

Alumni Center, 73 Upper College Road, Kingston, RI 02881 USA

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Matthew Lenz '11

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Joseph F. Matthews '80

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## The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees Academic Affairs and Research Committee Meeting Thursday, October 26, 2023 2:00 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 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 October 26, 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 2:03 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. Maria Ducharme (remote)
- Ms. Monica Garnes (remote)
- Mr. Joseph Matthews (in person)
- Dr. Marc Parlange, President (ex officio, non-voting) (remote)
- Melissa Sutherland (ex officio, non-voting) (remote)

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

- Mr. Richard Humphrey

Other board members present:

- Mr. Armand Sabitoni, Board Vice Chair (remote)

URI President's Leadership Council members in attendance:

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

URI staff members in attendance:

- Dr. Matthew Bodah, Vice Provost for Academic Performance and Budget (remote)
- Ms. Michelle Curreri, Secretary to the Board of Trustees (in person)
- Ms. Lauren Jensen, Associate General Counsel (remote)
- Dr. Dean Libutti, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management & Student Success (remote)
- Ms. Lynn Owens, Associate Secretary to the Board of Trustees (in person)
- Ms. Shawn Simmons, Executive Assistant in the Provost's Office (remote)
- Dr. Anne Veeger, Vice Provost for Academic Faculty Initiatives (remote)

Committee Chair Kerwin determined that a quorum was present and 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 September 14, 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 September 14, 2023.

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

VOTED

THAT:

The Academic Affairs and Research Committee approve the minutes for the meeting held on September 14, 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

ABSTAIN: 0

Board member Maria Ducharme was not present for the vote.

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

Provost Wolfe provided a detailed overview of URI's Fall Enrollment figures ([link to enrollment slides](#).) She announced to the committee that URI has a newly hired Dean of the College of Pharmacy, Dr. Kerry LaPlante. Additionally, she informed the committee about the proposed Fall Commencement ceremony, planned for December 2023.

## **3. REPORT OF THE CHIEF RESEARCH OFFICER**

Interim Vice President for Research for Economic Development Bethany Jenkins discussed Southeast New England's new EDA Ocean Tech Hub led by RI Commerce, and partnering with state government, regional university partners and communities to support this effort. In addition, she discussed URI's strengths in the area of offshore wind and opportunities to grow these strengths. She also discussed other opportunities to grow research funding, particularly by aligning priorities in the Division of Research and Economic Development with University Strategic Priorities and how we can pursue economic development opportunities for research funding and partnerships.

## **4. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

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

- a. Discussion of the job performance, character, or physical or mental health of a person or persons provided that the person or persons affected shall have been noticed in advance in writing and advised that they may require that the discussion be held at an open meeting, pursuant to R.I.G.L. § 42-46-5(a)(1).**

Committee Chair Kerwin called for a motion that the Academic Affairs and Research Committee convene into executive session to discuss the job performance, character, or physical or mental health of a person or persons provided that the person or persons affected shall have been noticed in advance in writing and advised that they may require that the discussion be held at an open meeting, pursuant to R.I.G.L. § 42-46-5(a)(1). He reported that the person has been notified in writing that this discussion will take place in executive session.

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

VOTED:        THAT        The URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs and Research Committee convene into executive session to discuss the job performance, character, or physical or mental health of a person pursuant to R.I.G.L. § 42-46-5(a)(1).

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

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

NAYS:        0

ABSTAIN:     0

At 2:42 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 2:48 p.m., the Academic Affairs and Research Committee returned to Open Session. Virtual public access resumed.

Committee Chair Kerwin called for a motion that the Academic Affairs and Research Committee of the URI Board of Trustees seal the minutes of the Executive Session that took place on October 26, 2023.

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

VOTED:        THAT        The URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs and Research Committee seal the minutes of the Executive Session that took place on October 26, 2023.

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

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

NAYS:        0

ABSTAIN:     0

## 5. ACTION ITEMS

- a. Review 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 Fall 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](#)

On a motion duly made by Joseph Matthews and seconded by Charles Fogarty, 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 will have completed their requirements at the conclusion of the Fall 2023 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, Charles Fogarty, Neil Kerwin, Joseph Matthews

NAYS:        0

ABSTAIN:    0

- b. Review of the granting of tenure, effective January 1, 2024, to an incoming faculty member who has met the requirements for tenure at URI, and recommendation for approval to the URI Board of Trustees.**

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 granting of tenure, effective January 1, 2024, to an incoming faculty member who has met the requirements for tenure at the University of Rhode Island, as recommended and presented in executive session.

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 of the URI Board of Trustees recommend that the Board of Trustees approve the granting of tenure, effective January 1, 2024, to an incoming faculty member who has met the requirements for tenure at the University of Rhode Island, as recommended and presented in executive session.

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

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

                                    NAYS:                      0

                                    ABSTAIN:                0

**c. Review of the awarding of honorary degrees for Commencement 2024, and recommendation for approval to the URI Board of Trustees.**

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 honorary degrees to the recipients proposed by the Office of the President and the nominating committee.

On a motion duly made by Monica Garnes and seconded by Charles Fogarty, 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 honorary degrees to the recipients proposed by the Office of the President and the nominating committee.

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

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

                                    NAYS:                      0

                                    ABSTAIN:                0

## 6. ADJOURN

Committee Chair Kerwin called for a motion to adjourn the meeting of October 26, 2023.

On a motion duly made by Charles Fogarty and seconded by Joseph Matthews, it was

VOTED:	THAT:	The URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs and Research Committee adjourn the meeting of October 26, 2023.
	VOTE:	5 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.
	YEAS:	Maria Ducharme, Monica Garnes, Charles Fogarty, Neil Kerwin, Joseph Matthews
	NAYS:	0
	ABSTAIN:	0

The meeting adjourned at 2:56 p.m.

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