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**The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees
Academic Affairs and Research Committee Meeting
Wednesday, April 10, 2024 · 2:30 p.m. EDT**

**The University of Rhode Island
Beagle Board Room, The Alumni Center
73 Upper College Road, Kingston, RI 02881**

OFFICIAL MINUTES

Committee Vice Chair Charles Fogarty welcomed everyone to the April 10, 2024, meeting of the University of Rhode Island (URI) Board of Trustees Academic Affairs and Research Committee and noted that the meeting was being held in person with committee members participating remotely. Virtual access to the meeting was available via the YouTube video platform. A recording is available for viewing at <https://web.uri.edu/trustees/meetings/>.

Committee Vice Chair Fogarty conducted a roll call and determined that a quorum of members was present. He called the meeting to order at 2:31 p.m.

The URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs and Research Committee members in attendance:

- The Honorable Charles Fogarty, Committee Vice Chair (remote)
- Ms. Maria Ducharme (remote)
- Ms. Monica Garnes (remote)
- Mr. David Martirano (remote)
- Mr. Joseph Matthews (remote)
- Dr. Marc B. Parlange, President (ex officio, non-voting) (remote)
- Dr. Melissa Sutherland (non-voting) (remote)

The URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs and Research Committee member not in attendance:

- Dr. Neil Kerwin, Committee Chair

URI Board of Trustees Chair Margo Cook participated remotely.

URI President's Stewardship Council members in attendance:

- Ms. Abby Benson, Vice President, Administration and Finance (remote)
- Ms. Anne Marie Coleman, Assistant Vice President, Human Resources (remote)
- Ms. Chelsea Berry, Senior Advisor to the President and Chief of Staff (remote)
- Dr. Matthew Bodah, Vice Provost for Academic Performance and Budget (remote)
- Ms. Alyssa Boss, General Counsel (remote)
- Ms. Jeanne Hruska, Senior Advisor to the Provost and Chief of Staff (remote)
- Dr. Bethany Jenkins, Interim Vice President for Research and Economic Development (remote)
- Dr. Kristin Johnson, Vice Provost for Global Initiatives (remote)
- Dr. Dean Libutti, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management & Student Success (remote)
- Dr. John Stringer, Executive Director, Institutional Research (remote)
- Dr. Anne Veeger, Vice Provost, Academic and Faculty Initiatives (remote)
- Dr. Barbara Wolfe, Provost and Executive Vice President, Academic Affairs (remote)

URI staff members in attendance:

- Ms. Michelle Curreri, Secretary to the Board of Trustees (in person)
- Ms. Lauren Jensen, Associate General Counsel (remote)
- Ms. Lynn Owens, Associate Secretary to the Board of Trustees (in person)
- Ms. Shawn Simmons, Executive Assistant in the Provost's Office (remote)

Committee Vice Chair Fogarty welcomed David Martirano back to the URI Board of Trustees and expressed thanks to outgoing trustee Richard Humphrey for his service to the Board. He acknowledged that the University of Rhode Island occupies the traditional stomping ground of the Narragansett Nation and the Niantic People.

1. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

a. **Minutes of the February 7, 2024, Academic Affairs and Research Committee Meeting** [Enclosure](#)

Committee Vice Chair Fogarty called for a motion that the Academic Affairs and Research Committee approve the minutes of the meeting held on February 7, 2024.

On a motion duly made by Monica Garnes and seconded by David Martirano, and hearing no discussion, it was

VOTED THAT: The Academic Affairs and Research Committee
approve the minutes for the meeting held on February 7, 2024.

VOTE: 5 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the

negative.

YEAS: Maria Ducharme, Charles Fogarty, Monica Garnes, David Martirano, Joseph Matthews

NAYS: 0

ABSTAIN: 0

2. REPORT OF THE CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER [Enclosure](#)

Dr. Barbara Wolfe, Provost and Executive Vice President, Academic Affairs

a. Updates on:

- (i) Coffee and Conversations**
- (ii) Academic Affairs Update**
- (iii) Committee and Task Force Updates**
- (iv) Personnel Update**
- (v) Honorary Degrees**
- (vi) 2024 Commencement**

Provost Wolfe provided updates on outreach to faculty, academic affairs, and the upcoming 2024 Spring Commencement exercises (see presentation slides in the enclosure). She also noted that US News and World Report has ranked URI's Pharmacy program as 31st in the country. On the current topic of artificial intelligence (AI), she mentioned that URI has launched an AI task force, supported by several committees.

3. REPORT OF THE CHIEF RESEARCH OFFICER

Dr. Bethany Jenkins, Interim Vice President for Research and Economic Development

a. Report on Activities, Metrics of Success, and Strategic Planning for the URI Research Foundation

b. Update on Division staffing

Dr. Jenkins provided a verbal update to the Committee. She said that her team has created two new positions entitled "Research Concierge" to facilitate projects. She then discussed the URI Research Foundation (URIRF), the role it plays, and how it can augment strategic planning. The URIRF was established in 2007, originally created as a public corporation for the purpose of developing research and technology at the University. Dr. Jenkins said that URI is reviewing the URIRF to make sure it aligns with its sole purpose to advance research at the University. She noted that the review process will include comparing our research foundation to those in other institutions; URI has started the process.

4. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- a. **Discussion regarding 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, pursuant to R.I.G.L. § 42-46-5(a)(7); specifically,**

- **Investment in potential programming**

Dr. Barbara Wolfe, Provost and Executive Vice President, Academic Affairs

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

VOTED: THAT The Academic Affairs and Research Committee convene into executive session pursuant to R.I.G.L. § 42-46-5(a)(7) to discuss 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.

VOTE: 5 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Maria Ducharme, Charles Fogarty, Monica Garnes, David Martirano, Joseph Matthews

NAYS: 0

ABSTAIN: 0

At 3:00 p.m., upon confirmation from remote committee members that no other persons were present or able to hear the executive session, the Academic Affairs and Research Committee convened into Executive Session. Virtual public access was paused.

At 3:10 p.m., the Academic Affairs and Research Committee returned to Open Session. Virtual public access resumed.

Committee Vice Chair Fogarty called for a motion that the Academic Affairs and Research Committee seal the minutes of the Executive Session that took place on April 10, 2024.

On a motion duly made by Monica Garnes and seconded by Joseph Matthews, and hearing no discussion, it was

VOTED: THAT The Academic Affairs and Research Committee seal the minutes of the Executive Session that took place on April 10, 2024.

VOTE: 5 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members

voted in the negative.

YEAS: Maria Ducharme, Charles Fogarty, Monica Garnes, David Martirano, Joseph Matthews

NAYS: 0

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Annual Review of the Academic Affairs and Research Committee Charter

[Enclosure](#)

b. Annual Review of the Academic Affairs and Research Committee Calendar

[Enclosure](#)

Committee Vice Chair Fogarty noted that, as outlined in Article V of the URI Board of Trustees Bylaws, the Board shall define the duties of each committee by approving a committee charter which declares clearly the purposes of the committee. Further, the committee work should be accomplished in accordance with an annual work plan which is aligned with the University's strategic vision and priorities. He stated that on an annual basis or more often, standing committees review their charters and calendars and recommend any necessary amendments to the Board of Trustees. He asked if there were any proposed updates to the committee charter and the committee calendar. No proposed changes were presented.

6. ACTION ITEMS

a. Approval of the awarding of posthumous academic degrees at Spring Commencement 2024, and recommendation to the URI Board of Trustees. [Enclosure](#)

Committee Vice Chair Fogarty called for a motion, and on a motion duly made by Maria Ducharme and seconded by David Martirano, and hearing no discussion, it was

VOTED THAT: The Academic Affairs and Research Committee recommend that the URI Board of Trustees approve the awarding of posthumous academic degrees at Spring Commencement, as presented in the enclosure, including Ms. Grace Campanella, College of Environment & Life Sciences, and Mr. Steven Drabik, College of Health Science.

VOTE: 5 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

- b. Approval of the awarding of undergraduate and graduate degrees, diplomas, certificates, and honors to be conferred by the President to the candidates who have completed their requirements at the conclusion of the Spring 2024 term and who are approved by the faculty of the University of Rhode Island, and recommendation to the URI Board of Trustees. [Enclosure](#)**

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

VOTED THAT: The Academic Affairs and Research Committee recommend that the URI Board of Trustees approve the awarding of undergraduate and graduate degrees, diplomas, certificates, and honors to be conferred by the President to the candidates who will have completed their requirements at the conclusion of the Spring 2024 term and who are approved by the faculty of the University of Rhode Island, as recommended and presented in the enclosure.

VOTE: 5 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Maria Ducharme, Charles Fogarty, Monica Garnes, David Martirano, Joseph Matthews

NAYS: 0

- c. Approval of legislation from the Faculty Senate Curriculum & Standards Committee Report #2023-2024-07C, and the Graduate Council Report #2023-2024-10C, which have been approved by the faculty and president of the University of Rhode Island, and recommendation to the URI Board of Trustees. [Enclosure](#)**
- (i) Organizational Change: reducing the number of required upper division credits for BA degrees in the College of Arts & Sciences**
 - (ii) New Program: MA in UX/UI Design in the College of Arts & Sciences**

Provost Wolfe explained the organizational change and introduced the new program which is mostly online.

Committee Vice Chair Fogarty called for a motion, and on a motion duly made by Maria Ducharme and seconded by David Martirano, and hearing no discussion, it was

VOTED THAT: The Academic Affairs and Research Committee recommend that the URI Board of Trustees approve an organizational change reducing

the number of required upper division credits for BA degrees in the College of Arts & Sciences, and the creation of a new MA program in UX/UI Design, as recommended and presented in the enclosure.

VOTE: 5 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Maria Ducharme, Charles Fogarty, Monica Garnes, David Martirano, Joseph Matthews

NAYS: 0

7. ADJOURN

Committee Vice Chair Fogarty called for a motion to adjourn the meeting of April 10, 2024.

On a motion duly made by David Martirano and seconded by Monica Garnes, it was

VOTED: THAT: The URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs and Research Committee adjourn the meeting of April 10, 2024.

VOTE: 5 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Maria Ducharme, Charles Fogarty, Monica Garnes, David Martirano, Joseph Matthews

NAYS: 0

ABSTAIN: 0

The meeting adjourned at 3:18 p.m.

The next URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs and Research Committee meeting is tentatively scheduled for June 2024.