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The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees Student Life and Athletics Committee Meeting September 7, 2023, 10:00 a.m. EDT

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

OFFICIAL MINUTES

Committee Chair Tom Ryan welcomed everyone to the September 7, 2023, meeting of the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees Student Life and Athletics Committee and noted that the meeting was being held in person with some board members participating remotely. Virtual access to the meeting was available via the YouTube video platform and is available for viewing at <https://web.uri.edu/trustees/meetings/>

Board secretary Michelle Curreri conducted a formal roll call and confirmed that a quorum was present. Committee Chair Ryan called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

The URI Board of Trustees Student Life and Athletics Committee members in attendance:

- Mr. Tom Ryan, Committee Chair (remote)
- Ms. Jay Placencia, Committee Vice Chair (remote)
- Mr. Armand Sabitoni (remote)
- Mr. Roby Luna (remote)
- Dr. Marc B. Parlange, President (ex officio, non-voting) (remote)
- Ms. Revaa Goyal, Student Representative (non-voting) (remote)

"The University of Rhode Island occupies the traditional stomping ground of the Narragansett Nation and the Niantic People. We honor and respect the enduring and continuing relationship between the indigenous people and this land by teaching and learning more about their history and present-day communities, and by becoming stewards of the land we, too, inhabit."

URI Board of Trustees
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September 7, 2023

URI Board of Trustees Committee Members not present:

- Mr. Robert Weygand
- Mr. Michael Grey

Invited Guest:

- Ms. Margo Cook, Board Chair (remote)

URI President's Leadership Council 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)
- Mr. Thor Bjorn, Athletics Director (in person)
- Ms. Alyssa Boss, General Counsel (remote)
- Dr. Ellen Reynolds, Vice President for Student Affairs (in person)

URI Staff members in attendance:

- Ms. Michelle Curreri, Secretary, Board of Trustees (in person)
- Mr. Jeff Johnson, Associate Director, Athletics Student Development (in person)
- Ms. Kacey Light, Associate Athletics Director, NCAA Compliance (in person)
- Ms. Lynn Owens, Associate Secretary, Board of Trustees (in person)
- Ms. Carol Pegg, M.Ed., Executive Assistant II (remote)

1. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

a. Minutes of the June 27, 2023, Student Life and Athletics Committee Meeting. [Enclosure 1.a.](#)

Committee Chair Ryan called for a motion that the Student Life and Athletics Committee of the Board of Trustees approve the minutes of the June 27, 2023 meeting of the committee.

On a motion duly made by Armand Sabatoni and seconded by Jay Placencia, it was

VOTED:	THAT	The URI Board of Trustees Student Life and Athletics Committee approve the minutes of the June 27, 2023 meeting of the Committee.
	VOTE:	4 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.
	YEAS:	Tom Ryan, Roby Luna, Armand Sabitoni, Jay Placencia
	NAYS:	0
	ABSTAINS:	0

2. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Athletics Director Thorr Bjorn provided a PowerPoint presentation to the Committee on the topics listed below.

a. NCAA Updates – Student Athlete Holistic Model [Enclosure 2.a.](#)

- Thorr Bjorn, Athletics Director

Director Bjorn reported that beginning in August 2024, URI Athletics has implemented several collaborative initiatives to create a holistic approach for excellence for student-athletes as it relates to medical issues (working with team doctors) and mental health services, and working with expert personnel on campus, assuring compliance with treating the whole person. URI Athletics has an existing relationship with the Psychological Consultation Center (PCC) to facilitate mental health support for student athletes.

b. NIL Update – URI National Landscape

- Thorr Bjorn, Director, Athletics
- Kacey Light, Associate Athletic Director NCAA Compliance

Director Bjorn reported on NIL (Name, Image, and Likeness) and focused on programs that the Athletics Department partners with (Opendorse™ and the Rhode to Excellence Collective) to monetize student athletes' NIL or to pursue entrepreneurship. He talked about what is and is not allowable and added that the NCAA places restrictions on colleges and universities by not allowing them to use NIL in recruitment efforts. He also outlined NIL's institutional involvement and what was permissible and impermissible in how an institution can promote NIL.

Director Bjorn shared the goals of and data from the Opendorse™ and Rhode to Excellence Collective and their three major goals to educate, support and encourage student athletes. He noted that URI is offering additional educational opportunities for student athletes as it relates to NIL and helping athletes create and enhance their brand.

c. Transfer Portal Updates – URI and National Landscape

- Thorr Bjorn, Director, Athletics
- Kacey Light, Associate Director, NCAA Compliance

Athletic Director Bjorn began by explaining the changes made to the transfer portal by the NCAA. He indicated that many of the past restrictions placed on student athletes, which can create recruitment challenges for the URI Athletics organization, had been changed. Director Bjorn also reported that for any student-athlete transfer awarded aid, URI Athletics must guarantee their award scholarship for the athlete's period of availability. Associate Director Light shared updated data about where URI student athletes landed once they entered the transfer portal.

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Vice President Ellen Reynolds provided a recap of this year's successful move in weekend on campus at URI.

3. ADJOURN

Committee Chair Tom Ryan called for a motion to adjourn the September 7, 2023 meeting.

On a motion duly made by Jay Placencia and seconded by Roby Luna, it was

VOTED: **THAT** The URI Board of Trustees Student Life and Athletics Committee
adjourn the meeting of September 7, 2023.

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

YEAS: Tom Ryan, Jay Placencia, Armand Sabitoni, Roby Luna

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

The meeting adjourned at 11:01 a.m.

The next URI Board of Trustees Student Life and Athletics Committee Meeting is scheduled for October 25, 2023.