremy	COS Senator	X	Padmanabhan, Poornima	KGCOE Senator	X
Coppenbarger, Matthew	COS Senator	X	Perry, Andrew	Alternate SOIS Senator	
Cromer, Michael	Alternate COS Senator		Ray, Amit	CLA Senator	X
Cui, Feng	Alternate COS Senator		Reinicke, Bryan	Alternate SCB Senator	
DAmanda, Elisabetta	Alternate CLA Senator	X	Reisch, Mark	CAD Senator	X
David, Prabu	Provost	X	Rich, Lexi	Alternate CET Senator	
Davis, Stacey	NTID Senator	X	Ross, Annemarie	NTID Senator	X
De Wit Paul, Alissa	Alternate GIS Senator		Sanders, Cynthia	NTID Senator	X
DiRisio, Keli	CAD Senator	X	Shaaban, Muhammad	Alternate KGCOE Senator	
Eirikur Hull, Clyde	SCB Senator	X	Song, Qian	SCB Senator	X
Ghazle, Hamad	Operations Officer/CHST Senator	X	Staff Council Rep	Joanna Prescott	X
Ghoneim, Hany	Alternate KGCOE Senator	X	Student Government Rep	Igor Polotai	X
Hardin, Jessica	CLA Senator	X	Sweeney, Kevin	Alternate SCB Senator	
Hartpence, Bruce	Alternate GCCIS Senator	X	Thomas, Bolaji	CHST Senator	X
Hoople, Jason	Alternate KGCOE Senator	X	Tsouri, Gill	KGCOE Senator	X
Jadamba, Basca	COS Senator	X	Villasmil, Larry	CET Senator	EXCUSED
Johnson, Dan	CET Senator	X	Warp, Melissa	Alternate CAD Senator	
Johnson, Scott	GCCIS Senator	X	Weeden, Elissa	GCCIS Senator	X
Kavin, Denise	Alternate NTID Senator		White, Phil	Alternate GCCIS Senator	
Krutz, Daniel	Alternate GCCIS Senator		Wiandt, Tamas	Alternate COS Senator	X
Kuhl, Michael	KGCOE Senator	EXCUSED	Zanibbi, Richard	Chair/GCCIS Senator	X
Kwasinski, Andres	Alternate KGCOE Senator	X	Zlochower, Yosef	COS Senator	X
Lanzafame, Joseph	Treasurer/COS Senator	X			

Interpreters: Sonya Chavis and Dana Cardona
Student Assistant: Ella Kolodziej
Presenters: Rachel Pelta, Leah Burger, James Eilertsen and Chris Collison