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Revaa Goyal '27  
*Student Representative*

**The University of Rhode Island  
Board of Trustees Meeting and Annual Retreat  
Friday, June 28, 2024 · 9:00 a.m. EDT**

**The University of Rhode Island  
Room 025C · The Fascitelli Center for Advanced Engineering  
2 East Alumni Avenue, Kingston, RI 02881**

**OFFICIAL MINUTES**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Margo Cook welcomed everyone to the June 28, 2024, meeting of the University of Rhode Island (URI) Board of Trustees and noted that the meeting was being held in person with some Board members participating remotely via Webex. Virtual access to the meeting was available via the YouTube video platform. A recording of the meeting is available for viewing at <https://web.uri.edu/trustees/meetings/>.

Board secretary Michelle Curreri conducted a roll call attendance and reported that a quorum of members was present. Chair Cook called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.

URI Board of Trustees members in attendance:

- Ms. Margo Cook (in person)
- Mr. Armand E. Sabitoni, Vice Chair (in person)
- Ms. Maria Ducharme (in person)
- Mr. Michael Fascitelli (in person)
- Honorable Charles J. Fogarty, Jr. (in person)
- Mr. Joseph Formicola (in person)
- Ms. Monica Garnes (in person)
- Dr. Neil Kerwin (in person)
- Mr. Matthew Lenz (in person)
- Mr. Roby Luna (remote) (left meeting at 11:43 a.m.)
- Mr. Joseph Matthews (in person)
- Ms. Cortney Nicolato (in person)
- Ms. Jay Placencia (in person)
- Mr. Thomas Ryan (in person)

URI Board of Trustees Meeting and Annual Retreat  
June 28, 2024

- Honorable Robert Weygand (in person)
- Dr. Marc B. Parlange, President (ex officio, non-voting) (in person)
- Mr. Michael Grey (ex officio, non-voting) (in person) (arrived at 9:09 a.m.)
- Mr. David Caprio (ex officio, non-voting) (in person)
- Dr. Melissa Sutherland (faculty representative, non-voting) (in person)
- Ms. Revaa Goyal (student representative, non-voting) (remote) (arrived at 10:07 a.m.)

URI Board of Trustees members not participating:

- Mr. David Martirano
- Mr. Vahid Ownjazayeri

URI President's Stewardship Council members in attendance:

- Ms. Abby Benson, Vice President, Administration and Finance (in person)
- Ms. Chelsea Berry, Senior Advisor to the President and Chief of Staff (in person)
- Mr. Thorr Bjorn, Director, Athletics (in person)
- Dr. Matthew Bodah, Vice Provost for Academic Personnel and Budget (remote)
- Ms. Alyssa Boss, General Counsel (in person)
- Ms. Lauren Burgess, Executive Director, Legislative and Government Relations (in person)
- Mr. Karl Calvo, Assistant Vice President, Facilities Group (in person)
- Ms. Jeanne Hruska, Senior Advisor and Chief of Staff, Provost's Office (in person)
- Dr. Bethany Jenkins, Vice President, Research and Economic Development (in person)
- Ms. Markeisha Miner, Vice President, Community, Equity and Diversity (in person)
- Dr. Ellen Reynolds, Vice President for Student Affairs (in person)
- Dr. John Stringer, Executive Director, Institution Research (in person)
- Dr. Barbara Wolfe, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs (in person)

URI staff members in attendance:

- Mr. Ryan Carrillo, Director, Planning & Real Estate Development (in person)
- Ms. Rebecca Carroll, Assistant Director, Community Relations (in person)
- Ms. Robin Cawley, Legal Assistant (in person)
- Ms. Michelle Curreri, Secretary to the Board of Trustees (in person)
- Dr. Dan Moos, Assistant to the Vice President, Administration and Finance (in person)
- Ms. Lynn Owens, Associate Secretary to the Board of Trustees (in person)
- Mr. Pierre St-Germain, Director, Dining & Conference Services (in person)
- Mr. Jay Walsh, URI Affiliate, AAUP (in person)

Attendees for the Board Retreat included:

- Dr. Larry O. Warner, Chief Impact & Equity Officer, United Way of Rhode Island (in person)
- Ms. Martha L. Wofford, President and CEO, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Rhode Island (in person)
- Dr. Kerry LaPlante, Dean of the College of Pharmacy (in person)
- Dr. Patrick Vivier, Dean of the College of Health Sciences (in person)
- Dr. Danny Willis, Dean of the College of Nursing (in person)

Chair Cook acknowledged that the University of Rhode Island occupies the traditional stomping ground of the Narragansett Nation and the Niantic People. She recognized the appointment of Bethany Jenkins to the permanent position of Vice President of Research and Economic Development.

Chair Cook asked if there were any proposed amendments to the published agenda. No amendments were suggested.

At Trustee Fogarty's request, the Board observed a moment of silence to recognize Walter Gray, former University of Rhode Island administrator, South Kingstown Town Council President and State Senator, who recently passed away. Trustee Fogarty recognized Mr. Gray's extraordinary service to the state of Rhode Island and the University and extended condolences to his family on his passing.

## 2. OPEN FORUM

Note: Public participants must submit an online public comment form requesting permission to speak no less than 2 hours in advance of the meeting. The online request form and instructions for submission can be found via this [link](#).

Chair Cook noted that one person signed up to speak during open forum but was not available to address the Board at this time.

## 3. REPORT OF THE CHAIR

*Margo Cook, Chair*

### a. State Support

Chair Cook stated that Governor Dan McKee signed the 2025 Rhode Island state budget bill last week. Overall, the new budget signals continued positive investment by the state in the University of Rhode Island. The state budget provides URI \$110.8 million in general state appropriation for the University's operating budget, an increase of \$5.4 million over FY24. It also provides \$14 million in capital plan asset protection funding; \$20 million in capital plan funding for URI's PFAS water treatment plant; and \$87.5 million for a general obligation bond for the construction of a biomedical sciences building on the Kingston Campus. This bond will require the approval of Rhode Island voters during the November 2024 general election. This year's budget follows a renewed investment in URI by the state of Rhode Island last year through increased appropriation support and \$65.8 million for the athletics complex renewal.

Chair Cook noted that while the state appropriation to URI is still insufficient for full recovery and maximum benefit, significant progress has been made. She conveyed her and the Board's gratitude to Governor McKee, Speaker Shekarchi, Senate President Ruggerio, and the elected leaders in the General Assembly for their partnership, support of URI, and belief in the positive impact Rhode Island's flagship university is having on the quality of life and economic vitality of our state. She thanked Vice Chair Armand Sabitoni, other members of the Board, President Parlange, the University's government relations team, and several faculty and staff members, for their tireless work advocating for the University.

b. Medical School Commission

Chair Cook stated that, in addition to the state budget, the Senate passed a resolution led by Senate President Dominick Ruggerio, with support from House Speaker Joseph Shekarchi, to establish a 21-member special legislative commission, chaired by President Parlange, to study the possible creation of a medical school at URI. Primary care in Rhode Island is at a critical point. The net loss of primary care clinicians in the state and the impact of that loss on health care access for residents is well documented. Through undergraduate and graduate programs in health care fields, including nationally ranked nursing and pharmacy programs, URI already is enhancing the physical and mental health of individuals and communities both here in Rhode Island and globally. The question facing us now is, what role might URI play in further addressing health care access and needs in the state? The commission, working collaboratively with this Board, will study the feasibility of a public medical school at URI, including budget needs and state support. The members of the commission will be appointed by the state Senate by August 1 of this year, and the commission will report its findings and recommendations to the Senate no later than January 2, 2026. This is an important conversation for our state and for the future trajectory of URI, and this is an important moment in time for us to come together to work collectively to enhance health and wellness across Rhode Island. It is essential for us, as a Board, to actively engage in and support the commission's work as we determine the feasibility and viability of a public medical school at URI. Chair Cook stressed that a public medical school cannot be at the cost of something else. She stated that the Board will discuss this topic in more detail during the afternoon retreat with two panel discussions.

**4. REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT**

*Marc Parlange, President*

President Parlange's presentation slides can be found [here](#).

- a. University Updates
- b. Budget Model
- c. State Budget
- d. Strategic Plan KPIs

President Parlange highlighted many campus celebrations that took place this spring, including the Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, Special Olympics, the Inclusive Innovation Conference, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Juneteenth celebration. He celebrated the academic achievements of students and faculty, recognized staff for their work on the new solar energy car port, congratulated Bethany Jenkins on her appointment to vice president, Research and Economic Development, highlighted Dr. Bongsup Cho's work in securing a five-year, \$21 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to support the Rhode Island IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence program, and recognized the Coastal Resources Center and the Graduate School of Oceanography for securing funding to work in Madagascar on environmental conservation and sustainable development. The President spoke of engineering double majors with paid internships who are studying abroad perfecting their language skills, URI's Japanese program – the fastest growing in the USA, the sailing team's ranking - 12<sup>th</sup> in the nation, the sailing coach being named US coach of

the year, and students winning key international awards, scholarships, and fellowships. URI has hosted more than 3,000 students for orientation and is getting ready for the new academic year.

President Parlange thanked the trustees for participating in URI Day at the State House and Commencement 2024. He congratulated Lil O'Rourke for meeting and surpassing the University's capital goal and noted that the URI Foundation reached this year's fundraising goal of \$33 million. He thanked the trustees for their leadership and personal support of URI. He thanked the State of Rhode Island for their support of improvements at URI, specifically, the athletics complex and the fine arts building and noted this year's general obligation bond request for a biomedical sciences building at URI. He thanked the Speaker of the House, the Senate President, and the South County representatives for their advocacy on behalf of URI to secure funding in the state budget.

The President provided an update on KPIs associated with the University's Strategic Plan, focusing on Priority 3: Foster an Inclusive Culture. He reviewed slides showing student diversity and percentage change in student enrollment since 2008 by race and ethnicity. The diversity index has increased since 2015 across students, instructional staff and non-instructional staff. The University is working towards increasing diversity, and progress is being made in the right direction.

The President talked about strategic investments in important areas of growth and impact at the University, including facilities, faculty, information technology services, academic services, student affairs, and athletics. He noted the University's support of its people and their efforts and highlighted impactful initiatives underway.

In conclusion, President Parlange spoke about healthcare needs in Rhode Island and URI's role in improving health outcomes. He spoke about building a thriving life sciences hub for the state and the University, and the launch of a robust bond campaign to build URI's new biomedical sciences building, which will support important research. URI's role is crucial in feeding the growth of the life sciences sector in Rhode Island. He stressed the importance of teaming up to explore the feasibility of a public medical school at URI. The President celebrated key research and spoke about the use of artificial intelligence in research work at URI. He thanked Board members for their continued advocacy, support, and feedback received through the comprehensive review.

## 5. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chair Cook called for a motion, and on a motion duly made by Armand Sabitoni and seconded by Jay Placencia, and hearing no discussion on the motion, it was

VOTED: THAT

The URI Board of Trustees convene into executive session pursuant to:

R.I.G.L. § 42-46-5(a)(1) for discussion regarding President Parlange's annual self-assessment and performance review, and compensation based on merit; and,

R.I.G.L. § 42-46-5(a)(6) and R.I.G.L. § 42-46-5(a)(7), for discussion and action regarding the University's pouring rights/beverage contract, as it relates to or concerns a prospective business or industry locating in the state of Rhode Island when an open meeting would have a detrimental

effect on the interest of the public, and as it relates to the question of the investment of public funds where the premature disclosure would adversely affect the public interest; and,

R.I.G.L. § 42-46-5(a)(5) and R.I.G.L. § 42-46-5(a)(7), for discussion or consideration of student housing, as it relates to the acquisition or lease of real property for public purposes, or of the disposition of publicly held property wherein advanced public information would be detrimental to the public interest, and for discussion of matters related to the question of the investment of public funds where the premature disclosure would adversely affect the public interest; and,

R.I.G.L. § 42-46-5(a)(7) for discussion of matters related to the question of the investment of public funds, which includes any investment plan or matter related thereto, where the premature disclosure would adversely affect the public interest; specifically, investment in potential programming.

President Parlange has been notified that discussion regarding his annual self-assessment will be conducted in executive session.

VOTE: 15 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Margo Cook, Maria Ducharme, Michael Fascitelli, Charles Fogarty, Joseph Formicola, Monica Garnes, Neil Kerwin, Matthew Lenz, Roby Luna, Joseph Matthews, Cortney Nicolato, Jay Placencia, Thomas Ryan, Armand Sabitoni, Robert Weygand

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

Board member Roby Luna, participating remotely, confirmed that no other person was present or able to hear the discussion at the remote location.

At 9:53 a.m., the Board entered executive session. Virtual public access was paused.

Board member Reva Goyal joined the meeting remotely at 10:07 a.m., during executive session.

At 11:42 a.m., the Board returned to open session. Virtual public access resumed.

Chair Cook called for a motion, and on a motion duly made by Monica Garnes and seconded by Jay Placencia, and hearing no discussion on the motion, it was

VOTED: THAT The URI Board of Trustees seal the minutes of the June 28, 2024,

executive session.

VOTE: 15 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Margo Cook, Maria Ducharme, Michael Fascitelli, Charles Fogarty, Joseph Formicola, Monica Garnes, Neil Kerwin, Matthew Lenz, Roby Luna, Joseph Matthews, Cortney Nicolato, Jay Placencia, Thomas Ryan, Armand Sabitoni, Robert Weygand

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

## 6. REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Chair Cook noted that, in an effort to streamline processes during our meetings, the Board is resuming its use of an Omnibus Vote to include approval of the past meeting's minutes and routine committee-related action items that have been fully reviewed by the committees prior to coming to the Board for consideration. Actions will be taken up in one vote during the Omnibus Vote.

Roby Luna left the meeting at 11:44 a.m.

### a. Ad Hoc Special Real Estate Committee Report

#### (i) Update – June 6, 2024, Ad Hoc Special Real Estate Committee Meeting

Committee Chair Fascitelli reported on activity at the June 6, 2024, ad hoc special Real Estate Committee meeting. The Committee reviewed a presentation from URI's Planning and Real Estate Development office on the timeline for a typical capital project at the University (4 ½ years from approval to occupancy) and potential strategies to reduce project timelines. The presentation also included benchmarking from other universities, which showed that our timelines are not atypical, but that State specific purchasing and code review requirements can cause delays. He stated that the University is looking at parallel processing to improve efficiency and save money.

Committee Chair Fascitelli reported that the Committee requested the University put together a list of strategies for reducing the project timelines without sacrificing quality or taking on undue risk, and that the University look at what authorities are given to UCONN and UMASS and what exemptions have been given to other RI entities, such as the Narragansett Bay Commission and the Quonset Development Commission (QDC). Vice President Benson reported that potential strategies will be part of an internal conversation in the fall about broader efficiency measures URI might want to pursue.

Committee Chair Fascitelli stated that the Committee received an update on the Campus Master Plan and URI has engaged Sasaki Architects, an international firm specializing in

higher education and familiar with URI. Completion is anticipated in June 2025 with a presentation to the Board in September 2025. Committee Chair Fascitelli also mentioned the recently completed housing study, which fits into the campus master plan and is critical to the University's Strategic Plan. The University has also kicked off the energy master plan and is currently undergoing a comprehensive facilities conditions assessment. The Board will have an opportunity to offer input into the master plan.

Concluding his report, Committee Chair Fascitelli said that the Committee discussed several topics in executive session.

## **b. Finance and Facilities Committee Report**

### **(i) Update – June 10, 2024, Finance and Facilities Committee Meeting**

On behalf of Committee Chair Ownjazayeri, Vice Chair Sabitoni provided an update on activity at the June 10, 2024, Finance and Facilities Committee meeting. He reported on discussion items and noted that the Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of the action items listed in the Omnibus Vote (Items 7.b. – 7.f).

Vice Chair Sabitoni stated that Vice President Benson provided an overview of the University's FY25 Budget request. As noted in the President's report, URI received a \$5.4M increase in its annual operating budget, \$14 million in RICAP asset protection, and \$87.5 million for the Biomedical Sciences General Obligation Bond.

The Committee also discussed actions taken in Executive Session at the April meeting regarding the 63 Briar Lane property (Kingston Pizza), which the University is in the process of purchasing.

During the Committee meeting, Vice President Benson provided an overview of the University's five-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) FY2026-2030, which has a strong focus on addressing the backlog of asset renewal projects. She highlighted changes since April, including the addition of a new Public Safety Building (now that an advanced planning study is complete) and that the new CIP reflects an increase from the last year's CIP of approximately \$580 million. Vice Chair Sabitoni noted that the Committee recommended approval of the CIP, as presented on June 10th.

The Committee recommended approval of proposed Parking Regulations for the Kingston campus, noting that they were last approved by the Rhode Island Board of Governors for Higher Education in 2006. During the Committee meeting, Vice President Benson also noted that parking fees and penalties are developed and listed by the Office of Transportation and Parking.

The Committee recommended approval of four separate contracts that exceed the \$5 million approval threshold, specifically for HVAC Maintenance and Repair (FY25-27); First Transit Inc. (FY24-25), which is the campus shuttle provider; Performance Food Group (FY24-25), which supports dining services; and the Independence Square Foundation lease for the Kinesiology Department.



The Committee recommended approval of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the University and URI Foundation and Alumni Engagement, specifically seeking a one-year extension of the MOU where the terms remain substantially the same.

The Committee recommended approval of replacement of the deck on the President's House, noting that, per the contract between the University and the President, all repairs greater than \$10,000 must be approved by the Board of Trustees.

Finally, the Committee recommended approval of proposed amendments to the Finance and Facilities Committee Charter and Calendar.

Board members had no comments or questions about items 7.b. – 7.f. as listed in the Omnibus Vote.

### **c. Student Life and Athletics Committee Report**

#### **(i) Update – June 14, 2024, Committee Meeting**

Committee Chair Thomas Ryan reported that the Student Life and Athletics Committee met on June 14, 2024. He stated that Thorr Bjorn, Athletics Director, and Ellen Reynolds, Vice President of Student Affairs, both gave great presentations on the year-end review of their respective programs and highlighted the successes from the year as well as their strategic initiatives moving forward.

Committee Chair Ryan reported that, for Athletics, URI has 466 student athletes with a cumulative GPA of 3.28 and 48.7% are on the Dean's List for 2022-23. Student athletes' graduation rate was 83%, versus a university average of 71%. Regarding the Athletic Complex improvements, Slate Track and Field is expected to be completed by June 2026 and Meade Stadium by August 2027.

Committee Chair Ryan noted that for three-year game attendance, URI Men's basketball ranked fifth in the league with 4,756 attendees. For URI Women's basketball, URI ranked #2 for 3-year attendance with almost 2,000 attendees, just a little below #1 Dayton at 2,344.

During the Committee meeting, Dr. Reynolds provided an update of Student Affairs Departments and highlights include:

- URI Health Services had 29,000+ clinic visits, representing just under 8,000 students, and continued to enjoy very high satisfaction rates with 96% of students indicating they would recommend Health Services to other students.
- The Counseling Center continued to see high demand with just under 6,000 individual visits and approximately 300 group therapy appointments. For the first time in several years, the Counseling Center was fully staffed this spring and had no wait for appointments. They successfully increased the diversity of the staff to approximately 27%, which mirrors the student body diversity.

- Telus Health, our partner providing 24/7 access to mental health clinicians continued to see increased utilization with 3,557 new digital users, and 64% of students accessed services after hours.
- URI Housing had 5,498 student residents as of census date Oct. 15<sup>th</sup>. Housing and Residential Life completed a comprehensive national survey with resident students and had a 56% participation rate. Survey results found 77.5% of the students were satisfied or very satisfied. Opportunities exist and the team is working hard to address major issues including desired on-campus housing.

Committee Chair Ryan concluded his report by saying that URI is in the process of reviewing a public private partnership (P3) relationship to add a minimum of 1,100 undergraduate and graduate beds on the Kingston campus.

Board members discussed with Athletics Director Bjorn the University's fundraising efforts and coordination with Name Image and Likeness fundraising efforts.

#### **d. Academic Affairs and Research Committee Report**

##### **(i) Update – June 17, 2024, Committee Meeting**

Committee Chair Neil Kerwin reported that the Academic Affairs and Research Committee met on June 17, 2024. The Committee heard reports from the Provost, the Vice President for Research and Economic Development, and Vice President Markeisha Miner on URI's statutorily required report on diversity, equity, and inclusion. The Committee also heard about current enrollment levels.

Committee Chair Kerwin reported that the Committee voted unanimously to recommend that the Board approve the action items 7.g. - 7.i. as listed in the Omnibus Vote, including the granting of tenure, the creation of a new academic program, and the granting of a posthumously awarded degree. The Committee also discussed items in executive session, which the full Board discussed in executive session earlier today.

Provost Wolfe provided a brief overview of summer and fall enrollment numbers, both up from past years' enrollment. Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) challenges continue to impact URI's yield of new students. The Provost reported on orientation sessions for incoming students, as well as transfer student numbers. Board member Ryan asked for URI statistics on the connection between US News and World Report rankings of universities and athletic achievement for NCAA teams on their applications.

Vice President Jenkins reported that during the Committee meeting she spoke of efforts to align URI's relationship with the URI Research Foundation. She stated that she will present a report of the Research Foundation's financials during the September Committee meeting. Committee Chair Kerwin noted that the Academic Affairs and Research Committee will continue to explore the degree of compatibility of the Research Foundation's mission with that of the University, originally explored during meetings of the ad hoc special Research Committee.

Board members had no comments or questions about items 7.g. – 7.i. as listed in the Omnibus Vote.

**e. Institutional Risk and Compliance Committee Report**

(i) Update – June 17, 2024, Institutional Risk and Compliance Committee Meeting

Committee Vice Chair Matthew Lenz stated that the Institutional Risk and Compliance Committee met on June 17, 2024. He reported that the Committee voted unanimously to recommend that the Board approve amendments to the Committee Charter and Calendar, as listed under action item 7.j. of the Omnibus Vote.

During the meeting, the Committee heard a presentation on cybersecurity, including the University’s response to a campus-wide cybersecurity incident in February 2024. Committee Vice Chair Lenz noted that URI is making progress on cybersecurity improvements, including new requirements for Single Sign On (SSO) and Multifactor Authentication (MFA) for university applications, and a systematic review of code and configurations and IT policies and procedures, in concert with URI’s faculty.

Committee Vice Chair Lenz reported that the Committee reviewed the University’s Enterprise Compliance program, including a discussion of the general risk compliance framework for URI and the mission of the Enterprise Compliance Office. He reported that the University’s external auditor, Brian Crowley from CliftonLarsonAllen LLP, discussed the plan for the external audit, including the scope of services and deliverables. The auditors will present a report in the fall.

Committee Vice Chair Lenz added that the Committee was briefed on the recently released Title IX regulations, including changes to the regulations that require the development of a new and updated policy. The University is moving forward as planned for the August 1, 2024 implementation.

Board members had no comments or questions about item 7.j. listed in the Omnibus Vote.

**f. Governance Committee Report**

(i) Update – June 28, 2024, Committee Meeting

Committee Chair Cortney Nicolato reported that the Governance Committee met on June 28, 2024. Committee members voted unanimously to recommend that the Board approve the action items 7.k. - 7.m. as listed in the Omnibus Vote. She noted that amendments to the URI Board of Trustees Remote Participation Policy are in response to prior legislative changes. The Committee approved the Policy on Approval and Execution of Contracts and Other Binding Documents and approved the Policy on Nondiscrimination and Sexual Misconduct, which incorporates recent changes made to Title IX.

Board members had no comments or questions about items 7.k. – 7.m. listed in the Omnibus

Vote.

**g. Executive Committee and Compensation Subcommittee Report**

(i) Update – June 25, 2024, Joint Committee Meeting

Chair Cook reported on the June 25, 2024 joint meeting of the Executive Committee and its Compensation Subcommittee. She said that committee members considered the President’s annual performance review (in executive session); she noted that the full Board continued the discussion during today’s executive session.

Chair Cook reported that the following items were discussed and the Executive Committee unanimously voted to recommend approval of action item (g)(ii) and 7(n) of the Omnibus Vote and the Compensation Subcommittee unanimously voted to recommend approval of action item (g)(iii) at the joint Committee meeting:

(ii) ACTION ITEM: Ratification of the tentative collective bargaining agreement between the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees and the Part-Time Faculty (PTF) for a one-year extension (July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025) of the existing collective bargaining agreement with an across-the-board salary increase.

Chair Cook called for a motion, and on a motion duly made by Armand Sabitoni and seconded by Jay Placencia, and hearing no discussion on the motion, it was

VOTED: THAT The URI Board of Trustees approve a one (1) year extension to the Agreement between the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees and Rhode Island Council 94, AFSCME, AFL-CIO, Local 145 per the Memorandum of Agreement Extending Collective Bargaining Agreement Through June 30, 2025.

VOTE: 14 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Margo Cook, Maria Ducharme, Michael Fascitelli, Charles Fogarty, Joseph Formicola, Monica Garnes, Neil Kerwin, Matthew Lenz, Joseph Matthews, Cortney Nicolato, Jay Placencia, Thomas Ryan, Armand Sabitoni, Robert Weygand

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

(iii) ACTION ITEM: Approval of an annual bonus to President Parlange for fiscal year ending June 30, 2024.

Chair Cook called for a motion, and on a motion duly made by Armand Sabitoni and seconded by Michael Fascitelli, and hearing no discussion on the motion, it was

VOTED: THAT            The URI Board of Trustees approve an annual compensation adjustment for President Parlange, based on merit, as discussed in Executive Session.

VOTE:                    14 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS:                   Margo Cook, Maria Ducharme, Michael Fascitelli, Charles Fogarty, Joseph Formicola, Monica Garnes, Neil Kerwin, Matthew Lenz, Joseph Matthews, Cortney Nicolato, Jay Placencia, Thomas Ryan, Armand Sabitoni, Robert Weygand

NAYS:                    0

ABSTAINS:            0

Board members had no comments or questions about agenda item 7.n. listed in the Omnibus Vote.

**7. OMNIBUS VOTE ON COMMITTEE-RELATED ACTION ITEMS AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**ACTION: Approval of the actions described below, as recommended by the referenced committees and presented in the referenced enclosures where applicable:**

**Approval of Minutes:**

- a. Approval of the Minutes of the April 26, 2024, Board Meeting, as presented. [Enclosure](#)

**Finance and Facilities Committee recommended action:**

- b. Approval of URI Parking Regulations. [Enclosure](#)
- c. Approval of Contracts in Excess of \$5 Million. [Enclosure](#)
- d. Approval of Amendment to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the University of Rhode Island and the URI Foundation and Alumni Engagement. [Enclosure](#)
- e. Approval of Modifications to the President’s House. [Enclosure](#)
- f. Approval of Amendments to the Finance and Facilities Committee Charter and Calendar. [Enclosure](#)

**Academic Affairs and Research Committee recommended action:**

- g. Approval of the annual granting of tenure for University of Rhode Island faculty members, effective July 1, 2024, or as specified. [Enclosure](#)
- h. Approval of legislation recommended by the Faculty Senate and the President providing a new Master of Science degree in Mental & Behavioral Health Counseling. [Enclosure](#)
- i. Approval of the awarding of a posthumous academic degree. [Enclosure](#)

**Institutional Risk and Compliance Committee recommended action:**

- j. Approval of amendments to the Institutional Risk and Compliance Committee Charter and Calendar. [Enclosure](#)

**Governance Committee recommended action:**

- k. Approval of amendments to the URI Board of Trustees Remote Meeting Participation Policy. [Enclosure](#)
- l. Approval of amendments to the University policy on Approval and Execution of Contracts and Other Binding Documents. [Enclosure](#)
- m. Approval of the URI Board of Trustees Nondiscrimination and Sexual Misconduct Policy. [Enclosure](#)

**Executive Committee recommended action:**

- n. Approval of a 2.5% across-the-board salary increase for non-union, non-classified employees effective June 30, 2024. [Enclosure](#)

Before proceeding with an Omnibus Vote to approve the past meeting's minutes and committee-recommended action items, Chair Cook asked if there were any action items listed in the Omnibus Vote for which any member had any questions or would like to discuss, oppose or remove from the Omnibus Vote to be voted on individually. Hearing none, she called for an omnibus motion, and on a motion duly made by Charles Fogarty and seconded by Matthew Lenz, and hearing no discussion on the motion, it was

VOTED:	THAT	The URI Board of Trustees approve agenda action items 7.a. through 7.n. as recommended and presented.
	VOTE:	14 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.
	YEAS:	Margo Cook, Maria Ducharme, Michael Fascitelli, Charles Fogarty, Joseph Formicola, Monica Garnes, Neil Kerwin, Matthew Lenz, Joseph Matthews, Cortney Nicolato, Jay Placencia, Thomas Ryan, Armand Sabitoni, Robert Weygand
	NAYS:	0
	ABSTAINS:	0

## 8. ADDITIONAL ACTION ITEMS

- a. ACTION ITEM: Approval of the University of Rhode Island Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) FY2026-2030 [Enclosure](#)

Vice President Benson reported that the full Board reviewed the CIP FY2026-2030 at its April 2024 meeting, and on June 10<sup>th</sup>, the Finance and Facilities Committee recommended that the Board approve the CIP. Since the Committee meeting, adjustments have been made to the CIP to correct a discrepancy in the cash flow for the PFAS project, due to a change in the funding source. Details of this adjustment can be found in the recommendation memo in the enclosure. This change will increase the proposed CIP total budget by \$1.7 million, for a total increase of \$580 million.

Chair Cook called for a motion and, on a motion duly made by Robert Weygand and seconded by Armand Sabitoni, and hearing no discussion on the motion, it was

VOTED: THAT The URI Board of Trustees approve the University of Rhode Island Capital Improvement Plan for FY2026-FY2030 as presented.

VOTE: 14 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Margo Cook, Maria Ducharme, Michael Fascitelli, Charles Fogarty, Joseph Formicola, Monica Garnes, Neil Kerwin, Matthew Lenz, Joseph Matthews, Cortney Nicolato, Jay Placencia, Thomas Ryan, Armand Sabitoni, Robert Weygand

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

- b. ACTION ITEM: Approval of an Amendment to the Contract between the University of Rhode Island and Oracle America, Inc., for license continuation of the Oracle ERP system (eCampus). [Enclosure](#)

Vice President Benson reviewed the highlights of this action item, as listed in the enclosure. This item was not considered by the Finance and Facilities Committee at its June 10<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Chair Cook called for a motion and, on a motion duly made by Monica Garnes and seconded by Joseph Matthews and hearing no discussion on the motion, it was

VOTED: THAT The URI Board of Trustees approve an amendment to the contract between the University of Rhode Island and Oracle America, Inc. effective June 28, 2024, as presented.

VOTE: 14 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Margo Cook, Maria Ducharme, Michael Fascitelli, Charles Fogarty, Joseph Formicola, Monica Garnes, Neil Kerwin, Matthew Lenz, Joseph Matthews, Cortney Nicolato, Jay Placencia, Thomas Ryan, Armand Sabitoni, Robert Weygand

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

At 12:21 p.m., the Board recessed for lunch.

At 12:43 p.m., the Board resumed the open session of the public meeting.

## 9. DISCUSSION ITEM

- a. 2024 URI Annual Diversity Report, pursuant to R.I.G.L. § 16-32-2.1, Diversity efforts and progress related to student, staff and faculty recruitment and retention at URI. [Enclosure](#)  
*Markeisha Miner, Vice President, Community, Equity, and Diversity*

Vice President Markeisha Miner reviewed highlights of the 2024 URI Annual Diversity Report, submitted to the Board of Trustees on May 1<sup>st</sup>. The report provides a detailed departmental breakdown of all faculty members employed at the University by rank and tenure, and by race and gender, and a detailed report on current student enrollments for each class at the University by race and gender, by academic department, and by outreach program (e.g. talent development), guaranteed admissions program, and the current levels of funding and staff support for each of these programs.

Vice President Miner remarked that the work of the Office of Community, Equity, and Diversity is focused on cultivating community, enhancing equity, and demonstrating diversity. This work of diversity, equity, and inclusion has to be integrated into the very fabric of the University. She thanked her leadership team colleagues, noting that every division and college is committed to the community, equity, and diversity efforts.

Vice President Miner noted that URI is focused on increasing the capacity of the community to connect with each other. Aligned with the Strategic Plan's Priority 3, URI is enhancing a culture of recognition in excellence through the Inclusive Excellence Awards. The University's designation as a top ten military-friendly institution reflects its strong interdisciplinary commitment to supporting military-connected students. URI has increased its collaborations with the Office of Equal Opportunity, Human Resources, and others to improve employee onboarding, ensure awareness of rights and responsibilities, and enhance faculty and staff experiences and sense of belonging.



She reported that URI continues to see positive results, noting that the most recent entering class in fall 2023 was the most diverse yet. Thirty percent are 1st in family college students. Three thousand are Pell grant recipients, demonstrating our commitment to socioeconomic diversity. Just over 1,000 students participate in our Talent Development (TD) program for Rhode Islanders who are from disadvantaged communities, and since 1968, 4,000 graduates in that program proudly call themselves members of TD Nation and are contributing to our state. Vice President Miner also highlighted the increased number of students registered with the Office of Disability Access and Inclusion and identifying as military affiliated, meaning that they are a veteran, they use dependent benefits toward tuition, they are on active duty, or are receiving a National Guard tuition waiver. URI continues to see increased diversity among students based on race/ethnicity and gender as highlighted in the President's report.

Vice President Miner reported that URI will be working in the near future on the next iteration of the climate survey. In addition to compositional diversity, URI intends to measure faculty, staff, and students' sense of belonging, their likelihood of encouraging others to study, to work, to teach here, and their knowledge of the available resources.

Board members discussed the following items with Vice President Miner:

- diversity of the student population compared to the faculty population;
- options to tap into the success of some college level justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion officers in recruiting faculty that mirror the student population;
- providing opportunities for advancement and retention for faculty and staff in underrepresented communities;
- working together on a coordinated overarching structure utilizing recruitment rubrics while allowing flexibility within the colleges, and;
- reconstituting the University's Diversity Council.

Vice President Miner concluded by saying how important it is to make sure that our students, faculty, and staff feel a sense of connection and belonging at URI, infusing throughout the culture what it means to be a Rhody Ram. URI has made a great commitment and is investing resources to bring people together, collaborating as one connected team. She thanked Board members for their commitment to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion at URI.

Chair Cook thanked Vice President Miner for her presentation and expressed the Board's support of her efforts.

## **10. BOARD RETREAT**

### **a. Opening Remarks**

*Margo Cook, Chair*

*Cortney Nicolato, Committee Chair*

### **b. Board Self-Assessment and Feedback**

*Cortney Nicolato, Committee Chair*

This item was taken up after Session I and Session II panel discussions.

**c. Session I: State of Healthcare in RI – Panel and Discussion**

- Joseph Matthews, Chair, South County Health
- Maria Ducharme, President, Miriam Hospital
- Larry O. Warner, Chief Impact & Equity Officer, United Way of Rhode Island
- Martha L. Wofford, President and CEO, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Rhode Island
- **Moderator:** Cortney Nicolato, President and CEO, United Way of Rhode Island

**d. Session II: Healthcare at URI – Panel and Discussion**

- Kerry LaPlante, Dean, College of Pharmacy
- Patrick Vivier, Dean, College of Health Sciences
- Danny Willis, Dean, College of Nursing
- **Moderator:** Barbara Wolfe, URI Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Session I moderator Cortney Nicolato introduced members of the panel and began a discussion about the state of healthcare in Rhode Island. The panelists discussed various healthcare challenges in Rhode Island, including affordability, accessibility, sustainability, primary care workforce issues, health equity initiatives, challenges in providing care for unhoused individuals, collaboration among healthcare systems for behavioral health, partnerships in mental health and education fields, and the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration. They discussed workforce development within the healthcare system and encouraged a collaboration between URI's many health sciences colleges and the healthcare delivery systems within the state to create a top of license model of care, with pipelines for students for clinical placements, creating partnerships that support a multidisciplinary model. The panelists discussed healthcare equity and the Rhode Island Life Index, and the need to reduce disparities in our healthcare system.

Session II moderator Barbara Wolfe introduced members of the panel and thanked the Board for the opportunity to spotlight URI's three health deans and their colleges as part of today's broader discussion on healthcare in Rhode Island, and the role URI plays in the health care enterprise locally, regionally, and nationally. Panelists discussed URI's commitment to society to improve health and healthcare.

Dean LaPlante spoke about her vision for the College of Pharmacy and the green fields of opportunity at URI. Dean Vivier spoke of the versatility of the College of Health Sciences and its breadth of disciplines that are critical to health. Responding to the question of how URI is preparing its nursing students to address the complexities of challenges in the healthcare field today, Dean Willis stated that URI is providing a theoretical education and also the practical and experiential components of nursing in areas of critical need, such as a general practitioner model, a psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner practice, and working collaboratively with a first responder program, among other opportunities. Noting the national shortage and the burnout rate amongst nurses, he stated that URI is talking to students about resiliency, self-care, conflict resolution, leadership skills, and what they need to bring to the practice environment as nurses in that transition to practice period.

The panelists detailed the many areas of research that URI faculty are working on that impact healthcare. They discussed innovative ways to address workforce needs in the state and ways to improve healthcare, including:

- Explore the possibility of increasing nursing enrollment by 25 percent.
- Address the challenge of underrepresented communities leaving before reaching higher positions in academia.
- Focus on interdisciplinary collaboration and teamwork in addressing healthcare challenges.
- Explore opportunities for collaboration in medication therapy management and patient adherence to medications.
- Investigate the potential for developing a program focused on wellness and disease prevention in collaboration with South County Hospital and other stakeholders.
- Explore the possibility of creating a new model for healthcare education that leverages the interdisciplinary expertise at URI and utilizes novel technologies such as AI and virtual simulation.
- Explore the possibility of expanding interdisciplinary education at URI to include physicians or other healthcare professionals.
- Advocate for pharmacists to have provider status and be reimbursed for their services.
- Investigate innovative approaches to delivering healthcare, such as community-based care models and interdisciplinary care teams.
- Continue discussions on utilizing technology and research to make healthcare more impactful and workable for providers.

Challenges discussed during the sessions include:

- The healthcare system in Rhode Island is facing challenges, such as low reimbursement rates, lack of access to high-quality, compassionate, and integrated care, and a complex system that is difficult for patients to navigate.
- Reimbursement rates are significantly lower in Rhode Island compared to neighboring states, leading to difficulties in finding primary care physicians and attracting healthcare providers.
- Increasing hospital rates leads to job cuts, highlighting the need for a balance between job growth and stability.
- Rhode Island faces challenges in terms of Medicaid rates, reimbursement rates, and affordability of healthcare compared to neighboring states. The state needs to find ways to invest in healthcare services while controlling healthcare expenditures, particularly pharmaceutical expenses.
- The healthcare providers are facing complications and difficulties due to the complex ratio of commercial and government patients.
- Medicaid and Medicare make up approximately 70% of the patient population, with Medicaid rates varying by state.
- Primary care providers are experiencing high levels of burnout due to a shortage of providers, long wait times for appointments, and heavy workloads. Efforts are being

made to build up and retain the primary care workforce through team-based approaches and competitive pay.

- Health equity initiatives, such as health equity zones, have shown promise in reducing health disparities in Rhode Island, particularly in relation to diabetes incidents.
- Social determinants of health, such as housing and access to care, play a significant role in overall health outcomes and should be addressed alongside clinical healthcare.
- Panelists and participants discussed the challenges faced by hospitals in providing care for unhoused individuals, particularly during extreme weather conditions.
- Programs such as street medicine and respite care were highlighted as effective ways to address these challenges, but they are currently underfunded.
- Panelists emphasized the importance of collaboration and co-opetition among healthcare systems to address behavioral health issues, which are a significant concern in Rhode Island.
- Panelists discussed various initiatives and partnerships in the fields of mental health, education, and nutrition.
- Panelists stressed the critical need to accelerate Rhode Island's investment in primary care.
- Panelists discussed the larger structural, economic issue of job growth in the state and the need for well-paying jobs that qualify people for commercial insurance. The work that the state is doing on the life sciences hub and other initiatives is critically important to driving growth.

#### **e. Closing Remarks**

Chair Cook noted that, as URI considers its role in improving health outcomes in Rhode Island and beyond, the University may consider creating a public medical school or a new interdisciplinary model using novel and innovative means and technologies, leveraging our colleges of Health Sciences, Nursing, and Pharmacy. Trustees discussed this and how to use URI resources to support state healthcare objectives.

President Parlange noted that the University of Houston started a medical school focused on community-based primary care, and it uses a team-based approach using integrated health to make a local impact. URI has an opportunity to be on the leading edge of AI. We have the potential to pivot and have an impact on healthcare in Rhode Island.

Chair Cook thanked moderators Courtney Nicolato and Barbara Wolfe for leading a very important discussion about healthcare in RI and at URI. She thanked the panelists for contributing to the discussion.

#### **Board Self-Assessment and Feedback**

*Courtney Nicolato, Governance Committee Chair*

Board members reviewed the results of the annual self-assessment survey. Chair Cook recognized board members' presence and preparedness, which lead to great discussions and outcomes. She encouraged board members to identify areas where they can apply their expertise and relationships and get involved to advance the University.

Cortney Nicolato stated that the survey results indicate that the Board is proud of the way it governs, the way it supports URI leadership and the ways in which it contributes to the University. She stated that respondents highlighted the need for professional development opportunities in higher education and best practices. There was a focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion, with a desire to learn and grow in these areas. The Board discussed the need for more strategic discussions with less time spent on bureaucratic matters. Other suggestions included:

- Streamline processes and reduce unnecessary discussion during board and committee meeting; allocate the time differently.
- Committee chairs should talk to their university liaisons to improve preparation for committee meetings.
- Review the frequency of committee meetings with an eye toward consolidation.
- Provide strategic updates rather than detailed presentations, focusing on key issues and decisions.
- Weaving in a conversation about value creation; how do we make it more valuable for prospective students to come to URI than to go someplace else.

Matthew Lenz left the meeting prior to the vote to adjourn.

## 11. ADJOURN

Chair Cook called for a motion, and on a motion duly made by Michael Fascitelli and seconded by Monica Garnes, and hearing no discussion on the motion, it was

VOTED: THAT The URI Board of Trustees adjourn the June 28, 2024, Board of Trustees meeting.

VOTE: 13 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Margo Cook, Maria Ducharme, Michael Fascitelli, Charles Fogarty, Joseph Formicola, Monica Garnes, Neil Kerwin, Joseph Matthews, Cortney Nicolato, Jay Placencia, Thomas Ryan, Armand Sabitoni, Robert Weygand

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

At 3:14 p.m., the meeting was adjourned.

The next URI Board of Trustees Meeting is scheduled for September 27, 2024.