

Faculty Senate Minutes of Meeting

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

Thursday, March 5, 2026

12:15 - 1:50 PM

Zoom

Attendance: See Below

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

R. Zanibbi called the meeting to order.

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

Motion to amend the agenda: move the LRPEC to new business to make room for policy E33.1 (R. Zanibbi/J. Lanzafame)

Motion passes without objection (E33.1 Now becomes Item 9 on the Agenda)

Motion to approve amended agenda (R. Zanibbi/S. Johnson)

Motion passes without objection

Agenda Item No. 3: Communications Officer's Report/Approval of Minutes; M. Laver (12:19)

Motion to approve the minutes (R. Zanibbi/S. Johnson)

Motion passes without objection

[February 19, 2026 Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes](#)

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

-Reminder that all senate information is in the Senate shared drive

-Green and Yellow highlights are recently updated items

-Senators can see all the work senate has accomplished this year

-4 active taskforces Student retention, graduate tuition, longer evaluation cycles for senior faculty, and academic freedom

-we are collecting committee reports in two stages: Monday after break, and then final report Friday April 17.

-reason is to triage the reports to tackle more pressing issues

-even a rough draft in the provided template is fine for the initial report

-Announcement: Leah Michelle is now active chair of Access, Engagement and Success Taskforce

-Spreadsheet is out for the BS in AI in order to share electives for the degree. COB has already put in courses.

- Degree is with the state, but not yet approved
- please have your curricular bodies put in courses from your college
- insert a note if there are some constraints around the course.
- Academic Freedom Taskforce
 - meeting with Provost and General Counsel about the Chicago Statement in Policy E2
 - edits from legal were proposed last year that senate did not approve
 - General Counsel is happy to accept original version, so now that is to the president for approval
- Questionnaire is out to faculty about awareness and satisfaction of services and offices on campus
- M. Laver: ICC has started to grapple with the senate motion to solicit possible electives for proposed degree programs.
- Luncheon with the president is March 26th from 12-2.
 - Please RSVP. Hold for senate meeting that day is cancelled, and luncheon will take its place

Agenda Item No. 5: Shared Governance Update (12:30)

No updates today

Agenda Item No. 6: Policy E12.5 Isaac L. Jordan Sr. Faculty and Staff Pluralism Awards; S. Woodruff Whitmore (12:31)

First, shout out to University Council Executive Committee for allowing us to continue with these awards with the interim policy.

Biographical Background to Isaac Jordan presented

Why these changes? DEI renamed to Access, Engagement and Success

- focused on identifying gaps in access, engagement and success
- therefore, changes keep the spirit and intent of the awards, but align the policy language to the new language
- acknowledgement of André Hudson and Peggy Tirrell
- Changes sent to Dr. Jenkins and Dr. Colon for review and approval
- Met with the family, and the family was supportive of the changes

Today will focus on the major changes

- removing the word pluralism from the title; now named the Isaac L. Jordan Senior Faculty and Staff Awards
- changing language from diversity, pluralism, and inclusion to words such as access, engagement, success, community, and belonging.
- removed language of underrepresented groups and diversity
- listed policy C6.0 rather than listing all protected categories

Questions?

-B. Hartpence: How far back should we make our references? This policy references C6, but C6 has lots of definitions; should C6 reference its "ground truth" instead of us trying to list all of the details of that policy. Is there some ultimate truth that policies can refer to? S. Whitmore: The committee is sympathetic to this sentiment, but we feel this is the way forward. R. Zanibbi: Just looked at the policy and Human Resources/Legal Affairs are the responsible offices. Also, P. Padmanabhan pointed out that protected categories in the policy are defined by applicable federal and state laws, so that may speak to B. Hartpence's question about "ground truth." J. Lanzafame: I support 95 percent of it, or maybe 99 percent of it. I wish an adjective could be added to the award so that people know what the award is for. Otherwise, no issues. M. Reisch: I think any time we are removing DEI from our documents, we are preemptively bending a knee to the current administration. When pushed, they are losing in court. I will always vote against this type of work.

-S. Whitmore provided a detailed review of Red Line document (please see the redline document for all revisions)

Motion to approve Revisions to Policy E12/5 (R. Zanibbi/S. Johnson)

P. Padmanabhan: challenging when you really don't know what the awards are for. Other policies are very clear what they are for. Only if you've been at RIT for a while would you know. S. Whitmore: There is much more on the website, so it is clear there. P. Padmanabhan: Yes, but still not clear! R. Zanibbi: If you had to add such language, what would that be? S. Whitmore: This is similar to other named awards such as the Simone Legacy Award. K. Jenkins: Other awards identified by name only, so this is consistent. P. David: I would support a slight change in name to indicate that the award is for AES. R. Zanibbi: Can you please go back to committee and investigate whether some verbiage can be added to the name to indicate it is for AES? S. Whitmore: Yes, absolutely.

Motion Passes (20-16-1)

R. Zanibbi: I do understand the sentiment that having a word in the title to indicate what the award is about is important to some. P. David: I catch your drift. Sandra and her group would have to work on it, but if there is something we can do to make it clear that the award has to do with AES, I am supportive. M. Laver: In my 18 years at RIT, I have a tremendous amount of respect for the Division of Access, Engagement, and Success, and so my yes vote is a recognition of all of their exemplary work and good judgment, although I do wish, I suppose, for the record, to indicate that I agree with Mark and those who in turn agree with him. Thank you.

[Isaac L Jordan Sr Awards Presentation](#)

[Policy E12.5 Edits](#)

Agenda Item No. 7: Policy D08.0 (Student Academic Integrity Policy) ; B. Herring (12:56)

-Returning for a vote on Policy D8. Was presented several times before and under review for the past 10 years.

-Major changes: updates list of academic integrity violations, moving to an online system instead of ad hoc emails, adjustments to the hearing process, faster appeal process ultimately ending with dean of the college where the incident occurred, language about what happens when a student decides to withdraw after a decision has been made.

-Recent feedback from senate incorporated into the policy:

-Outcome should be an educational action

-Clarification of when the grade converts from W to F. If the decision in the process results in an F for the course, but the student has already withdrawn, the W would convert to an F.

-These were the only changes received.

Motion to approve revisions to Policy D08 (R. Zanibbi/C. Hull)

Motion Passes (39-0-0)

M. Laver: I have been involved with this for a few years now, so I do want to, for the record, thank the Academic Affairs Committee under Bruce's leadership, and other leadership before him, and the many, many people involved with this, including Student Affairs, the Ombuds office, and Student Government. This has been a heroic effort. So, Bruce, thank you for your leadership, and thank you to everybody that worked on this. C. Hull: I agree with that sentiment! R. Zanibbi: Yes, thank you very much! We are grateful to you and the committee.

[Policy D08.0 Presentation](#)

[Policy D08.0 Edits](#)

Agenda Item No. 8: Student Government Paw Prints; K. Beck (1:03)

Katie Beck is the Chair of Academics and Co-ops Committee of Student Government

-Pawprints represent student petitions that have garnered 200 signatures or more

Course information available before enrollment (212 signatures)

-students want to have information that would be on a syllabus.

-expand course descriptions on SIS. We understand that it is not possible to share all syllabi, but perhaps faculty can opt in and share a description of the course work, including work load, teaching style, materials, and the like.

Change policies regarding generative AI (about 350 signatures)

-We are aware of the variety of views and uses.

-perhaps consider AI guidelines or opt outs for AI assignments.

-more transparency about AI in courses.

No exams during the Career Fair (224 signatures)

-We have spoken with some professors who say they are not told far enough in advance when the career fair will be held in order to take that into account for their scheduling.

-We have already spoken with the Director of career services, who will be proactive in communicating the dates of the career fair as soon as they become known.

Transparency in purchasing course materials (253 signatures)

-All assignments should be turned in through MyCourses to avoid having to pay for other sites.

-We know this is not completely feasible, but homework services are expensive and students would just like transparency from the beginning when a course will use these additional pay services.

-this dovetails with the broader course description above

Extend the Add/Drop Period (393 signatures)

-Adding a week to the add drop period would be helpful.

-Of course, some courses would have to opt out if students can not catch up

-For example, Calc I and other Calc sections use the same materials, it's just that some Calc sections proceed at a slower pace, so students could drop the faster paced Calc class and move into the slower paced one.

Homework Return Policy (217 signatures)

-Policy [D5.0.IX.B](#) should be more strictly followed!

-Perhaps annual reminders of the policy or develop a way a student can report violations

Please no homework over breaks (207 signatures)

-same as above: more strictly followed and perhaps reminders!

Discussion

-P. David: Thanks for summarizing this and bringing it to senate. Some of these things are already policy, so awareness raising should be sufficient for those items. Regarding AI: mainly from CAD in this petition. Across campus there is concern, and that is a broader discussion. C. Hull: Thank you for all the work you've done here. Perhaps faculty not being forced to go to meetings over break can also be highlighted in any announcement. I'm very sympathetic to the idea that students should not be getting homework assignments during break, and, there's also the possibility of somebody saying, on Friday at 5 p.m, here's an assignment that's due Monday after you get back, it's gonna take you 5 days to work on, have a good break. So the spirit, as well as the letter of the law should be followed. I would like to endorse the longer add/drop period as it may help higher retention/graduation rate. S. Johnson: The syllabus issue is going to be very hard. It is a good idea, but classes often change over the summer, and sometimes, 2 weeks before classes, a different instructor with a different syllabus. Too many changing variables. D. Olles: With respect to add/drop period: I understand the specific concern about the calculus sequences and the desire to be able to drop from 181 to 171, if desired. However, this should only be allowable for students whose programs allow it in their timelines. Also, the number of graded assignments that are completed in the first three weeks of 171 (3 quizzes, 9 prerequisite quizzes, 9 workshops, and 1 exam) would be an enormous amount of work to attempt to make up to try and get caught up in the course. The material is not equally mapped from one to the other. 181 starts with a precalculus review where 171 dives right into calculus with a just in time review of algebra and trig so students might actually be behind in the first few weeks. The current add/drop period works but any more time would be problematic. S. Chung: For the career day suggestion, individual colleges have their own career fair, too, so I wonder which one we are referring to.

Motion to charge this to academic affairs to give a more formal response by April 15 (J. Lanzafane/C. Hull)

Vote Result: (34-0-3)

B. Hartpence: We just voted to have the committee respond, but are we missing something? I applaud the pawprints, but I wonder if there is a procedure put in place where we hear student concerns and

then delegate to the appropriate committee. Does Student Government even heed these pawprints?
K. Beck: We have, in student government, a couple committees, and each of the paw prints gets assigned to the committee. So these are the ones that got assigned to me, and I was able to work with professors, but I wasn't able to get movement on them, so that's why I felt I would like to present to senate, and so I feel like in the future, this committee perhaps being able to continue to present to you would be very beneficial. R. Zanibbi: Students are permitted to submit charges every year. We have also started to have regular meetings between governance groups, so maybe next year SG can participate in these meetings. C. Hull: It occurs to me that some of these things Academic Affairs wouldn't be able to comment on, so perhaps some of these things the provost can do himself without AAC. B. Herring: AAC is happy to be in touch with the provost as needed. J. Lanzafane: Proposed AAC because it is the most likely place to discuss these things, and please remember there will be student representatives on the AAC. P. Padmanabham: Given student involvement in AAC, maybe they do not have to present to senate anymore; perhaps students can present their petitions though a luncheon or another venue? P. David: Very productive discussion: I am glad to work with AAC and students about messaging to faculty.

[PawPrints Presentation](#)

Agenda Item No. 9: Policy E33.1; Stephanie Smith (1:28)

Proposed changes to this policy to make sure that policy E33.1 does not conflict with NYS Paid Family Leave policy, which is, in part, used for baby bonding or child bonding.

- Legal requirements of PFL versus E33.1 as well as the pay between PFL and E33.1 make it so that these two policies have to work jointly.

- under PFL, employees cannot work whatsoever, whereas E33 may stop teaching duties, but they can be available to do some work.

- E33.1 says 100 percent pay for one semester or 50 percent pay for 2 semesters, whereas PFL is 66 percent of salary paid from prudential of the employee, capped by law right now at \$1,228. Payroll has to stop pay for this period, and so this conflicts with how E33.1 runs.

- just a few proposals: extending clarification into the policy that E33 cannot be used, when an employee is on STD, which it already states in that policy, but extending it out to state that it cannot be used when a faculty member is using paid family leave for child bonding. It also adds the RIT leave administration team, my team, along with Jason Wishard, my teammate, are points of contact for faculty members to reach out to us with questions about short-term disability or PFL.

- We also propose removing some of the redundant language, which I'll show in the next couple of slides about this policy coinciding with paid family leave, or state leave, rather. It updates the link that was on the original, or that is currently on the document that's a little outdated, and directs the employee to the Parental Leave and Short-Term Disability website for RIT, and then just makes a couple of additions to more inclusive language from birthing mother to birthing parent.

- The first recommended change, is in paragraph 3, section 1. This is the first of two recommendations to change, birthing mother to birthing parent. And the next one states that removing the workload modification shall coincide with any applicable state that you've taken, and as I described just previous, why that can actually happen. The only way that it really actually coincide is they both exist within the

same 12 months, because PFL has to be used within 12 months of the baby being born or the date of adoption, and E33 is set up similarly. So they exist in the same 12 months, they just cannot be used at the same time within that 12 months if both are chosen to be used by the faculty member.

-On paragraph 3, Section 2 is the second of two, birthing parent changes from birthing mother to birthing parent.

-And then the last section is paragraph 4, and this is where, it's highlighting, as you can see here, workload modification is for time other than short-term disability, which employees cannot work anyway because they are fully disabled and cannot work on full disability, and then highlighting that New York State paid family leave for bonding with a child, which is separate from care for a family member, cannot be used at the same time because they may not engage in work-related activities per the PFL law.

-And then clarifying that, my team, the leave administration team are the point of contact for the parental leave, the PFL, the short-term disability, points of contact, and then can't see it here, but the RIT parental leave is a link to the RIT parental leave website that has more of the updated information and more specific information in regards to PFL, short-term disability, how the birthing parent can apply for short-term disability and PFL, if that is the route, or PFL is the route that they wish to take..

-And then lastly, I'm trying to put more charts and cool graphics on the RIT website for leave-related things, but this is a start of helping to provide employees with a visual of what a standard leave may look like, a short-term disability for birth, and this is for New York State employees specifically, This is Just as an example, to help give some, some visual of what it looks like when you go from short-term and then to new parent leave, which is supplemental to New York State paid family leave, which I won't go down to those rabbit holes. But I wanted to provide this just as an example of what should be appearing shortly on the RIT leave websites for some more graphics and information that maybe help make leave a bit more digestible, since it can definitely be a bit confusing, and which one to use when, and how much pays what, and definitely want to make that as smooth as possible for everybody who has to go out on a leave of absence.

-Questions

-P. Padmanabhan: Great Presentation. I am concerned about putting a link in policy; can we insert the text itself that simply directs readers to the HR website? S. Smith: I can do what is most convenient, and I recognize that links break routinely! L. Villasmil: Perhaps have both. Links are very useful, and without them, you may have to "go fishing." P. Padmanabhan: Currently there are links, so I will take my concern back. Adding that the link refers to the HR website would be helpful if the link breaks. S. Aldersley: Why is this important to do now? S. Smith: This is a perpetual source of confusion, and there have been some concerns over the last couple months. S. Chung: Having these leave options is important, and I support the policy. However, I wonder whether there are any provisions to support faculty who may need to take on additional workload when covering for colleagues on leave. This could include new teaching preparations or additional service responsibilities, which may eventually affect their research productivity and annual or promotion evaluations. This issue may become particularly challenging in small teams or departments. For example, the situation could be more difficult if one person takes multiple leaves over several consecutive years, or if more than one faculty member takes leave at the same time. Again, I strongly support the policy, but I am wondering whether there are any guidelines on how the additional workload is managed for colleagues who temporarily take on these responsibilities. R. Zanibbi: Very good point, but outside the scope of this policy. Probably a separate discussion. D. Olles: From my first maternity leave to my second, things changed, DRAMATICALLY. I was confused both times. This is SO much better than when I went through it.

A friendly amendment to add this language to the links that direct readers to the HR website: "may be found online from the RIT [Human] Resources division at this link..." (R. Zanibbi)

Amendment passes with no objection

Motion to Revise Policy E33.1 with the modification spelling out that the link takes the reader to HR (R. Zanibbi/S. Johnson)

Motion Passes (36-0-2)

INSERT PRESENTATION LINK

Agenda Item No. 10: Senate Nominations; S. Davis (1:48)

Call for nominations to the executive committee. We have a slate already, but if you would like to nominate yourself, I would need a mission statement and CV by April 1. Any nominations from the floor?

-L. Villasmil: Do you want any competition? R. Zanibbi: I have been clear that I would like more nominations and contested elections. L. villasmil: I will submit a CV secretly.

Also, we need nominations for at large positions

-P. Padmanabhan: Are these all two year terms? T. Brown: Majority are two year terms, with two exceptions: Eisenhart and ICC are three years.

-please nominate yourself if you are interested!

Agenda Item No. 11: New Business; R. Zanibbi (1:51)

C. Hull: The taskforce on Student Retention will send out an email with a report.

-draft on policy for a BA degree; will hand that off to ICC and if they wish they may bring that to senate.

-original charge was to look at the MIT grading policy. We are working on that and I will share a document that outlines the policy and what we can and cannot do in that regard because of NY policies. However, it seems there may be a way to implement some of these ideas because the restrictions are not NYS law, but rather board of Regents policies, so perhaps if President Sanders wanted to, he could form a coalition with other schools such as Colombia and Rochester to work towards this through lobbying

-A motion will be sent out to the senate, and we will summarize here.

-S. Johnson: What we're planning on is doing a motion, and we'll send this out here so people can see it, and we won't vote today because a lot of people are leaving, but the idea is, we've passed this around before, that we wanted to do the whole idea of getting another probation after change of program. This would allow students to try a program. If they don't do well and they get a couple of probations, what happens next would be they would potentially be suspended, and they would be

having this suspension lurking over their head because they've had two probations already. And if they change into a new program, this would allow them to get one of those probations back after they've successfully done well in that program for a year. I know someone who's gone through this, and they changed programs, and they were always worried about, if I have one bad semester, I'm potentially going to be thrown out of RIT, because I've already used my two probations in a program I was not good at. So, we'll be bringing this back here soon because we're running out of time.

Agenda Item No. 12: Adjournment; R. Zanibbi (1:56)

Attendance 3/5/2026

Name	Relationship to Senate	Attended	Name	Relationship to Senate	Attended
Adrion, Amy	Alternate CAD Senator		Lapizco-Encinas, Blanca	KGCOE Senator	X
Alm, Cecilia	CLA Senator	X	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	
Barone, Keri	Vice Chair/CLA Senator	X	Mardini, Ihab	Alternate CAD Senator	
Beck, Makini	SOIS Senator	X	McCalley, Carmody	Alternate COS Senator	
Brady, Kathleen	NTID Senator	X	McLaren, Amy	CAD Senator	
Brown, Jeremy	GCCIS Senator		Nickisher, Heidi	CAD Senator	X
Brown, Tamaira	Senate Coordinator	X	Officer, Cindy	Alternate NTID Senator	
Butler, Janine	NTID Senator		Olles, Deana	COS Senator	X
Butler, Joshua	Alternate NTID Senator		Olson, Rob	Alternate GCCIS Senator	
Chiavaroli, Julius	GIS Senator		O'Neil, Jennifer	Alternate CET Senator	
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		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	X	Sanders, Cynthia	NTID Senator	X
DiRisio, Keli	CAD Senator		Shaaban, Muhammad	Alternate tKGOE Senator	
Eirikur Hull, Clyde	SCB Senator	X	Song, Qian	SCB Senator	X
Ghazle, Hamad	Operations Officer/CHST Senator	X	Staff Council Rep	Amanda Hughes	X
Ghoneim, Hany	Alternate KGOE Senator		Student Government Rep	Igor Polotai	
Hardin, Jessica	CLA Senator	X	Sweeney, Kevin	Alternate SCB Senator	
Hartpence, Bruce	Alternate GCCIS Senator	X	Thomas, Bolaji	CHST Senator	
Hoople, Jason	Alternate KGOE Senator		Tsouri, Gill	KGOE Senator	X
Jadamba, Basca	COS Senator	X	Villasmil, Larry	CET Senator	X
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	X	White, Phil	Alternate GCCIS Senator	
Krutz, Daniel	Alternate GCCIS Senator		Wiandt, Tamas	Alternate COS Senator	X
Kuhl, Michael	KGOE Senator	X	Zanibbi, Richard	Chair/GCCIS Senator	X
Kwasinski, Andres	Alternate KGOE Senator	X	Zlochower, Yosef	COS Senator	X
Lanzafame, Joseph	Treasurer/COS Senator	X			

Interpreters: Sonya Chavis and Dana Cardona

Student Assistant: Ella Kolodziej

Presenters: Sandra Woodruff Whitmore, Bruce Herring, Katie Beck and Stacey Davis