THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

THINK BIG WE DO℠

Alumni Center, 73 Upper College Road, Kingston, RI 02881 USA

The University of Rhode Island
Board of Trustees Meeting and Annual Retreat
Friday, June 27, 2025 · 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
Margo Cook, Chair

Chair Margo Cook welcomed everyone to the June 27, 2025, meeting and annual retreat of the University of Rhode Island (URI) Board of Trustees and noted that the meeting was being held in person at the Fascitelli Center for Advanced Engineering. One Board member participated 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 9:03 a.m.

URI Board of Trustees members in attendance:

- Ms. Margo Cook, Chair (in person)
- Mr. Armand E. Sabitoni, Vice Chair (in person)
- Ms. Maria Ducharme (in person)
- Mr. Michael Fascitelli (in person)
- Honorable Charles J. Fogarty (in person)
- Mr. Joseph Formicola (in person)
- Ms. Monica Garnes (in person)
- Dr. Neil Kerwin (remote)
- Mr. Matthew Lenz (in person) (left the meeting at 12:28 p.m.)
- Mr. David Martirano (in person)
- Mr. Joseph Matthews (in person)
- Ms. Cortney Nicolato (in person)

- Ms. Jay Placencia (in person)
- Mr. Tom Ryan (in person)
- Dr. Marc B. Parlange, President (ex officio, non-voting) (in person)
- Mr. David Caprio (ex officio, non-voting) (in person) (arrived at 9:14 a.m.)
- Mr. Michael Grey (ex officio, non-voting) (in person)
- Dr. Kristine Bovy (faculty representative, non-voting) (in person)
- Mr. Ryan Estus (student representative, non-voting) (in person) (left the meeting at 10:30 a.m.)

URI Board of Trustees members not participating:

- Mr. Roby Luna
- Mr. Vahid Ownjazayeri

URI President's Stewardship Council members in attendance:

- Dr. Mark Antonucci, Vice President for Advancement, URI, and CEO, URI Foundation and Alumni Engagement (in person)
- Ms. Abby Benson, Vice President, Administration and Finance (in person)
- Ms. Chelsea Berry, Senior Advisor to the President and Chief of Staff (in person)
- Ms. Alyssa Boss, Vice President and General Counsel (in person)
- Mr. Karl Calvo, Assistant Vice President, Facilities Group (in person)
- Mr. Gabriele Fariello, Chief Information Officer (in person)
- Ms. Becky Hill, Vice President, Human Resources (in person)
- Ms. Jeanne Hruska, Senior Advisor to the Provost and Chief of Staff (in person)
- Dr. Bethany Jenkins, Vice President, Research and Economic Development (in person)
- Dr. Kerry LaPlante, Dean, College of Pharmacy (in person)
- Mr. Matthew McDonald, Vice President, Communications and Marketing (in person)
- Ms. Markeisha Miner, Vice President, Community, Equity and Diversity (in person)
- Mr. John Poehlmann, Assistant Vice President, Financial Strategy and Planning (in person)
- Dr. Ellen Reynolds, Vice President, Student Affairs (in person)
- Dr. John Stringer, Executive Director, Institutional Research (in person)
- Dr. Barbara Wolfe, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs (in person)

URI staff members in attendance:

- Ms. Lauren Broccoli Burgess, Executive Director, Legislative and Government Relations (in person)
- Mr. Ryan Carrillo, Director, Planning and Real Estate Development (in person)
- Ms. Robin Cawley, Legal Assistant, Office of the General Counsel (in person)
- Ms. Michelle Curreri, Secretary to the Board of Trustees (in person)
- Ms. Katherine Kittredge, Associate Director, Campus Design (in person)
- Ms. Lynn Owens, Associate Secretary to the Board of Trustees (in person)
- Mr. Jay Walsh, Executive Director, URI/AAUP (in person)

Guests in attendance:

- Michael Ledford, J.D., President, Lewis-Burke Associates LLC (in person)
- Mr. Tyler Patrick, Principal Planner, Sasaki (remote)
- Dr. Paul Umbach, President, Tripp Umbach (remote)

Chair Cook acknowledged that the University of Rhode Island occupies the traditional stomping ground of the Narragansett Nation and the Niantic People.

Chair Cook stated that an amendment to the agenda is in order to move consideration of the Affiliation Agreement between URI and the URI Foundation and Alumni Engagement from the Omnibus Vote to the Finance and Facilities Committee Report for discussion and action. She asked if there were any other proposed amendments to the published agenda. None were presented.

Chair Cook called for a motion, and on a motion duly made by Armand Sabitoni and seconded by Cortney Nicolato, it was

VOTED:	THAT:	The URI Board of Trustees amend its agenda to move Agenda Item 5.r., Approval of an Affiliation Agreement, from the Omnibus Vote to new Action Item 4.e.(vi) under the Finance and Facilities Committee Report section of the agenda.
	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, Neil Kerwin, Monica Garnes, Matthew Lenz, David Martirano, Joseph Matthews, Cortney Nicolato, Jay Placencia, Armand Sabitoni, Tom Ryan
	NAYS:	0
	ABSTAINS:	0

2. REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

Marc Parlange, President

President Parlange's presentation slides can be found here. He stated that while URI is navigating a lot of uncertainty at the federal level because of the work that has been done in recent years, the University is in a good position. He asked the trustees to read and share the op-ed piece in *Science Magazine* regarding the impact of federal actions on higher education, losing federal and state support has real human consequences. The President highlighted significant growth in URI's research grant submittals and enrollment, infrastructure improvements, diversity initiatives, and strategic priorities for future challenges and opportunities.

a. University Updates

President Parlange provided a brief overview of recent community events held since the last Board meeting. He thanked the trustees for participating in the Spring 2025 Commencement ceremonies. He featured campus activities including Juneteenth, performances, lectures, and alumni gatherings.

b. Budget Updates

President Parlange noted that State budget support for the University has improved significantly over the past four years, aiding infrastructure and faculty hiring. URI has seen significant support for the Bay Campus improvements, the athletics complex renewal, the PFAS removal facility, the Fine Arts Center, and housing initiatives, enhancing the student experience and enrollment potential. The University's biomedical sciences building will improve lab capacity, which is crucial for life sciences research and education. The President recognized FY25 gifts and commitments in support of URI’s top students and spoke of upcoming fundraising opportunities.

c. Strategic Plan KPIs

The President reviewed advancements in Fostering an Inclusive Culture, Strategic Plan Priority 3. URI aims to foster an inclusive culture, showing progress in diversity index among students and faculty. President Parlange noted that key performance indicators are trending in the right direction.

Concluding his report, the President spoke of current challenges in higher education, opportunities for growth, and transformative action plans. He noted that URI is focused on strengthening industry partnerships and promoting its strengths to attract more funding and students. He thanked the Board for their support and guidance and invited them to actively share the URI story while helping to foster meaningful connections on its behalf.

Board members discussed with the President what they can do to support the University in light of federal and state funding challenges. URI is gathering economic data to quantify the downstream impacts of research funding cuts on state universities and their local economies. Trustees encouraged URI to develop a promotional strategy to communicate the positive changes and future developments at the University to prospective students, public policy makers, and donors. They encouraged a collaborative effort amongst other state universities and their board leadership, along with the national education associations. Vice President Jenkins spoke about URI’s association with National Science Foundation’s Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR)/Institutional Development Award (IDeA) programs to accelerate science and technology for U.S. global competitiveness, prosperity, and security. Trustee Tom Ryan commented on current and planned campus infrastructure improvements and suggested that URI show incoming first-year students what the campus will look like in four years when they graduate.

Responding to trustee inquiry about the progress and momentum of university fundraising, President Parlange commended Mark Antonucci, Vice President for Advancement and URIFAE CEO, along with the Provost and deans, for their collaborative efforts in establishing the university's fundraising goals for the upcoming year. Vice President Antonucci noted that URI is positioning itself to be more proactive about fundraising initiatives and has created a strategy to engage some of the big foundations that support higher education. The Vice President noted that, because research grants connected to private philanthropy are not being cut, URI is moving to bring in more philanthropic dollars to enhance its federally funded research projects. He encouraged everyone to continue building partnerships with industry and government for research initiatives and funding opportunities. He emphasized the need to enhance communication efforts about URI's story outside of Southern New England to attract national attention and support.

3. EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board may seek to enter into executive session for the following items:

a. **Discussion regarding President Parlange's annual self-assessment and performance review, and annual performance-based incentive, pursuant to R.I.G.L. § 42-46-5(a)(1).**
Margo Cook, Chair

b. **Discussion pursuant to R.I.G.L. § 42-46-5(a)(7) regarding matters related to the question of the investment of public funds where the premature disclosure would adversely affect the public interest, specifically:**
(i) Tripp Umbach Report
Marc Parlange, President
Barbara Wolfe, Provost and Vice President, Academic Affairs

c. **Discussion regarding potential litigation, pursuant to R.I.G.L. § 42-46-5(a)(2), and a matter related to the question of the investment of public funds where the premature disclosure would adversely affect the public interest, pursuant to R.I.G.L. § 42-46-5(a)(7).**
Marc Parlange, President
Barbara Wolfe, Provost and Executive Vice President, Academic Affairs

d. **Discussion regarding collective bargaining with all bargaining units, pursuant to R.I.G.L.§ 42-46-5(a)(2), including discussion of:**
(i) PSA/NEA/URI: Professional Staff Association
(ii) PTAA/URI: Professional Technical Administration Association
(iii) PTF: Part-Time Faculty
(iv) AAUP/URI: American Association of University Professors
(v) GAU/NEARI: URI Graduate Assistants United
Becky Hill, Vice President, Human Resources

e. **Discussion and action related 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, pursuant to R.I.G.L. § 42-46-5 (a)(5), and a matter 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, pursuant to R.I.G.L. § 42-46-5 (a)(7), specifically:

(i) Approval of the Authority to Complete Negotiation of Certain Financial Terms Related to the Development, Construction, and Financing of New University Housing.

Chair Cook stated that President Parlange has been notified that discussion of his annual self-assessment will be done in executive session. She called for a motion, and on a motion duly made by Monica Garnes and seconded by David Martirano, 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 annual performance-based incentive; and,

R.I.G.L. § 42-46-5(a)(7) for discussion regarding a matter related to the question of the investment of public funds where the premature disclosure would adversely affect the public interest; specifically, the Tripp Umbach Report; and,

R.I.G.L. § 42-46-5(a)(2) for discussion regarding potential litigation and R.I.G.L. § 42-46-5(a)(7) for a matter 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)(2) for discussion regarding collective bargaining with all bargaining units, including:
PSA/NEA/URI: Professional Staff Association
PTAA/URI: Professional Technical Administration Association
PTF: Part-Time Faculty
AAUP/URI: American Association of University Professors
GAU/NEARI: URI Graduate Assistants United; and,

R.I.G.L. § 42-46-5(a)(5) for discussion and action related to the acquisition or lease of real property for public purposes, or of the disposition of publicly held property, and R.I.G.L. § 42-46-5(a)(7) for discussion and action regarding a matter 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, Approval of the Authority to Complete Negotiation of Certain Financial Terms Related to the Development, Construction, and Financing of New University Housing.

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, Neil Kerwin, Monica Garnes, Matthew Lenz, David Martirano, Joseph Matthews, Cortney Nicolato, Jay Placencia, Armand Sabitoni, Tom Ryan

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

Remote participant Neil Kerwin confirmed that no other persons were present or able to hear the discussion at the remote location.

At 10:03 a.m., the Board entered executive session. Virtual public access was paused.

Board member Matthew Lenz left the meeting at 12:28 p.m.

At 12:30 p.m., the Board returned to open session. Virtual public access resumed.

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

VOTED: That the Board seal the minutes of the June 27, 2025, executive session.

VOTE: 12 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Margo Cook, Maria Ducharme, Michael Fascitelli, Joseph Formicola, Monica Garnes, Neil Kerwin, David Martirano, Joseph Matthews, Cortney Nicolato, Jay Placencia, Armand Sabitoni, Tom Ryan

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

Board member Charles Fogarty was not present for the vote.

4. REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEE CHAIRS AND ACTION ITEMS

a. Governance Committee Report

(i) Update – June 9, 2025, Governance Committee Meeting
Cortney Nicolato, Committee Chair

Committee Chair Nicolato reported on activity at the June 9, 2025 Governance Committee meeting, noting that most of the Committee's work will be presented during today's annual retreat.

b. Academic Affairs and Research Committee Report

(i) Update – June 17, 2025, Academic Affairs and Research Committee Meeting
Charles Fogarty, Committee Vice Chair

Committee Vice Chair Fogarty reported on activity at the June 17, 2025, Committee meeting, including reports from Provost Wolfe and AVP Libutti on record enrollments. He stated that the Committee voted to recommend that the Board approve action items 5.b. through 5.g. as listed in the omnibus vote.

Provost Wolfe provided a brief summary of her report to the Committee.

Vice President Jenkins provided a brief presentation on her report to the Committee. Presentation slides can be found here. She thanked the State of Rhode Island for its financial support, including $5.7M recently awarded for an ocean technology innovation center. She recognized URI faculty for achieving an all-time high in terms of submitting research grant proposals, reviewed the total research and economic development funding and sources for FY2025, reported on the status of proposals and awards, and outlined features of Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable (FAIR) models for cost accounting of research.

Board members discussed the importance of making a strategic investment in personnel capable of obtaining grant funding in alignment with URI's Strategic Plan and encouraged coordination with efforts of the Foundation.

c. Executive Committee/Compensation Subcommittee Report

(i) Update –June 17, 2025, Joint Meeting of the Executive Committee and Compensation Subcommittee Meeting
Margo Cook, Chair

Chair Cook reported that on June 17th, the Executive Committee and the Compensation Subcommittee met jointly to discuss the President's annual self-assessment review and compensation. Committee members voted to recommend that the Board approve amendments to the committee calendars and liaison listing, as well as tentative collective bargaining agreements listed in Items 5.h. – 5.o. on the omnibus vote.

(ii) ACTION ITEM: Approval of an annual performance-based incentive to President Parlange for Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2025.
Margo Cook, Chair

Chair Cook noted that the President's employment contract includes a performance-based incentive. The performance incentive has a target of 15% of base salary for the contract year, with a range of zero to 25%. It is in the Board's discretion to confirm that award based on the goals that have been described beforehand and met.

She reported that the Compensation Subcommittee considered this item on June 17th and voted to recommend to the Chair an annual performance-based incentive for Contract Year ending June 30, 2025. The full Board discussed this item in Executive Session during today's meeting.

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

VOTED: That the Board approve an annual performance-based incentive, as discussed in Executive Session.

VOTE: 12 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Margo Cook, Maria Ducharme, Michael Fascitelli, Joseph Formicola, Monica Garnes, Neil Kerwin, David Martirano, Joseph Matthews, Cortney Nicolato, Jay Placencia, Armand Sabitoni, Tom Ryan

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

Board member Charles Fogarty was not present for the vote.

d. Institutional Risk and Compliance Committee Report

(i) Update – June 18, 2025, Institutional Risk and Compliance Committee Meeting
Roby Luna, Committee Chair

Committee member Joseph Matthews reported on activity at the June 18, 2025, Committee meeting. The IRCC committee discussed the annual audit plan and governance issues, noting Moody's negative outlook for higher education. Cybersecurity improvements were highlighted, including reduced phishing risks and enhanced incident response capabilities. He stated that the Committee voted to recommend that the Board approve action item 5.p. as listed in the omnibus vote.

e. Finance and Facilities Committee Report

(i) Update – June 26, 2025, Finance and Facilities Committee Meeting
Armand Sabitoni, Committee Vice Chair

Committee Vice Chair Armand Sabitoni reported on activity at the June 26, 2025, Committee meeting, including the Comprehensive Campus Plan and the Capital Improvement Plan. The Comprehensive Campus Plan aims to align with the University's strategic goals and enhance campus accessibility and aesthetics. URI's Capital Improvement Plan for FY 2027-2031 incorporates funding updates and prioritizes projects based on recent appropriations. Vice Chair Sabitoni called upon Vice President Abby Benson to provide a high-level overview of the following items.

(ii) DISCUSSION ITEM: Comprehensive Campus Plan Update Enclosure
Abby Benson, Vice President, Administration and Finance

Vice President Benson introduced Tyler Patrick, principal planner with Sasaki, who presented an update of the Comprehensive Campus Plan (CCP), supported by select slides on planning principles and Strategic Plan alignment, the proposed framework, the Butterfield Road and residential district core, campus greenway and accessible pathways, and Ellery Pond expansion and wetlands trails, linked here.

Vice President Benson encouraged Board members to review the full enclosure and provide feedback. The University's CCP will be finalized over the summer and presented for review and approval at the September committee and board meetings.

Chair Cook stated that the full CCP was reviewed in detail and thoroughly discussed by the Committee. URI must identify the best use of its limited resources and time to realize the biggest impact on the University. In response to Board inquiry, Mr. Patrick confirmed that the final plan will include cost estimates and project prioritization.

(iii) ACTION ITEM: Approval of the URI Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) FY2027-2031 Enclosure
Abby Benson, Vice President, Administration and Finance

Vice President Benson noted that the full CIP is included in the enclosure. She discussed the major changes to the University's FY2027 – FY2031 Capital Improvement Plan since the April 2025 presentation, including final state appropriations (RICAP) numbers, changes relative to the recent Rhode Island Commerce award to the Research Foundation (for the newly renamed Ocean Technology Innovation Center building), updates to the Narragansett Bay Campus Phase 2 and Biomedical Sciences Building relative to the use of gift funds, and estimates for the Allen's Harbor project (a new CIP project).

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

VOTED: That the Board approve the University of Rhode Island Capital Improvement Plan for FY2027-FY2031 as presented.

VOTE: 12 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Margo Cook, Maria Ducharme, Michael Fascitelli, Joseph Formicola, Monica Garnes, Neil Kerwin, David Martirano, Joseph Matthews, Cortney Nicolato, Jay Placencia, Armand Sabitoni, Tom Ryan

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

Board member Charles Fogarty was not present for the vote.

(iv) ACTION ITEM: Approval of Certain Documents Relative to the Development, Construction, and Financing of New University Housing. Enclosure
Abby Benson, Vice President, Administration and Finance

Vice President Benson stated URI is seeking approval of the Ground Lease, Affiliation Agreement, and the Interim Management Agreement relative to the development, construction, and financing for new undergraduate and graduate residences (New University Housing). She noted that the other agreements in the enclosure are for informational purposes only since URI is not a party to these agreements. There are a series of resolutions in the enclosure that describe the structure of the project. URI's internal team has thoroughly vetted these agreements. URI also has P3 consultants and external counsel that have worked on P3s around the country. The Board is being asked to approve the transactions. The documents will be finalized over the coming months.

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

VOTED: That the Board approve the Project and authorize each Authorized Officer to Execute Development, Construction, and Financing of the two (2) new on-campus undergraduate student housing communities and one (1) on-campus graduate student and family housing community at the University of Rhode Island and to execute documents and take actions, all as further described in the enclosed resolutions.

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, David Martirano, Joseph Matthews, Cortney Nicolato, Jay Placencia, Armand Sabitoni, Tom Ryan

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

(v) ACTION ITEM: Approval of a Transaction(s) between URI and the URI Department of Environmental Management to the Use of the W. Alton Jones Campus. Enclosure
Abby Benson, Vice President, Administration and Finance

Vice President Benson reported that this recommendation for a mission-aligned partnership between URI and the RIDEM provides for the proper management of the W. Alton Jones (WAJ) campus on behalf of URI. The transaction includes a 10-year lease with renewals at URI's discretion. The agreement excludes certain areas of WAJ for research that is actively being conducted on the campus and would also exclude the Whispering Pines Conference Center, which would be reserved for URI or a third party. As the steward of the state's natural resources, RIDEM will manage this 2,300-acre property including its forests and dams and is willing to invest in critical infrastructure on the campus and allow public access.

Chair Cook encouraged the University to share with the public the many advantages to partnering with RIDEM to optimize the natural resources at WAJ and provide educational resources aligned with URI's mission. Board members noted that RIDEM will be a great partner and suggested that they come to an upcoming meeting to report on their plans for the campus.

Vice Chair Sabitoni, who noted that the Committee had decided to recommend approval after a full discussion, called for a motion, and on a motion duly made by Monica Garnes and seconded by Joseph Formicola, and hearing no discussion on the motion, it was

VOTED: That the Board approve an Agreement regarding the use of portions of the W. Alton Jones Campus at 401 Victory Hwy, West Greenwich, RI, by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management as presented on substantially the terms in the enclosed Term Sheet, and that any authorized signatory (as defined in the Policy on Approval and Execution of Contracts and Other Binding Documents) be authorized to negotiate the terms of any documents relating to such transaction on substantially the terms in the enclosure, with any such changes and additional terms as are deemed necessary or appropriate by the authorized signatory.

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, David Martirano, Joseph Matthews, Cortney Nicolato, Jay Placencia, Armand Sabitoni, Tom Ryan

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

The following item was added to this section of the agenda and removed from the Omnibus Vote (Item 5.r.).

(vi) Approval of an Affiliation Agreement with the University of Rhode Island Foundation and Alumni Engagement (URIFAE)
Abby Benson, Vice President, Administration and Finance

This matter was not considered by the Finance and Facilities Committee at its June 26, 2025 meeting, as the agreement was not ready. The agreement has since been shared with the full Board for review and consideration, and is linked here. Vice President Benson noted that this proposal for a new 1-year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which affirms that URI and URIFAE will continue to work together in support of the University.

Board members discussed with Vice President Antonucci the financial details of the MOU, including modified financial and in-kind contributions, past research funding, procedures regarding gift agreements and disbursements, and a reduction in the Foundation's annual service fee. Trustee Fascitelli recommended that the Board engage in continued dialogue at a future meeting to gain a deeper understanding of the financial framework surrounding the affiliation.

Vice Chair Sabitoni called for a motion, and on a motion duly made by Cortney Nicolato and seconded by Maria Ducharme, and hearing no discussion on the motion, it was

VOTED: That the Board approve the Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Rhode Island Foundation and Alumni Engagement, as recommended and presented, and that the Board Chair, President, and Vice President of Administration and Finance are each individually authorized, for and on behalf of the University and the Board of Trustees, to execute the Memorandum of Understanding, as recommended and presented.

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, David Martirano, Joseph Matthews, Cortney Nicolato, Jay Placencia, Armand Sabitoni, Tom Ryan

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

5. 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 25, 2025, Board Meeting. Enclosure

Academic Affairs and Research Committee recommended action:

b. Approval of the granting of tenure, effective July 1, 2025, to incoming dean of the College of Environment and Life Sciences, Dr. Jean VanderGheynst, who has met the requirements for tenure at the University of Rhode Island. Enclosure

c. Approval of the annual granting of tenure for University of Rhode Island faculty members, effective July 1, 2025, or as specified. Enclosure

d. Approval of legislation from the Graduate Council #2024-2025-07C, College of Engineering organizational change to create a new degree program, Master of Engineering Management and Leadership (MEML), which has been approved by the faculty and president of the University of Rhode Island. Enclosure

e. Approval of legislation from the Graduate Council #2024-2025-08C, College of Arts and Sciences organizational change to create a new program, Ph.D. in Computational Social Science (CSS) Doctorate degree program, which has been approved by the faculty and president of the University of Rhode Island. Enclosure

f. Approval of legislation from the Faculty Senate Curriculum & Standards Committee Report #2024-2025-09C, College of Arts and Sciences organizational change to create a new program, Bachelor of Arts degree in Environmental Arts and Humanities, which has been approved by the faculty and president of the University of Rhode Island. Enclosure

g. Approval of the awarding of a posthumous academic degree at Fall Commencement 2025. Enclosure

Executive Committee and Compensation Subcommittee recommended action:

h. Approval of amendments to the Executive Committee Charter and Calendar. Enclosure

i. Approval of amendments to the Compensation Subcommittee Charter and Calendar. Enclosure

j. Approval of an amendment to the June 2023 listing of appointed Primary University Liaisons and University Liaisons to Committees to reflect a title change for the Executive Committee and the Compensation Subcommittee university liaison. Enclosure

k. Ratification of the tentative collective bargaining agreement between the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees and the PSA/NEA/URI Professional Staff Association for a two-year contract extension (July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2027) of the existing collective bargaining agreement with a 3.25% salary increase each year.

l. Ratification of the tentative collective bargaining agreement between the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees and the Part-Time Faculty (PTF) commencing July 1, 2025, and ending on June 30, 2028, with annual across the board salary increases of 3.25% starting July 1, 2025, 3.25% starting July 1, 2026, and 3.5% starting July 1, 2027.

m. Ratification of the tentative collective bargaining agreement between the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees and the Professional Technical Administration Association (PTAA/URI) for a two-year contract extension (July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2027) of the existing collective bargaining agreement, with a 3.25% across the board salary increase each year.

n. Ratification of the three-year tentative collective bargaining agreement between the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees and the American Association of University Professors (AAUP/URI), commencing July 1, 2025 and ending on June 30, 2028, with annual across the board salary increases of 3.5% starting July 1, 2025, 3.5% starting July 1, 2026 and 4% starting July 1, 2027.

o. Ratification of the three-year tentative collective bargaining agreement between the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees and the URI Graduate Assistants United (GAU/NEARI), commencing September 1, 2025 with annual across the board salary increases of 3.5% starting September 1, 2025, 3% starting September 1, 2026 and 3% starting September 1, 2027.

Institutional Risk and Compliance Committee recommended action:

p. Approval of amendments to the Institutional Risk and Compliance Committee Calendar. Enclosure

Finance and Facilities Committee recommended action:

q. Acceptance of the Report on Approvals under the Delegation of Authority to the President Relating to Land and Property Enclosure

The following item was removed from the Omnibus Vote and added to the Finance and Facilities Committee Report and Action Items (4.e.(vi)).

~~r. Approval of an Affiliation Agreement with the University of Rhode Island Foundation and Alumni Engagement (URIFAE).~~ Moved to Item 4.e.(vi)

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 (other than Item 5.r., which was removed and taken up separately under Item 4.e.(vi)). Hearing none, she called for an omnibus motion, and on a motion duly made by Tom Ryan and seconded by Jay Placencia, it was

VOTED: That the Board approve agenda action items 5.a. through 5.q. as recommended and presented.

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, David Martirano, Joseph Matthews, Cortney Nicolato, Jay Placencia, Armand Sabitoni, Tom Ryan

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

7. DISCUSSION ITEM

a. 2025 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 Miner presented an overview of the 2025 URI Annual Legislative Report. Presentation slides can be found here. She provided highlights of the annual report on current faculty, staff, and student demographics as mandated by RIGL § 16-32-2.1, particularly noting representation from first-generation college students, Pell Grant recipients, military-affiliated students, students registered with disability services who receive accommodations, and student participants in the Talent Development program. She also updated the Board about efforts to enhance access and equal opportunity as well as to assess campus climate. She highlighted several new positions beyond the Office of Community, Equity and Diversity that were recently filled, including a full-time Title IX coordinator, director for community and organizational development, and military and veterans' education center coordinator. She noted that the University was again designated as a Top Ten Military Friendly University and also now as military spouse friendly.

Concluding her report, Vice President Miner noted that the University prioritizes diversity and inclusion in alignment with its land grant mission and its strategic vision, as well as governing law.

Chair Cook thanked Vice President Miner for her report and applauded the university community for remaining consistent with its values while also navigating the current environment.

8. ANNUAL BOARD RETREAT

a. Lunchtime Activity

Cortney Nicolato, Governance Committee Chair

Due to time constraints, the lunchtime activity was canceled.

b. Opening Remarks
Margo Cook, Board Chair

Chair Cook reported that Trustee Bob Weygand has resigned from the Board. She extended the Board's gratitude for Bob's service to the URI Board of Trustees, particularly his contributions to the Governance and Student Life & Athletics Committees. Bob brought thoughtful insight, integrity, and a sincere commitment to the mission of the University of Rhode Island. His tenure from 2023-2025 helped advance the work of this board in meaningful ways.

Chair Cook noted that it is healthy for boards to regularly reflect on whether current practices truly serve the institution's needs. She stated that the URI Board operates exceptionally well because of trustees' dedication, preparation, and insightful inquiry. Board members understand that their role is to guide, not manage, the university. That clarity strengthens the relationship between the Board and President Parlange, which is key to effective governance.

Chair Cook stated that the Board has done well encouraging leadership to think long-term—asking the tough questions that help them see around corners they might miss in day-to-day operations. Still, there's room to deepen that practice. Whether it is during meetings or informal outreach, we should challenge each other and the leadership team to explore what is ahead. With major decisions looming that will shape the University for years to come, keeping our focus on strategic oversight will be critical. Chair Cook stated that she welcomes Cortney's insights as we continue evolving these practices.

c. Board Self-Assessment and Feedback
Cortney Nicolato, Governance Committee Chair

Governance Committee Chair Nicolato reviewed the results of the Board's self-assessment exercise and highlighted trustee feedback. She noted that 92% of trustees completed the board self-assessment. Many identified URI's Board of Trustees as among the most effective they have served on. Leadership—including Margo, Armand, and Marc—received strong appreciation, especially considering the Board's formation only five years ago.

Board members expressed a desire for deeper engagement, more strategic discussions, and stronger communication between meetings. There was interest in forming subcommittees for major initiatives (e.g., medical school, facilities planning, AI) to allow for deeper discussions of complex topics. There was interest in greater involvement outside board meetings, both virtually and in-person, and interest in leveraging trustees' professional experience in board work and fostering more curiosity-driven engagement.

Committee Chair Nicolato noted that the Governance Committee has taken up two key areas of focus; board communication and board engagement. Trustees noted that communication improvements are needed for better engagement among board members. They called for more proactive updates when news is forthcoming or questions arise and discussed exploring tools for push notifications to prompt email checks. It was noted that the Board must balance efficiency and compliance with the Open Meetings Act.

Committee Chair Nicolato reported that the trustees also completed a board engagement form which yielded themes. These themes on board engagement efforts will be distilled into a range of future engagement opportunities.

Concluding her review, Trustee Nicolato invited board members to share any additional thoughts or suggestions for enhancing board operations and involvement.

Board members applauded the efforts of Vice President McDonald and his communications team for dramatically improving outreach and awareness. Their efforts have elevated the University's state and national profile, positively influencing public perception, development, and funding. They acknowledged that URI's status as #1 in New England is now a point of pride echoed by state leaders.

Board members reviewed the committee structure and effectiveness and addressed administrative matters thoroughly. They advocated for more board time for strategic, in-depth discussions. Board members focused on streamlining meetings while ensuring that vital issues surface for the board's input. Trustees suggested that students, faculty, and staff be more engaged in board discussions and that the Student Life and Athletics Committee liaisons report directly to the Board. In response to suggestions, Committee Chair Nicolato indicated the Committee can look into that and whether the Finance and Facilities Committee should have more members. Trustees discussed the process of filling open board seats. Governance Committee efforts are underway to address future board composition. Meeting cadence and committee structure were discussed, as URI recently revamped its meeting schedule based on purpose, charter requirements, and efficiency. Board members discussed committee involvement, reporting efforts, and full board participation in key discussions. Committee Chair Nicolato acknowledged work that had been done to make meetings more efficient but also agreed to have the Committee look at doing more to isolate topics to allow for more substantive discussion at Board meetings. Vice Chair Sabitoni suggested that members could receive enclosures that show what committees did and then just ask people if they have questions on written reports, while others noted the committee reports actually don't take much time and suggested it might make sense instead to invite Board members to attend key Finance and Facilities Committee meetings where topics like the Comprehensive Campus Plan are discussed. President Parlange acknowledged the time and effort involved in preparing meeting materials and expressed his appreciation to the trustees for their commitment to reviewing the material. He encouraged continued inquiry and discussion during meetings. Dr. Bovy indicated a desire to hear from students more. Chair Cook proposed the creation of a subcommittee on a medical school.

d. 2025-2026 Draft Statement of Expectations/KPIs and Goals
Cortney Nicolato, Governance Committee Chair

Governance Committee Chair Nicolato informed the Board that the draft 2025-2026 Statement of Expectations/KPIs and Goals was shared with board members prior to the meeting. She asked if any trustee had amendments to the document; none were presented.

The 2025-2026 Statement of Expectations document, including updated KPIs and Goals will be distributed to board members following the meeting. Board members were asked to review, sign, and return it, acknowledging their fiduciary duties and responsibilities.

Governance Committee Chair Nicolato expressed her thanks to Board secretary Michelle Curreri for her work, particularly with the Governance Committee.

e. Government Relations Update
Lauren Broccoli Burgess, Executive Director, Legislative & Government Relations

Ms. Burgess acknowledged state leaders for their continuing support of the University and recognized URI's legislative and government relations team for their dedicated efforts. She also recognized all the board members for their engagement and advocacy on behalf of the University.

Ms. Burgess reported that URI's government relations team, Lewis-Burke Associates, and research leaders are aligning efforts to pivot, and position the University for long-term success, regardless of shifts in federal leadership. Efforts are aggressive and proactive, and include:

- An internal task force monitors federal developments—grants, executive actions, and agency priorities—and coordinates responses.
- Engagement with national associations and advocacy coalitions helps shape policy direction, particularly as organizations focus on mobilizing support among Republican senators. Rhode Island's delegation already strongly supports these programs.
- As an R1 university, URI is working to pivot strategically and align with federal priorities—leveraging legislative mechanisms and agency relationships to secure grants and funding.
- A prime example is URI's collaboration with Electric Boat, Naval Undersea Warfare Center, and the University of Connecticut around undersea vehicle research, which highlights federal partnership, funding, and institutional advancement.

Ms. Burgess introduced Michael Ledford from Lewis-Burke who presented on strategies and successes for the next 0–10 years.

f. Session I: Current Landscape of Federal Research and Higher Education Funding
Michael Ledford, J.D., President, Lewis-Burke Associates LLC

Mr. Ledford reported that a diversified team at Lewis-Burke Associates LLC is working for URI. He presented a strategic briefing (linked here) on the evolving federal landscape and its implications for URI's research, education, and funding strategies. The presentation emphasized that the current federal environment is highly fluid, characterized by activity across key domains: executive actions, agency-level policy shifts, congressional legislation, and the annual appropriations process.

Mr. Ledford noted that, despite broader political and operational disruptions in Washington, and less funding overall, critical federal investments in research and innovation have remained strong—and in some cases, expanded. These developments present near- and long-term opportunities for URI to secure additional funding and increase its national visibility. Advocacy strategies must adapt to recent agency restructuring and staffing changes across the federal government. In response, URI is deepening its involvement in national coalitions and leveraging third-party advocates to better align institutional priorities with federal agendas.

Mr. Ledford's presentation also introduced a historical framework for understanding federal-higher education relationships, describing the current era as a "fourth-generation compact" centered on innovation, workforce development, and sustained economic competitiveness.

During Mr. Ledford's presentation, he emphasized URI's strengths in ocean mapping, critical minerals, shipbuilding, biotechnology, and chronic disease research. He stressed the need for URI to pitch bold, high-impact proposals ($100M+ scale) to remain competitive.

Mr. Ledford concluded by affirming that URI is well-positioned to enhance its federal engagement. The University's forward-looking strategy focuses on being proactive rather than reactive—building agility, expanding partnerships, and aligning its mission with emerging national priorities.

Board members discussed the shifting political and funding landscape for higher education. Mr. Ledford emphasized the need for URI to engage more tactically and indirectly with federal and industry stakeholders. He recommended building targeted partnerships—leveraging industry, community beneficiaries, and bipartisan coalitions—to advocate for URI's research priorities. Vice President Jenkins noted that success lies in framing URI's strengths as solutions that align with federal objectives. Mr. Ledford stated that proposals must be ambitious, timely, and demonstrate multi-state impact to gain traction in a transactional environment. He added that funding opportunities will resume and may come from agencies that the University is not accustomed to working with.

Chair Cook thanked Mr. Ledford for his presentation and discussed next steps. Board engagement is essential to help scale proposals rapidly through strategic partnerships. A focused discussion was encouraged to deepen exploration of priority topics such as sustainable seafood and ocean mapping. Members were encouraged to support high-impact proposals and identify where members' networks can accelerate federal engagement and funding opportunities for the University.

g. **Session II: Philanthropy and URI's Strategic Planning**
Mark Antonucci, Vice President for Advancement, URI
Chief Executive Officer, URI Foundation and Alumni Engagement

Chair Cook introduced Vice President Mark Antonucci, who spoke about efforts to align the Foundation's focus with the University's Strategic Plan. Vice President Antonucci stressed the importance of bringing URI's story to the national stage. He stressed the need to leverage the University's strengths—particularly in ocean studies, health care, and emerging fields (e.g., AI) for future fundraising efforts. The Vice President shared plans to better engage the Board of Trustees in fundraising and networking and to pursue transformative, large-scale gifts by engaging broader networks. Efforts are underway to align the Foundation and the Board of Trustees more closely, including joint meeting scheduling. He concluded by recognizing the University's strong position and urged continued strategic focus to maintain momentum.

h. **Closing Remarks**
Margo Cook, Board Chair

Chair Cook thanked the trustees for their thoughtful questions and feedback today. She noted that the Board engaged in rich discussions and identified structural improvements to enhance focus on strategic topics. Plans include revisiting board and committee agendas to allow more time for high-priority issues and potentially reassigning topics from the Student Life and Athletics Committee to the full board. Consideration will also be given to forming smaller working groups or holding special sessions to address complex areas, such as facilities planning and prioritization, the proposed medical school, and federal funding. She concluded by emphasizing the University's strong momentum, ongoing growth in partnerships and philanthropy, and the importance of intentional planning to sustain progress.

9. ADJOURN

Chair Cook called for a motion to adjourn. On a motion duly made by Charles Fogarty and seconded by Jay Placencia, and hearing no discussion on the motion, it was

VOTED:	That the Board adjourn the meeting.
VOTE:	13 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.
YEAS:	Margo Cook, Maria Ducharme, Michael Fascitelli, Charle Fogarty, Joseph Formicola, Monica Garnes, Neil Kerwin, David Martirano, Joseph Matthews, Cortney Nicolato, Jay Placencia, Armand Sabitoni, Tom Ryan
NAYS:	0

ABSTAINS: 0

At 2:56 p.m. this meeting ended.

The next URI Board of Trustees Meeting is scheduled for Friday, September 26, 2025.