

**The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees
Academic Affairs and Research Committee Meeting
Monday, September 16, 2024, 3:00 p.m. EDT**

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

OFFICIAL MINUTES

The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees Academic Affairs and Research Committee meeting was held in person, with committee members participating remotely. Virtual public access to the meeting was available via the YouTube video platform and is available for viewing at <https://web.uri.edu/trustees/meetings/>.

Committee Chair Kerwin welcomed everyone to the September 16, 2024, meeting of the URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs and Research Committee. He conducted a roll call attendance and determined that a quorum of members was present. He called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.

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

- Dr. Neil Kerwin, Committee Chair (remote)
- Hon. Charles Fogarty, Committee Vice Chair (remote)
- Ms. Monica Garnes (remote)
- Mr. David Martirano (remote)
- Mr. Joseph Matthews (remote)
- Dr. Melissa Sutherland (non-voting) (remote)
- Dr. Marc B. Parlange, President (ex officio, non-voting) (remote) (joined at 3:03 p.m.)

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

- Ms. Maria Ducharme

Board Chair Armand Sabitoni also participated remotely.

URI President's Stewardship Council members in attendance:

- Ms. Alyssa Boss, General Counsel (remote)
- Dr. Bethany Jenkins, Vice President for Research and Economic Development (remote)
- Dr. Dean Libutti, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Success (remote)
- Ms. Markeisha Miner, Vice President for Community, Equity and Diversity (remote)
- Dr. Barbara Wolfe, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs (remote)

URI staff members in attendance:

- Ms. Michelle Curreri, Secretary, Board of Trustees (in person)
- Ms. Lauren Jensen, Deputy General Counsel (remote)
- Ms. Lorrie McCarty, Staff Assistant to the Provost, Office of the Provost (remote)
- Ms. Lynn Owens, Associate Secretary, Board of Trustees (in person)

Committee Chair Kerwin welcomed the group and acknowledged that the University of Rhode Island occupies the traditional stomping ground of the Narragansett Nation and the Niantic People.

Committee Chair Kerwin asked if there were any amendments to the meeting agenda. There were none.

1. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

a. Minutes of the June 17, 2024, Academic Affairs and Research Committee Meeting

[Enclosure](#)

Dr. Neil Kerwin, Committee Chair

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

VOTED THAT: The Academic Affairs and Research Committee
approve the minutes of the June 17, 2024, meeting of the
Committee.

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

negative.

YEAS: Charles Fogarty, Monica Garnes, Neil Kerwin, David Martirano,
Joseph Matthews

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

2. REPORT OF THE CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER

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

- a. AI Task Force [Enclosure](#)**
- b. Personnel appointment/upcoming searches**
- c. New Faculty**

The Provost's presentation to the Committee is [linked here](#).

Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs Barbara Wolfe provided the final report of the AI Task Force (see enclosure above) and noted that AI literacy among students and faculty will be critical moving forward.

She informed the Committee that Dr. Sue Adams was appointed the Interim Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Initiatives upon the retirement of Dr. Anne Veeger. She also noted that the University will launch a national search for a University Librarian and a Dean of the College of Environmental and Life Sciences, with the upcoming retirement of Dean John Kirby. The Provost further noted that the University welcomed new faculty members this fall, filling vacancies left by retirements and other departures.

The Board inquired whether faculty were reporting on the use of AI by students and about funding sources for AI research. The Provost noted that AI, including its use by students, is the topic of this year's Academic Summit. Vice President of Research and Economic Development Bethany Jenkins discussed research opportunities around AI.

3. REPORT OF THE CHIEF RESEARCH OFFICER

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

- a. Division of Research and Economic Development Strategic Updates**
- b. Impacts and Outcomes of Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work of the Faculty; Research Metrics for the University**
- c. Economic development efforts and impacts of University partnerships and initiatives:**
 - 1. Business Engagement Center within the URI Foundation & Alumni Engagement**
 - 2. URI Research Foundation**

Vice President Jenkins provided information on the research awards of approximately \$161 million from combined sources ([presentation attached](#)). The presentation focused on the landscape of the URI Research Foundation (URIRF) and its partnership with the University. She focused on the URIRF research support governance and founding legislation purpose, organizational structure, and federal funding. The URIRF research support revenue breakdown revealed that intellectual property revenue is not extensive. The University would like to increase licensing income and equity share from its research.

Committee members asked that the following information be provided at an upcoming meeting:

- Information on the withdrawn funds and where they currently reside.
- How to ensure that URI's research priorities are reflected in the work that the URI Research Foundation does.
- The University's priorities for the next affiliation agreement.
- Where the intellectual property (IP) revenue stands in comparison to our peer state institutions.

4. DISCUSSION ITEM

a. Preliminary Enrollment Update

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

Dr. Dean Libutti, Associate Vice President for Enrollment and Student Success

Provost Wolfe explained that this was a preliminary update on enrollment as the final numbers would not be available for another couple of weeks. She turned the discussion over to Dean Libutti, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Success.

Associate Vice President Libutti provided a preliminary enrollment update. The University received record applications this year. Dr. Libutti noted that the admissions team held over 100 events to interact with first-year students, and their success should be celebrated. The federal government's delays in rolling out the FAFSA have impacted this year's yield and possibly next year's. This will be discussed in detail at the next Board meeting when more data is available.

5. ACTION ITEM

- a. **Review 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 Summer 2024 term and who are approved by the faculty of the University, and recommendation to the Board.** [Enclosure](#)

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

Committee Chair Kerwin called for a motion, and on a motion duly made by Charlie Fogarty 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 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 Summer 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: Charles Fogarty, Monica Garnes, David Martirano, Joseph Matthews, Neil Kerwin

NAYS: 0

ABSTAIN: 0

6. ADJOURN

Committee Chair Kerwin called for a motion to adjourn the meeting of September 16, 2024.

On a motion duly made by Monica Garnes and seconded by Joseph Matthews, it was

VOTED: THAT: The URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs and Research Committee adjourn the meeting of September 16, 2024

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

YEAS: Charles Fogarty, Monica Garnes, Neil Kerwin, David Martirano, Joseph Matthews

NAYS: 0

ABSTAIN: 0

The meeting adjourned at 4:02 p.m.

The next Committee meeting is scheduled for October 22, 2024.