

Rhode Island Model Legislature

Memorandum

TO: RIML Advisors
FROM: Nicholas R. Barrow, Systems Administrator
Version 1.0.1
RE.: Introduction to RIML 2020 - 2021 Changes

Dear Advisors:

I hope this email finds you and your families safe and well during these unprecedented times. For those of you who do not know me, my name is Nicholas Barrow and I am the Systems Administrator for the Model Legislature's digital side, as well as the media consultant for the Rhode Island Council for the Social Studies (formerly RISSA). I also was the Senate President last year, and will be a Freshman at Georgetown University this fall.

As I'm sure most of you are aware, the Model Legislature experimented with a semi-digital platform for the 2019-2020 season, commonly referred to as the "Digital Repository."

Redesigned, All New Platform for the 74th (2020-2021) Session

I am excited to announce that this platform has been redesigned and expanded for the upcoming, and hopefully definite, future. This brings a whole list of exciting new features that we have to offer students across this State as they explore the legislative process, including:

- Their very own, custom email addresses (ending in @rimodellegislature.com)
- A newly designed and fully-functional website: rimodellegislature.com:
 - Content visibility is based on the currently-logged in user (i.e. students and advisors will see some overlapping content, some specific content)
- A 100% digital experience:
 - Registration, Bill Title and Bill Submissions, Committee Hearings, Amendments, and Bill Distributions are entirely digital
 - All committee and chamber agendas will update in real time (as opposed to last year, where someone had to manually enter data)

- A virtual amendment process (amendments are now entered by committee chairs and chamber clerks online, which allows every single student the ability to view and read the amendments passed in every committee and chamber
- New tools for your clubs:
 - Google Docs, to author 100% of new legislation
 - Google Hangouts/Meets, and Google Classroom, allowing instant communications, all associated with your @rimodellegislature.com email addresses.
 - Google Sites, should you wish to make your own webpage for your school/delegation
 - Google Drive, to store 100% of the content you create
- New YouTube channel
 - We are in the process of creating YouTube videos documenting every step of the way to help you better familiarize yourself with the process.
 - The channel is located here:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjhnfLsB-dxgmTsKYC9qn8A>
 - There are playlists geared towards every aspect of the Program, including one entitled "Tips and Tricks: Advisors' Edition", which features videos made specifically for you, documenting new processes, such as the new [Bill Title Registration and Bill Submission](#) or [Creating and Managing Your Students' Accounts](#).

Advisors will also be given a RIML-issued email address specific for their delegation (i.e. la-salle@rimodellegislature.com). These accounts are already created; more information on this is located in an attached .PDF. To be issued a password for this account, the advisor will need to email me privately and request the password be reset to something of their choosing. Then, upon the first time the advisor attempts to login, they will be asked to choose a new password that only they would know.

A new aspect is that you, as advisors, will be tasked with adding your students into Google, so that they can have access to the program. This is also documented in the attached .PDF, as well as already being covered on the YouTube channel in a complete "how-to" guided tutorial.

Should you have any questions regarding any of this, please feel free to contact me at this email address (nbarrow@risocialstudies.org), my personal email address (nicholasrbarrow@icloud.com), or my phone number (401-316-7762). I am also happy to schedule a Zoom with you, jointly or separately, to go over any questions you may have.

I welcome you to share the bullet-point information above with your students! This should be very exciting for returning students, as well as giving first-time model legislators a 21st century experience.

We at the Rhode Island Model Legislature are aware that the current circumstances, while we hope will be a distant memory come the start of the 2020-2021 season, may continue into the fall. Rest assured, we are building a plan for this. Drafting legislation and meeting with your local clubs can easily continue using Google Hangouts/Meets. The largest disruption, we hope never occurs, would be to the leadership meetings. We are planning on using Google Hangouts/Meets for this as well. And with any luck, everything will be long gone come the Committee & Caucus Day, as well as the General Assembly Day. Should, in the very unlikely event that, the novel coronavirus outbreak continues, we have digital voting plans and procedures already being built and prepared for students. Should your local clubs need it, we have already built a Google Form that will allow for secure voting. Please contact me to be given access to a copy of this system.

I'm looking forward to working with you all in the future. Should you have any questions about any aspect of model legislature, you can now contact a single email distributor, administration@rimodellegislature.com, and State Coordinators Mark Gardner and Louise Oliveira, along with myself, will all get your emails.

COVID-19 Planning

I hate to even be writing this right now, but it would be irresponsible to ignore the fact that the novel coronavirus outbreak may continue into the fall, being the first semester of the 2020-2021 educational year, and thus the upcoming Model Legislature season.

We have developed a working plan to deal with the possibilities of having Model Legislature entirely online. We have every intention to continue the program, as it is one that students have looked forward to, and indeed been bettered from, for over seventy years. This plan is a work in progress, and will be updated often. That being said, feel free to review this plan at rimodellegislature.com > About > Policies & Memos > COVID-19.

What I Need and Am Asking For From You

To make the transition as smooth as possible, I wanted to outline a few bullet points of items that I'll need from you in the coming weeks, at your earliest convenience; if you have any questions regarding these, please feel free to contact me:

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- Your most up-to-date school-issued email address(es) and contact information
 - Volunteers to Help Revise the Handbook: I've converted, by hand, most of the old handbook into Google Docs (that way we can always have editing capabilities with our new Google Suite), but there have been issues raised, especially in last year's session, that highlight that an actual revamping and rewriting of the handbook is necessary, on top of the fact that the new digital platform will require modification of what's included. I'm looking for any advisors, whomever is interested, in helping me to go through the handbook and write sections that need to be updated or added, such as plagiarism (I'm not an educator, you all would know far better than me on how to write sections like these in a way that both protects students while outlining fundamental principles like academic honesty). Just shoot me an email and I'll share it with you.
 - A message for the website: we created a section on the website for every school to host a message from themselves; a few sentences about the club, school, or school community would be great! Whatever welcoming message you feel is appropriate will be published in your section.
 - (OPTIONAL) short video (~30 seconds) discussing what Model Legislature is to you and your students: We created a new YouTube channel that documents all of the new processes of the Program, as well as to help new recruits. We would love to hear from you, the Advisors, so we can showcase the entire Model Legislature community on the YouTube channel. If you have any student that is interested in making a roughly 30 second video talking about what Model Legislature is/means to them, and if you would like to do the same as well, please forward this to me at your earliest convenience. There are many ways of doing this: hosting a Zoom and recording it; on a Mac, open "Screenshot" and change it to recording mode; or any other freeware programs, such as Screencastify.

I appreciate you taking the time to read through this update. As always, my (virtual) door is open for any inquiries you have.



Thanks for your time, and stay healthy!

Best,



Nicholas R. Barrow

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