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Matthew Lenz '11

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David J. Martirano '91

Joseph F. Matthews '80

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Faculty Representative

Revaa Goyal '27
Student Representative

**The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees
Academic Affairs and Research Committee Meeting
Wednesday, February 5, 2025 · 2:00 p.m. EST**

**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 February 5, 2025, 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 2:00 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. Maria Ducharme (remote) (arrived at 2:03 p.m.)
- Ms. Monica Garnes (remote)
- Mr. David Martirano (remote)
- Mr. Joseph Matthews (remote)
- Dr. Kristine Bovy (non-voting) (remote)
- Dr. Marc B. Parlange, President (ex officio, non-voting) (remote)

URI Board of Trustees Chair Margo Cook and Vice Chair Armand Sabitoni also participated remotely.

URI President's Stewardship Council members in attendance:

- Dr. Sue Adams, Interim Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Initiatives (remote)
- Ms. Abby Benson, Vice President for Administration and Finance (remote)
- Ms. Chelsea Berry, Senior Advisor to the President and Chief of Staff (remote)
- Dr. Matthew Bodah, Vice Provost for Academic Personnel and Budget (remote)
- 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)
- Dr. Kristin Johnson, Vice Provost for Global Initiatives (remote)
- Ms. Lorrie McCarty, Staff Assistant to the Provost, Office of the Provost (remote)
- Ms. Lynn Owens, Associate Secretary, Board of Trustees (in person)
- Dr. Theodore Walls, Faculty Senate President (remote)

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 proposed amendments to the published agenda. There were none.

1. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

a. Minutes of the October 22, 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 Charles Fogarty, seconded by Monica Garnes, and hearing no discussion, it was

VOTED That the Academic Affairs and Research Committee approve
the minutes of the October 22, 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

Maria Ducharme was not present for the vote.

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

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

a. Academic Summit

Provost Wolfe reported on the success of the AI@URI 2.0 Academic Summit on January 16, 2025. The event featured Dr. Vance Ricks as the keynote speaker and discussed practical AI applications.

b. Update on Searches

Provost Wolfe noted three ongoing searches for Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Initiatives, Dean of the College of Environment and Life Sciences, and University Librarian. All searches are expected to be completed by the end of the academic year.

c. Medical School Feasibility Study Update

Provost Wolfe reported that a feasibility study for a medical school led by Tripp Umbach is underway. The report is expected to be submitted to the Senate Commission in June 2025.

d. Fall 2025 Enrollment Update

Provost Wolfe announced the reinstatement of the RN to BS online nursing program. She also highlighted that URI has received over 27,000 applications to date.

Dr. Dean Libutti, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Success, reported increased early deposits compared to last year, indicating positive enrollment trends. URI's 4+1 bachelor's-to-master's degree programs also attracted strong interest. He noted challenges for enrollment include shifting population trends, competition from out-of-state institutions, and financial aid difficulties. To address these challenges, URI expanded recruitment efforts into new markets and leveraged performance data to promote URI.

3. REPORT OF THE CHIEF RESEARCH OFFICER

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

a. FY2025 Grant Outlook: Mid-year Grant Awards

Vice President Jenkins reported a \$1.2 million increase in grant funding, reflecting strong support for research.

b. Faculty Research Recognition

Vice President Jenkins highlighted that two faculty members, Ashtosh Giri and Justin Parent, received prestigious Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers (PECASE) Awards under the Biden administration. These awards, the highest honors for outstanding scientists and engineers starting their independent careers, are a notable achievement, especially for two recipients from the same university.

4. ACTION ITEMS

- a. Recommendation to approve legislation from the Graduate Council #2024-2025-01C, College of Education organizational change to create a new degree opportunity, Master of Arts, Educational Leadership & Policy, which has been approved by the faculty and president of the University of Rhode Island. [Enclosure](#)**

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

Provost Wolfe provided a brief explanation of this action item.

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

VOTED That the Committee recommend that the Board approve legislation recommended by the Faculty Senate and the President providing a new degree opportunity, Master of Arts, Educational Leadership & Policy Program, as presented in the enclosure.

VOTE: 6 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

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

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

- b. Recommendation to approve legislation from the Faculty Senate Curriculum & Standards Committee Report #2024-2025-03C, College of Business organizational change to create a new degree opportunity, Bachelor of Arts, Business Studies Program, which has been approved by the faculty and president of the University of Rhode Island. [Enclosure](#)**

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

Provost Wolfe provided a brief explanation of this action item.

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

VOTED That the Committee recommend that the Board approve legislation recommended by the Faculty Senate and the President providing a new degree opportunity, Master of Arts, Educational Leadership & Policy Program, as presented in the enclosure.

VOTE: 6 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

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

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

- c. **Recommendation to approve legislation from the Graduate Council #2024-2025-3C, College of Health Sciences organizational change to create a new degree opportunity, Master of Public Health Program, which has been approved by the faculty and president of the University of Rhode Island.** [Enclosure](#)

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

Provost Wolfe provided a brief explanation of this action item.

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

VOTED That the Committee recommend that the Board approve legislation recommended by the Faculty Senate and the President for a new degree opportunity, Master of Public Health Program, as presented in the enclosure.

VOTE: 6 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

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

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

- d. **Recommendation to approve legislation from the Graduate Council #2024-2025-4C, College of ~~Health Sciences~~ Business organizational change to create a new degree opportunity, Master of Science in Management (MSM), which has been approved by the faculty and president of the University of Rhode Island.** Enclosure *Note: The Master of Science in Management (MSM) degree opportunity is part of the College of Business. The meeting agenda incorrectly listed the College of Health Sciences.*

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

Provost Wolfe provided a brief explanation of this action item.

Committee Chair Kerwin called for a motion, and on a motion duly made by Monica Garnes, seconded by Maria Ducharme, and hearing no discussion, it was

VOTED That the Committee recommend that the Board approve legislation recommended by the Faculty Senate and the President for a new degree opportunity, Master of Science in Management (MSM), as presented in the enclosure.

VOTE: 6 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

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

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

5. EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Committee may seek to enter into Executive Session for the following item:

- a. **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).**

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

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

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

VOTED That the Committee enter into executive session pursuant to R.I.G.L. § 42-46-5(a)(2) for discussion regarding potential litigation, and R.I.G.L. § 42-

46-5(a)(7) related to the question of the investment of public funds where the premature disclosure would adversely affect the public interest.

VOTE: 6 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

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

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

At 2:44 p.m., upon confirmation from remote participants that no other people were present or able to hear the executive session, the Academic Affairs and Research Committee convened into Executive Session. Virtual public access was paused.

Trustee Bovy left the meeting at 3:00 p.m.

At 3:07 p.m., the Academic Affairs and Research Committee returned to Open Session. Virtual public access resumed.

Committee Chair Kerwin called for a motion to seal the executive session minutes, and on a motion duly made by Monica Garnes, 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 February 5, 2025.

VOTE: 6 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

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

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

6. ADJOURN

Committee Chair Kerwin called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

On a motion duly made by Charles Fogarty and seconded by David Martirano, it was

VOTED That the Academic Affairs and Research Committee adjourn the meeting

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of February 5, 2025.

VOTE: 6 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

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

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

The meeting was adjourned at 3:08 p.m.

The next URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs and Research Committee meeting is scheduled for April 16, 2025.