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The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees Academic Affairs and Research Committee Meeting September 14, 2023, 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

The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees Academic Affairs and Research Committee meeting was held in person, with committee members participating both in person and 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 14, 2023 meeting of the URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs and Research Committee. He conducted a roll call and determined that a quorum was present. At 2:35 p.m., the meeting was called to order.

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

- Dr. Neil Kerwin (Committee Chair) (remote)
- Honorable Charles Fogarty (Committee Vice Chair) (remote)
- Ms. Monica Garnes (remote)
- Mr. Joseph Matthews (in person)
- Dr. Marc Parlange, President (ex officio, non-voting, remote)
- Melissa Sutherland (in person, ex officio, non-voting)

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

- Mr. Richard Humphrey
- Ms. Maria Ducharme

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Other board members present:

- Mr. Armand Sabitoni, Vice Chair (remote)

The University of Rhode Island Leadership Council members in attendance:

- Ms. Abby Benson, Interim Vice President for Finance & Administration (remote)
- Ms. Chelsea Berry, Interim Senior Advisor to the President and Chief of Staff (remote)
- Ms. Alyssa Boss, General Counsel (remote)
- Dr. Bethany Jenkins, Interim Vice President for Research and Development (remote)
- Dr. Barbara E. Wolfe, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs (remote)

The University of Rhode Island staff members in attendance:

- Ms. Lauren Burgess, Director, Legislative & Government Relations (remote)
- Ms. Carol Connolly, Director of Research Security and Associate General Counsel for Defense Research and International Trade Compliance (in person)
- Ms. Michelle Curreri, Secretary to the Board of Trustees (in person)
- Ms. Sarah Gaines, Marine Research Associate, Coastal Resources Center (in person)
- Ms. Elizabeth Howlett, Director, Special Projects (remote)
- Dr. Kristin Johnson, Vice Provost for Global Initiatives (remote)
- Dr. Dean Libutti, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management & Student Success (remote)
- Dr. Daniel Moos, Assistant to the Interim Vice President, Administration and Finance (remote)
- Ms. Lynn Owens, Associate Secretary to the Board of Trustees (in person)
- Mr. John Poehlmann, Assistant Vice President, Financial Strategy and Planning (remote)
- Ms. Lisa Primiano, Assistant Director, Coastal Resources Center (remote)
- Mr. John Stringer, Director of Institutional Research (remote)
- Dr. Elin Torell, Director, Coastal Institute (in person)

Invited Guest:

- Ms. Vinita Bahri-Mehra, Attorney, Director & Leader, Global Business Practice, Kegler Brown Hill & Ritter (remote)

Committee Chair Kerwin welcomed the two new committee members, Monica Garnes and Joseph Matthews. He acknowledged that the University of Rhode Island occupies the traditional homeland of the Narragansett Nation and the Niantic People.

1. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

- a. Minutes of the June 15, 2023, Meeting [Enclosure 1.a.](#)**

Committee Chair Kerwin called for a motion that the URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs and Research Committee approve the minutes of the meeting held on June 15, 2023.

On a motion duly made by Charles Fogarty and seconded by Monica Garnes, it was

VOTED	THAT:	The Academic Affairs and Research Committee approve the minutes for the meeting held on June 15, 2023.
	VOTE:	4 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.
	YEAS:	Charles Fogarty, Monica Garnes, Neil Kerwin, Joseph Matthews
	NAYS:	0
	ABSTAINS:	0

2. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. **Review of the establishment and registration of a branch and/or other appropriate operational model under the laws of the Republic of Madagascar for the “The USAID Resilient Inclusive Abundance in Key Ecosystems (RIAKE) Madagascar Program” under the leadership and direction of URI’s Coastal Resources Center.** [Enclosure 2.a.](#)

Committee Chair Kerwin noted that this item was also a topic at the Institutional Risk and Compliance Committee meeting held on September 13, 2023. That committee recommended that the Board of Trustees approve the proposed action. Dr. Bethany Jenkins introduced Dr. Elin Torell, Coastal Resources Center, Director for International Programs, and Sarah Gaines, who presented the background of this opportunity. Dr. Torrell explained that this is one of the most biodiverse environments in the world and a great research opportunity for URI.

- b. **Review of proposed amendments to the URI Honorary Degree Policy** [Enclosure 2.b.](#)

Committee Chair Kerwin noted that proposed amendments to the Honorary Degree Policy are being reviewed by the Academic Affairs and Research Committee, as the committee is responsible for the formal awarding of degrees, certificates and honors. The Governance Committee will take action on the proposed amendments. Dr. Barbara Wolfe and Dr. Dan Moos explained that proposed amendments include changes to the process and intent of the policy related to URI’s annual honorary degree conferral.

3. REPORT OF THE CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER [Enclosure 3](#)

- a. **Early Fall Enrollment**

- b. New Leaders and Faculty**
- c. Global Update**
- d. Strategic Planning**
- e. Other Updates and Incentive Based Budgeting (IBB)**

Provost Wolfe reported that classes have started and provided an enrollment update. She announced the hiring of Dr. Christopher Lavan for the role of Associate Vice Provost for Advancement of Teaching and Learning, as well as 39 new tenure-track faculty, 13 teaching track faculty, and 10 new lecturers.

Provost Wolfe called upon Dr. Kristin Johnson to provide an update on Global initiatives. Dr. Johnson explained that URI is now approaching pre-COVID levels of student mobility, and the most common destination for our study abroad students is Spain. She reported that we currently have 411 students from 43 countries visiting URI.

4. REPORT OF THE CHIEF RESEARCH OFFICER [Enclosure 4](#)

- a. Review goals and outcomes of research, scholarship, and creative work of the faculty and economic development efforts and impacts of university partnerships, and initiatives.**
- b. Update on Activities of the Division of Research & Economic Development, Research & Economic Development, Research Metrics for the University, Strategic Planning and Needs Assessment.**

Interim Vice President Bethany Jenkins reviewed the most current goals and outcomes of research, scholarship, and creative work of the faculty and economic development efforts and impacts of university partnerships, and initiatives. She provided an update on activities of the Division of Research & Economic Development, Research Metrics for the University, and Strategic Planning and Needs Assessment.

5. ACTION ITEMS

- a. The Committee will ratify action taken at the June 28, 2023 Academic Affairs and Research Committee meeting ([draft minutes linked here](#)), as that meeting was improperly noticed:**

Review and approve legislation recommended by the Faculty Senate and the President:

Organizational Change: Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies to be renamed the Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education. Proposal will dissolve the school of professional studies. [Enclosure 5.a.](#)

Action ratifies the vote taken by the Committee on June 28, 2023, regarding this organizational Change. The organizational change was presented to the Board of Trustees and approved by the Board at a properly noticed meeting on June 29, 2023.

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

VOTED THAT: The Academic Affairs and Research Committee of the URI Board of Trustees ratify action taken at the June 28, 2023 Committee meeting, whereby the Committee recommended that the Board of Trustees approve legislation recommended by the Faculty Senate and the President, specifically, dissolving the school of professional studies and renaming the Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies to the Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education.

VOTE: 4 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Monica Garnes, Charles Fogarty, Neil Kerwin, Joseph Mathews.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

- b. 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 2023 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 5.b.](#)

Committee Chair Kerwin called for a motion that the Academic Affairs and Research Committee of the URI Board of Trustees recommend that the 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 2023 term and who are approved by the faculty of the University of Rhode Island, as recommended and presented in the enclosure.

On a motion duly made by Charles Fogarty and seconded by Joseph Mathews, and hearing no discussion, it was

VOTED THAT: The Academic Affairs and Research Committee of the URI Board of Trustees recommend that the 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 2023 term and who are approved by the faculty of the University of Rhode Island, as recommended and presented in the enclosure.

VOTE: 4 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Monica Garnes, Charles Fogarty, Neil Kerwin, Joseph Mathews.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

6. ADJOURN

Committee Chair Kerwin called for a motion to adjourn the meeting of September 14, 2023.

On a motion duly made by Monica Garnes and seconded by Charles Fogarty, it was

VOTED: THAT: The URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs and Research Committee adjourn the meeting of September 14, 2023.

VOTE: 4 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Monica Garnes, Charles Fogarty, Neil Kerwin, Joseph Mathews

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

The next URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs and Research Committee meeting is scheduled for October 2023.