

Members

Margo Cook '86, *Chair*

Armand E. Sabitoni '73, *Vice Chair*

Maria P. Ducharme, DNP, RN - M.S. '96

Michael D. Fascitelli '78

Charles J. Fogarty M.P.A. '80

Joe Formicola '69

Monica J. Garnes '94

Neil Kerwin, Ph.D. - M.A. '73

Matthew Lenz '11

Roby Luna '04

David J. Martirano '91

Joseph F. Matthews '80

Cortney M. Nicolato '01

Vahid Ownjazayeri

Yahaira "Jay" Placencia '01

Thomas Ryan '75

Ex Officio Members

Marc B. Parlange, Ph.D., P.Eng.
President

Michael Grey, *Chair*
R.I. Board of Education

David Caprio, *Chair*
R.I. Council on Postsecondary Education

Kristine M. Bovy, Ph.D.
Faculty Representative

Ryan Estus '26
Student Representative

**The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees
Academic Affairs and Research Committee Meeting
Monday, September 15, 2025 · 3:00 p.m. EDT**

**The University of Rhode Island
The Beagle Board Room, 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 Neil Kerwin welcomed everyone to the September 15, 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 3:00 p.m.

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

- Neil Kerwin, Committee Chair (remote)
- Maria Ducharme (remote)
- Monica Garnes (remote)
- David Martirano (remote)
- Joseph Matthews (remote)
- Marc B. Parlange, President (ex officio, non-voting) (remote)
- Kristine Bovy (non-voting) (remote)

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

- Charles Fogarty, Committee Vice Chair

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

URI President's Stewardship Council members in attendance:

- Mark Antonucci, Vice President for Advancement, Chief Executive Officer, URI Foundation (remote)
- Chelsea Berry, Senior Advisor to the President and Chief of Staff (remote)
- Matthew Bodah, Vice Provost for Academic Personnel and Budget (remote)
- Alyssa Boss, Vice President and General Counsel (remote)
- Bethany Jenkins, Vice President for Research and Economic Development (remote)
- Lauren Jensen, Deputy General Counsel (remote)
- Kristin Johnson, Vice Provost for Global Initiatives (remote)
- Dean Libutti, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Success (remote)
- Matthew McDonald, Vice President, Communications and Marketing (remote)
- Markeisha Miner, Vice President for Community, Equity, and Diversity (remote)
- Ellen Reynolds, Vice President for Student Affairs (remote)
- Barbara Wolfe, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs (remote)

URI staff members in attendance:

- Michelle Curreri, Secretary, Board of Trustees (in person)
- Emily Diomandes, Deputy Chief of Staff (in person)
- Lorrie McCarty, Staff Assistant to the Provost, Office of the Provost (remote)
- 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 proposed amendments to the published agenda. There were none.

1. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

a. Minutes of the June 17, 2025, Academic Affairs and Research Committee Meeting

[Enclosure](#)

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

VOTED That the Academic Affairs and Research Committee approve the minutes of the June 17, 2025, meeting of the Committee.

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

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

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

2. REPORT OF THE CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER

Barbara Wolfe, Provost and Executive Vice President, Academic Affairs

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

a. Summer Enrollment

Provost Wolfe reported that the summer term had a record enrollment of 8,300 students. She noted that two pilot programs were launched over the summer: **Level Up** and **Rhody Launch**. Trustee Martirano asked whether these programs were requirements or simply refreshers to prepare students for the rigor of URI. Provost Wolfe explained that the programs were designed to give students an opportunity to prepare themselves and improve their chances of success.

b. Leadership Team for Federal Actions

Provost Wolfe stated that the Leadership Team for Federal Actions continues to meet weekly to assess the impact of federal actions on the University. She reported that a community update was distributed this past month, providing information on developments over the summer.

c. Update on Searches and Medical School Feasibility Study

Provost Wolfe provided updates on leadership searches currently underway. She noted that the national search for the next Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences would launch this month. Searches for the Vice Provost for Academic Resource and Management and the Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School are in progress, with the goal of concluding by the end of the fall semester.

On the **Medical School Feasibility Study**, Provost Wolfe noted that the Rhode Island Special Legislative Commission will meet on October 9 at 5:00 p.m. at the State House, with the meeting devoted to public testimony. She stated that the consulting firm, **Tripp Umbach**, remains on track to submit its final report in October, which will include both the feasibility study and an economic impact analysis. Based on updates received to date, the final report is expected to recommend establishing a public MD-granting medical school in collaboration with Rhode Island hospitals, health systems, and community clinics. The proposed school would emphasize primary care and community-based training, integrated with URI's existing health disciplines.

d. Accreditation Update

Provost Wolfe reported that URI is up for reaccreditation by the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) in 2027. She thanked the Accreditation Steering Committee, with special recognition to Sue Adams, Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Initiatives, who is leading the accreditation process. She also thanked Committee Chair Kerwin for representing the Board on the Committee.

She explained that the process was launched this month, with the fall devoted to planning and data collection in preparation for the self-study, which will be undertaken next year. A preliminary draft is expected by March 2027, with the final report submitted to NECHE in August 2027.

Chair Kerwin thanked Provost Wolfe and opened the floor for questions.

Trustee Monica Garnes praised the Rhody Launch and Level Up programs and asked how many students participated in each. Associate Vice President Libutti responded that nineteen students enrolled in Rhody Launch and eighteen students enrolled in the Level Up program, adding that both pilots were highly successful.

Chair Kerwin asked President Parlange and Provost Wolfe about the timeline for making a decision on the medical school. Provost Wolfe explained that the feasibility study must first be reviewed by the Special Legislative Commission, which must submit a report to the legislature by January 2026.

Trustees inquired about international student enrollment. Vice Provost for Global Initiatives Kristin Johnson noted that undergraduate international enrollment is actually higher than in recent years. Provost Wolfe commended the Office of Global Initiatives for its continuous engagement and support of international students.

Trustee Garnes congratulated the team on the record-high summer enrollment and asked about URI's growth potential. Provost Wolfe noted that in-person enrollment growth must be balanced with housing capacity and strategic goals, and noted a particular focus on expanding graduate programs, including online offerings. Associate Vice President Libutti added that new summer programs and initiatives are expected to further increase summer enrollment.

3. REPORT OF THE CHIEF RESEARCH OFFICER

Bethany Jenkins, Vice President, Research and Economic Development

Vice President Jenkins' presentation to the Committee is [linked here](#).

a. Update on Activities of the Division of Research & Economic Development: Research Metrics for the University, Strategic Planning and Needs Assessment.

Vice President Jenkins noted that despite challenges, the University closed FY25 only \$3 million below its FY24 high watermark in research awards. When factoring in the contributions of partner organizations such as the URI Foundation and the Research Foundation, overall research activity was higher than the previous year.

Vice President Jenkins noted that in FY25, more proposals were submitted to federal agencies than ever before, which has resulted in new awards across campus, sustaining a thriving research culture.

Vice President Jenkins presented an analysis of award distribution by funding agency and described this diversification of revenue streams as an encouraging sign of long-term resilience. She celebrated URI's record achievement of five National Science Foundation (NSF) CAREER awardees in 2025 and noted that

14 early-career faculty had submitted CAREER proposals over the summer, an all-time high. The awards spanned disciplines including engineering, physics, computer science, and natural resource sciences. Vice President Jenkins also announced a National Institute of Health (NIH) T32 award in interdisciplinary biomedical neurosciences, which will provide 56 predoctoral training positions across multiple colleges. She highlighted two major recent awards: a \$5 million NSF Expand RISE grant in quantum sciences led by Physics, and a \$7 million NSF EPSCoR award addressing marine microplastics and coastal ecosystems led by Engineering.

Vice President Jenkins also reported on challenges. As of September 5, URI had \$46.5 million in terminated awards, which equated to a direct financial impact of \$27.6 million in unspent funds, including approximately \$5 million in lost indirect costs. President Parlange confirmed that this is consistent with national trends at peer institutions.

b. Review goals and outcomes of research, scholarship, and creative work of the faculty and economic development efforts and impacts of university partnerships and initiatives.

Vice President Jenkins reported that URI currently maintains about 20 active licenses, filed 23 patents in the past year, and generated roughly \$35,600 in licensing revenue. A new partnership with *Impart* has created an online showcase of URI-owned intellectual property, providing visibility for industry partners. Vice President Jenkins described efforts to promote the Research Foundation as a hub for innovation, entrepreneurship, and venture formation. She highlighted the upcoming URI Tech Showcase as a major opportunity to grow this ecosystem.

Following the presentation, Trustee Margo Cook emphasized the importance of developing an enterprise relationship management model to strengthen partnerships with corporations, ensuring that companies experience a coordinated relationship with URI rather than fragmented outreach. Cook noted that such structure would maximize both revenue potential and reputation, while also aligning with URI's R1 status.

4. EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Committee may seek to enter into executive session for the following item:

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

- Research support from partner organizations**

Bethany Jenkins, Vice President, Research and Economic Development

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

VOTED That the Committee convene into executive session pursuant to R.I.G.L. § 42-46-5(a)(7) for discussion 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, Research support from partner organizations.

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

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

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

3:55 p.m., upon confirmation from remote participants 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.

4:05 p.m., the Academic Affairs and Research Committee returned to Open Session. Virtual public access resumed.

Committee Chair Kerwin called for a motion, and on a motion duly made by Joseph Matthews and seconded by Maria Ducharme, 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 September 15, 2025.

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

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

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

5. ACTION ITEMS

- a. **Consideration of 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 Summer 2025 term and who are approved by the faculty of the University of Rhode Island, and recommendation for approval to the URI Board of Trustees.**

[Enclosure](#)

Barbara Wolfe, Provost and Executive Vice President, Academic Affairs

Provost Wolfe asked the Committee to recommend to the Board the approval of 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 Summer 2025 term, pending the approval of the faculty of the University.

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

VOTED THAT the Committee recommend that the Board 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 Summer 2025 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, Monica Garnes, Neil Kerwin, David Martirano, Joseph Matthews

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

b. Consideration of the granting of tenure, effective August 25, 2025, to faculty member Patricia Cioe, PhD, APRN, FNP-BC, College of Nursing, who has met the requirements for tenure at the University of Rhode Island, and recommendation for approval to the URI Board of Trustees.
[Enclosure](#)

Provost Wolfe asked the Committee to recommend to the Board the granting of tenure for Dr. Patricia Cioe, who has met the requirements for tenure as outlined in the University Manual and the Collective Bargaining Agreement of the University of Rhode Island Chapter of the American Association of University Professors.

Dr. Cioe is joining URI as Associate Dean of Research and Scholarship and Professor in the College of Nursing. Prior to joining URI, she served as a faculty member in the Department of Behavioral and Social Sciences at Brown University since 2014, most recently as an Associate Professor. She also served as Vice Chair of the Institutional Review Board at Brown.

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

VOTED THAT the Committee recommend that the Board approve the granting of tenure, effective August 25, 2025, to faculty member Patricia Cioe, PhD, APRN, FNP-BC, College of Nursing, who has met the requirements for tenure at the University of Rhode Island, as recommended in the enclosure.

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

YEAS: Maria Ducharme, 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 David Martirano and seconded by Maria Ducharme, and hearing no discussion, it was

VOTED THAT the Academic Affairs and Research Committee adjourn the meeting of September 15, 2025.

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

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

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

The next URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs and Research Committee meeting is scheduled for October 27, 2025.