

THE
UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND

ACADEMIC
STRATEGIC PLAN

2016–2021

INNOVATION
with IMPACT:
Shaping the Future of URI



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A Message from President David M. Dooley



Dear Colleagues and Friends:

The University's Academic Plan is central to shaping our priorities and defining our path for the future. Many areas of significant, quantifiable progress have been made as a result of the implementation of the 2010–2015 Academic Plan. This progress demonstrates the focus and dedication of URI faculty, administrators, staff, and students to achieve academic excellence.

The goals of this academic plan continue to build on URI's momentum in certain areas but also incorporate new goals to achieve even greater success. The goals are: enhancing student success; expanding research, scholarship, and creative work; growing a global presence; embracing diversity and social justice; streamlining processes to improve effectiveness; and implementing a bold advancement agenda. These goals strongly resonate with my vision for the University's future, outlined on the following page.

This is an opportunity for all of us to think creatively and energetically about how we can work together to achieve these goals and transform our university and our state.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David M. Dooley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David M. Dooley
President

President's Transformational Goals for the 21st Century

Creating a 21st Century 24/7 Learning Environment. To prepare our students to excel and lead, URI must take full and systemic advantage of the most advanced educational tools and practices. We must provide expanded opportunities for experiential learning (research, creative work, and scholarship), as well as opportunities to learn and work across disciplines and fields of knowledge. It is essential to provide “hands-on” learning. Through the use of technology, improved advising, and innovative curricula, URI must do its part to reduce barriers to graduation and enable more of our students to complete their degrees in four years.

Increasing the Magnitude, Prominence, and Impact of URI's Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work. URI must place additional emphasis on research, scholarship, and creative work. To do so will help preserve and enhance the nation's global competitiveness; help create a Rhode Island economy that is vibrant, competitive, and sustainable; and enrich our culture and society. Increasing the research, scholarship, and creative work undertaken by our faculty and research staff will provide more opportunities for students to be engaged in these activities, thereby providing a stronger education.

Internationalizing and Globalizing the University of Rhode Island. It is simply essential for our students' success that they are prepared to live and work in an increasingly globalized economy and society. URI must substantially increase the number of our students who study abroad and the number of international students who study at URI. We must expand the number and scope of our international research and education partnerships. We must increase the number of our graduates with competency and fluency in languages other than English, and their knowledge of the cultures, politics, and history of other peoples and nations.

Building a Community at the University of Rhode Island that Values Equity and Diversity. In order for our students to thrive in an increasingly diverse and complex context, URI must assist them in developing their abilities to communicate, understand, and work with people who are very different from themselves. Building a community at URI in which every member is welcomed, supported, and valued is an essential foundation to education and learning, and therefore is central to our identity and mission. The University of Rhode Island must strive to prepare our students not just to participate, but to lead, and effective leadership in the 21st century requires the skills to build productive partnerships in contexts and institutions that are increasingly diverse.

As we meet these goals, URI will continue to be a leader in preparing its students for success, and URI—through the work of its faculty and students—will have a major impact on economic renewal in our state and region, and in maintaining our quality of life.

To learn more about the implementation progress related to these goals, please visit: uri.edu/president/Transformational_Goals_ProgressFall2014.pdf

A Message from Provost Donald H. DeHayes



Dear Colleagues and Friends:

The landscape of higher education is changing rapidly and dramatically. Disruptive technologies, rising student debt, access and affordability, a renewed focus on student success and degree completion, globalization, and the evolving demography of our nation present challenges for every higher education institution in our nation. However, for those institutions committed to thoughtful strategies and innovation, these challenges will be opportunities for advancement and success. URI must be one such institution. Our future depends on our comprehensive commitment to thoughtfully and selectively embracing innovations with impact to shape a vibrant institutional future. We must define and invest in new modalities of student learning and educational technology, partnerships that support and enhance impactful scholarship, streamlined procedures and processes to allow agility, and advancement strategies that enhance our resource base and reputation. In so doing, we will become the first-choice institution for a dedicated and diverse community of students, staff, and faculty, and ensure a system of shared governance that will enable and empower URI in the future.

The 2016–2021 Academic Strategic Plan, **Innovation with Impact: Shaping the Future of URI**, responds to these challenges and opportunities with a clear set of goals, strategies, and actions developed and embraced by our community. The plan is dynamic and ambitious—it will stretch us forward and raise the bar on our expectations of ourselves. As a “living” plan, we expect these strategies and actions to evolve, even as they define and guide our strategic direction, shape our future, and also serve as a framework for investment and resource allocation. Hopefully, the bold ideas articulated here will inspire us to be innovative and impactful, moving us in important and exciting new directions.

A handwritten signature of Donald H. DeHayes in black ink.

Donald H. DeHayes
Provost and Vice President
for Academic Affairs

Provost's Acknowledgments

The Joint Committee on Academic Planning (JCAP) provided leadership for, and steered the development of, this Academic Strategic Plan. JCAP diligently reviewed important trends impacting higher education and organized the Seventh Annual Academic Summit—with 225 attendees and an especially engaging Student Summit—to generate and shape ideas. From these summits, an array of goals and strategies emerged that represent the core of this new plan. Ten task forces, including 150 faculty members, students, and staff, refined the goals and strategies and developed a series of recommended actions. The draft plan was shared with the community and with the Faculty Senate, then opened for public feedback. The focused and strategic efforts of JCAP members and their attention to gathering, listening to, and incorporating the ideas of faculty, students, and others, with patience and persistence, reflects academic shared governance at its best—shared responsibility for the health and vitality of the institution.

Gratitude is extended to President David Dooley, the vice presidents and senior leadership, the deans, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, and the URI Foundation for their thoughtful feedback. Hundreds of URI community members provided suggestions, comments, and ideas for the plan. This collaborative process created the University's 2016–2021 Academic Strategic Plan, which ensures that URI will remain focused on the initiatives that will serve our students, our state, and our world.

About the Academic Strategic Plan

This plan provides strategic direction, a set of broadly defined goals critical to the evolution of our university. It is not a prescriptive plan, but rather a dynamic one open to modification as we proceed, progress, and observe changes in the world. The ideas in this plan are meant to guide our work, focus our priorities, and inspire us to move forward in exciting new directions.



Academic Vision

The University of Rhode Island will be the institution of first choice for students and faculty with a passion for inquiry. Our emphasis on innovation and interdisciplinary learning and discovery connects us with the world and is built upon a contemporary foundation of liberal learning and scholarship that celebrates diversity and complexity, and instills empowerment and social responsibility. Our emphases and expertise in the broadly defined realms of health, environment, and science and technology translate into learning and discovery that matters deeply in the world. We contribute directly to global prosperity through collaborative innovation and productive partnerships.

In our academic vision, we establish the goal of creating a learning environment steeped in innovation and characterized by discovery, collaboration, inquiry, and engagement. We take pride in demonstrating these values for our students and their families in their academic and co-curricular experiences. We shall become more self-sufficient and entrepreneurial so that we can better meet the opportunities before us. We must lead the way in new integrative approaches to teaching, scholarship, and outreach by developing meaningful partnerships and embracing innovation.

OUR VALUES: uri.edu/cornerstones

OUR MISSION: uri.edu/mission



OVERARCHING FOCUS: INNOVATION WITH IMPACT

The University of Rhode Island aspires to nothing less than strategic excellence in all areas of academic pursuit and institutional investment. Therefore, all institutional efforts and initiatives outlined in this Academic Strategic Plan will emphasize and focus on **innovation** in the following areas:



Engaging and **innovative** pedagogies, research, and academic programs that foster learning and success in matters of critical importance in the world



Exciting and relevant collaborations deeply rooted in **innovation** that push the frontiers of learning, discovery, and problem solving



New applications of technology that promote **innovation**, engagement, efficiency and effectiveness



A community that reflects **innovation** and a commitment to strategic institutional advancement in all areas



Innovative models and processes that promote agility and responsiveness across all divisions

GOALS



GOAL 01

Enhance Student Success

Transform undergraduate and graduate student learning and academic support with a firm commitment to student success and the development of knowledgeable, skilled, and engaged graduates prepared for an ever-changing world.



Strategy 1

Expand pedagogical approaches focused on engaging students in learning across the curriculum

ACTIONS

1. Promote use of engaging pedagogical approaches (e.g., flipped classrooms, team-based/problem-based learning, less hierarchical/more facilitative pedagogy, study groups, action research, students teaching students)
2. Implement widespread data analytics and self-paced learning options in courses
3. Promote increased faculty-student and student-student interaction (e.g., instructor-student feedback cycle, peer assessment/review, early alerts)
4. Expand the scope and strategy of the Honors Program to ensure student engagement and to enhance recruitment and retention of high-achieving students; seek external investment to ensure the Program's continued vitality
5. Explore options that allow students to design or customize their own majors
6. Coordinate curriculum (align curriculum among multi-section courses, upper- and lower-level courses), integrate civic engagement and experiential learning projects (e.g., "unclassroom," integrated clinical experience), and ensure programs actively engage students in integration, synthesis, and application of knowledge
7. Advance student support through information literacy
8. Expand online course offerings for all students and for targeted populations (adult learners)

Strategy 2

Significantly expand opportunities for experiential learning within all majors, and restructure academic and career advising to better support students in meeting their life goals

ACTIONS

1. Move toward a model of professional advising, especially in early years of the student experience and systematically assess the effectiveness of advising at all levels
2. Emphasize internships and experiential learning opportunities through knowledgeable advisors and a strong collaboration between the Center for Career and Experiential Education (CCEE) and advisors in all areas
3. Expand efforts to make graduate students and their advisers aware of and prepared for both academic and non-academic careers
4. Cultivate, value, and track experiential/project-based learning early in the student's college career in every undergraduate major and in all graduate degree programs
5. Expand advisory boards/groups for all majors and/or colleges with goal of promoting internships and mentorships, where potentially useful
6. Develop greater coordination between the CCEE and departments/programs, including the assessment of graduates and their success
7. Reconceptualize and affirm (collaboratively among faculty and areas) the meaning and intent of service learning and undergraduate student research; and reorganize the undergraduate student research funding program to ensure it is fully available to and meets the needs of engaged students

GOAL 01

Enhance Student Success (continued)

8. Develop more interdisciplinary learning opportunities for all students, including those in professional master's degree programs

Strategy 3

Facilitate the implementation of new learning pedagogies and expand modes of course delivery and assessment by leveraging space and time in new ways

ACTIONS

1. Strategically plan and allocate space and technology to facilitate interdisciplinary collaborations and connections among and between faculty, students, and graduate students
2. Transform the scheduling of classes to effectively meet new pedagogical approaches, including service and experiential learning
3. Expand interconnectivity between campuses by improving intercampus transportation options, developing an effective administrative and academic integration among Providence, Kingston, and Bay campuses, and advancing digital integration
4. Facilitate learning through collaborative use of resources, e.g., interprofessional education (IPE), area/topic cluster courses
5. Consider alternate course delivery systems that facilitate engagement, deep learning, on-time graduation, and exploration in other majors (e.g., 4-credit courses, half-semester modules, pass/fail option, auditing, J-term offerings, certifications, credit system/seat time); and address the needs of academically challenged students
6. Support the University Libraries plan to accommodate the increasing demand for academic support services
7. Implement a variety of teaching methods and student assessments within the same course, where possible, and expand the utilization of technology applications to enhance learning

8. Support appropriate assessment strategies to measure learning outcomes for both undergraduate and graduate programs and ensure the Academic Program Review Committee's criteria is aligned with the Plan's learning themes
9. Strategically expand post-baccalaureate online degree programs and certificates

Strategy 4

Provide a comprehensive faculty development program, align incentives, and explore the opportunity for a faculty/teaching commons and expanded digital initiatives within the University Libraries

ACTIONS

1. Coordinate extended opportunities for faculty development (e.g., utilize faculty expertise, networking, shared practices, faculty sharing forums, learning communities, faculty development series, online resources for faculty) in collaboration with the Office for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning (ATL)
2. Promote initiatives designed to assist faculty in recognizing different student learning styles and developing inclusive curricular and assessment strategies
3. Advance digital initiatives, the Digital Commons, and open access within the University Libraries, and pursue consortium opportunities that would effectively serve the University
4. Expand the University Library's Learning Commons with a Teaching Commons focused on faculty and the advancement of teaching and learning
5. Create feedback structure with ATL so that faculty who want feedback on their teaching can receive site visits, consultation, etc.
6. Provide faculty with instructions and resources for applying Student Ratings of Instruction results toward course modification with the aim of improvement

Strategy 5

Reframe and redefine liberal education at URI in the context of the 21st century

ACTIONS

1. Frame and emphasize the value of liberal learning as a foundational platform for intellectual inquiry and development (all majors) with the potential to be intellectually rewarding, personally fulfilling, and economically beneficial
2. Engage students with pedagogies of problem solving through historical, contemporary, and personal perspectives, and connect these habits of mind to lifelong learning
3. Expand formal programs and opportunities for undergraduate research and increase the integration of faculty research into courses
4. Refigure and present the undergraduate experience as lifelong learning and introduce its meaning, importance, and pursuit starting at matriculation
5. Facilitate curricular and teaching strategies that highlight student agency, learning outside of formal class structures, and curricula that enhance building connections, integration and synthesis, and broad contextual perspectives
6. Explore institutionalizing an e-portfolio initiative to integrate student knowledge and development and serve as a means of assessment, in addition to the traditional student transcript
7. Encourage and increase collaboration between departments that would lead to innovative interdisciplinary master's and doctoral programs

Strategy 6

Focus on access and affordability and improve credit and degree completion rates for all undergraduate and graduate students, with specific attention in data reporting to underrepresented, economically disadvantaged, international, out-of-state, and in-state populations

ACTIONS

1. Focus and expand efforts to ensure student success in gateway courses and continually assess those efforts
2. Successfully implement the new general education curriculum comprising new and revitalized courses
3. Engage more full-time faculty in teaching general education courses and highlight the critical importance of faculty efforts and continuous innovation in these courses
4. Target appropriate financial aid to support economically disadvantaged students and retain out-of-state students
5. Assess and identify progress and gaps in programs and services that are focused on student access, at-risk students, and overall student success, including academic and student support services
6. Ensure effective organization/structuring of curriculum and academic policies to promote ease in transferring to URI from other colleges and within URI between majors; reduce redundancy/duplication of work; and eliminate unnecessary prerequisites
7. Continue to refocus URI 101 on student responsibilities for academic planning and success, including preparation to achieve professional, career, and life goals

8. Develop specific strategies to improve retention of graduate students and ensure timely completion of advanced degrees
9. Support and expand dual enrollment and statewide articulation agreements to expand access to college credit-bearing courses
10. Advance degree completion efforts, including programs such as "Finish What You Started" that target at-risk populations and/or bring students back to the University to complete degrees



GOAL 02

Expand Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work

Achieve high-impact, translational, and innovative research, scholarship, and creative work that addresses state, regional, and world challenges to improve health, environmental sustainability, economic development, and the human experience.



Strategy 1

Broaden resources and support for significant growth in research opportunities with the state, nation, and world, and demonstrate value and recognition for multiple forms of scholarship

ACTIONS

1. Generate research, scholarship, and creative work across all academic disciplines with emphasis in four core strategic and transdisciplinary themes: (a) Health, (b) Science and Technology, (c) Environment, and (d) Liberal Learning and Scholarship for the 21st Century
2. Selectively recruit senior-level faculty hires in critical areas where the University is underrepresented or needs to accelerate development
3. Enlist senior research faculty to mentor, advise, and assist early-career tenure track faculty
4. Establish clear and open lines of communication about measuring faculty research productivity; appropriately value various disciplines and types of scholarship
5. Focus on enhancing University Libraries to support research, scholarship, and creative work and make Special Collections a

centerpiece of scholarship and a distinctive element of URI and the State of Rhode Island

6. Continue and extend commitment to international collaborations
7. Ensure effective research infrastructure, e.g., establishment of a vivarium research facility and a high-performance computing center
8. Leverage federally supported small business funding mechanisms to support faculty research and translate research into commercial applications
9. Ensure that University Libraries provides access to current online publications and databases, and to print collections in nearby libraries

Strategy 2

Foster inquiry-based interdisciplinary knowledge and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), and build greater connections across disciplines and academic units

ACTIONS

1. Recognize the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) (e.g., promotions, awards, grants, tenure, advancement, citations)
2. Improve publicity, marketing, and sharing of faculty and student research to key stakeholders within and outside the University across multiple media outlets and open access and digital commons
3. Improve infrastructure to serve multidisciplinary faculty research, scholarship, and creative work

a. Develop an interactive, visible, searchable website that lists faculty areas of expertise in research, teaching, and service

b. Explore establishing differentiated and individualized faculty workloads that better match interests, capabilities, and University needs and reflect faculty members' changing interests and abilities over time, e.g., increased teaching activities in exchange for reduced research activities or reduced teaching for increased research activities with proven track record

c. Expand opportunities to build vertical research teams with interdisciplinary components

4. Attract new graduate students by developing new programs and renewing existing programs
5. Ensure that University-supported graduate assistantships (teaching and research) are: strategically and equitably allocated to best support teaching and research needs and graduate program advancement; supportive of interdisciplinary programs; and reviewed on a regular basis
6. Create permanent structures for graduate teaching assistants to develop and receive feedback on their teaching
7. Create professional development opportunities for graduate students without teaching assistantships to gain experience and knowledge about pedagogy

Strategy 3

Target research initiatives that impact economic and workforce development

ACTIONS

1. Expand and nurture synergistic partnerships and funding with various stakeholders (e.g., corporations, philanthropic, governmental, and community-based organizations) at local, state, national, and international levels
2. Build public support and appreciation for the University's research, scholarship, and creative work and its interconnectedness with economic and workforce development and enhancing quality of life in Rhode Island
3. Emphasize experiential undergraduate and graduate learning and research through integrative services, programs, and courses
4. Develop a wide range of 1- or 2-credit research/professional courses, or topical modules, that have value and appeal across broad disciplines
5. Implement innovations in digital technology and communication for researchers who are developing and preparing grant applications, preparing graduate fellowship applications, writing Institutional Review Board (IRB) submissions, or using the visual arts for enhancing graphics and illustrations in scientific writing and presentations

Strategy 4

Involve undergraduate and graduate students in rich and varied research, creative projects and other opportunities

ACTIONS

1. Develop coordinated support services for undergraduate research and explore the potential for creating an office or center to support and organize these services
2. Increase student knowledge of preparing scholarly proposals

3. Create research-based courses to fulfill core major and/or general education requirements
4. Expand research-based, creative, innovative J-term courses/projects
5. Engage undergraduate students early in their tenure—especially those who are first-generation, low-income, or from underrepresented groups—as well as graduate students, in seeking external funding for research and/or creative activities
6. Aggressively publicize funding opportunities and successfully funded and completed research

Strategy 5

Develop high-performance research computing initiatives to facilitate research and advance big data analyses and applications across all disciplines

ACTIONS

1. Procure and support computational resources for faculty and students and provide a learning and training environment that includes:
 - a. Technical support for computational, mathematical, and statistical consulting related to high-performance computer (HPC) enabled research
 - b. Incentives for the formation of interdisciplinary research teams around HPC to encourage broad URI community involvement in research
 - c. Training and educational support for researchers and students
 - d. Enable and enhance HPC and research computing support for teams seeking external research funding
 - e. Provide student and instructor access to data, HPC and research computing, and advanced analytical tools to improve opportunities for critical problem solving in multiple disciplines

2. Encourage the Big Data Collaborative to form an Institute for Data Intensive Discovery (ID2) to generate synergy among Big Data researchers and to coordinate related education and research activities across campuses
3. Create undergraduate and graduate courses, certificates, programs, and minors in big data, data science and/or data analytics. Begin with grand challenge, honors, and general education courses and develop training and educational support for faculty and student users
4. Develop user policies and management plans that attract new users and encourage new and innovative ways to use computing in the humanities, arts, and education
5. Provide incentives and organizational structure to foster a community of researchers in high-performance and research computing
6. Develop metrics for areas such as usage by faculty and students, funds invested by deans for faculty start-up packages, and grant impact—e.g., number of grant applications referencing the HPC Center
7. Ensure that graduate students have access to statistical expertise for their research



GOAL 03

Grow a Global Presence

Advance the internationalization of the University, develop students as engaged global citizens, and create meaningful international strategic partnerships.

Strategy 1

Articulate and prioritize internationalization of institution-wide strategic plans and faculty hires

ACTIONS

1. Encourage colleges and divisions to incorporate specific global initiatives into their planning
2. Establish global committees and/or task forces within each college and division to monitor and assess progress of internationalization plans, including benchmarking with similar units at other institutions
3. Ensure that global education, research, service, and outreach are recognized and valued in promotion and tenure
4. Work to create a campus community that reflects the diversity of the global community
5. Provide professional development opportunities for faculty to develop global competence and incorporate global perspectives into their teaching where appropriate

Strategy 2

Provide appropriate administrative leadership and structure to promote and coordinate the globalization efforts of the University

ACTIONS

1. Assess current structures devoted to globalization efforts and consider whether to recommend changes
2. Establish clear internal and external communication channels to promote internationalization efforts (e.g., global website, campus events, newsletters)

Strategy 3

Create opportunities for the internationalization of the curriculum and co-curriculum to ensure that all students are exposed to global perspectives and build global competence

ACTIONS

1. Partner with the Office of Advancement of Teaching and Learning (ATL) and other organizations to provide workshops for faculty on teaching experiential and global courses
2. Formalize a global studies minor that reinforces student global competencies
3. Create experiences and opportunities such as international tracks, global certificates, and expanded study abroad or domestic travel opportunities within majors and graduate programs
4. Expand students' global geographic, linguistic, and cross-cultural learning and world orientation by expanding course offerings in these areas across disciplines and departments
5. Increase number, breadth, and variety of co-curricular activities that reinforce international elements of the curriculum, including the new global competency general education requirement

Strategy 4

Create institutional policies and support mechanisms to provide faculty with opportunities to develop global competence to maximize the impact of student global experiences on learning outcomes

ACTIONS

1. Increase international mobility opportunities for teaching, conducting research, and attending conferences abroad
2. Encourage faculty applications for international scholarship and provide support (e.g., Fulbright)

Strategy 5

Expand support structures and efforts to increase numbers of domestic students engaging in international education experiences, and successfully recruit, enroll, and retain international students

ACTIONS

1. Expand opportunities for graduate and undergraduate students to gain an international education experience of study, research, and/or internship (e.g., through an increased number of J-term and full-semester faculty-led study abroad programs, and through partnerships with international institutions and local globally-engaged organizations)
2. Standardize policy for transfer of credit gained abroad across all colleges and maintain a database of pre-approved transfer credits from international institutions

3. Effectively integrate study abroad into the curriculum by engaging advisors to communicate opportunities to students, offer cross-cultural course options during and after study abroad experiences, and provide effective preparation for global learning by introducing cross-cultural course options delivered prior to study abroad
4. Enhance partnership efforts to recruit and enroll international graduate and undergraduate students, e.g., Education Service Providers, development of URI pathway program, Associates in Cultural Exchange (ACE) conditional admission
5. Improve recruitment of international students through print, video, and online materials in target languages
6. Provide comprehensive support for and inclusion of enrolled international graduate and undergraduate students through advising, peer support, and programs at the University and college levels, such as peer ambassadors and expanded housing options

Strategy 6

Formalize the process of strategic planning and proposal review, approval, tracking, and assessment of international partnerships

ACTIONS

1. Identify strategic regions and countries as potential partner locations, based upon mission fit and ability to support and sustain collaborations

2. Create an interdisciplinary review team to examine and confirm that proposed collaborations are aligned with institutional mission, are fiscally viable, and have appropriate academic approvals
3. Streamline administrative process and legal review of collaborative agreements (e.g., memorandums of understanding/agreements)
4. Update collaboration proposal guidelines on URI website and communicate these to the deans and faculty in all degree-granting colleges
5. Review partnerships annually for operational and programmatic effectiveness and communicate with partners to discuss and implement changes as needed



GOAL 04

Embrace Diversity and Social Justice

Inspire an enlightened community that is characterized by vibrant cultural diversity; that embraces difference; that is built upon a learning environment that fosters respect, understanding, and social justice; and that rejects prejudice and intolerance.



Strategy 1

Develop robust plans for diversifying faculty and staff by employing new and novel approaches that realize and retain greater numbers of diverse faculty

ACTIONS

1. Encourage and support departments and colleges in using URI's Affirmative Action plan, institutional data, and best practices to increase the number of diverse faculty and staff
2. Educate the community about systemic and structured discrimination and marginalization
3. Inform the community of the success of efforts to diversify faculty, staff, and students
4. Secure institutional commitment to eliminating disparities in recruitment, hiring, and retaining of employees, and ensure that all departments are accountable for diversity hiring and retention
5. Ensure that search committees within departments and colleges understand and implement affirmative recruitment, hiring, and retention plans sensitive to diversity
6. Elevate institutional recognition and visibility at all levels of teaching and scholarship that focus on diversity, equity, and social justice, including ensuring appropriate consideration in the promotion and tenure process

7. Develop professional development and mentoring programs for staff and faculty from underrepresented groups at all career levels
8. Further advance and support work/life flexibility policies and practices
9. Engage college diversity committees and presidential commissions in recruitment and retention, and in fostering a welcoming, supportive, and inclusive climate for faculty

Strategy 2

Increase the recruitment, retention, and graduation of students from underrepresented groups, and provide support for their inclusion and success in the academic environment

ACTIONS

1. Designate academic program liaisons to work with the Office of Admission on recruitment efforts and to develop outreach to engage and excite underrepresented K–12 students about URI
2. Examine the use and impact on student success of diversity coordinators/advisors as mentors of undergraduate and graduate students from underrepresented groups
3. Expand peer tutoring and support programs for underrepresented groups to increase success in Gateway courses and other challenging courses
4. Seek and secure external funding for programs (e.g., Ford and Gates Foundations) that support the inclusion and success of marginalized students in the academic environment
5. Educate faculty about effective mentorship of graduate students from underrepresented groups and develop other targeted opportunities to increase diversity among graduate students

6. Develop targeted opportunities to increase diversity among graduate students

Strategy 3

Create an active learning community among students, faculty, staff, and administrators that engages in open discourse and enhanced understanding about what it means to be a diverse and socially just community

ACTIONS

1. Engage and inform faculty about inclusive pedagogy, classroom climate, practices and policies, and diverse learning styles and encourage faculty scholarship in these areas
2. Expand undergraduate coursework addressing diversity and inclusion through infusion of diverse course material in existing courses and development of new courses
3. Urge graduate students from all departments and programs to participate in cultural competency courses as part of postgraduate education
4. Leverage the Multicultural and Diversity Enhancement Fund for course development in multicultural competency
5. Advance awareness and pedagogical sensitivity related to equity and diversity through faculty and staff orientation and professional development programs
6. Incentivize faculty to integrate diversity and inclusion principles and practices in their work

GOAL 05

Streamline Processes to Improve Effectiveness

Engender a highly professional work culture that celebrates service and is characterized by flexible, effective, and efficient processes and by trust, support, and recognition towards greater institutional effectiveness.



Strategy 1

Develop new strategic and supportive human resource, affirmative action, and payroll administrative processes within all divisions of the University that enable efficiency and effectiveness in hiring and retaining excellent employees, and in performance management

ACTIONS

1. Lead a collaborative process to develop a workplace vision and organizational values for the University
2. Propose changes to the hiring process—without compromising recruitment of diverse applicants—such as:
 - a. Update personnel classifications and re-engineer human resource processes to promote additional paperless electronic processes (including internal payroll)
 - b. Develop a system designed to hire qualified people for jobs at all levels in a timely manner
 - i. Determine optimal position approval process for most efficient hiring
 - ii. Improve timing in processes related to all aspects of hiring including processing forms, approval to interview, approvals for hiring offers, and appointments
3. Formally propose greater autonomy from the state classification system
 - i. Explore opportunities to allow for greater autonomy for approvals of new positions and performance-based merit pay
 - ii. Forms should reflect greater sensitivity to diversity (e.g., gender orientation)

3. Ensure comprehensive recruitment strategies with competitive salaries, dual professional employment opportunities, faculty start-ups, and relocation assistance
4. All divisional/department heads should assess position descriptions annually to determine if required skill sets are current and to propose updates to better meet current and future workplace needs
 - a. Document the essential functions performed by current employees
 - b. Review job responsibilities to ensure they meet current needs and anticipate future needs; determine desired changes and work with HR to update and keep current
 - c. Identify new positions, taking into account creative ways to accomplish goals (e.g., shared positions, hourly work, and other employment arrangements)
 - d. Prioritize positions strategically and develop a long-range (2–4 years) timeline for future funding requests
5. Reinvest in a staff development program and performance management system
 - a. Institute cross training or similar mechanism to allow decision-making and response time to flow more quickly for hiring offers, search-related decisions, and performance management
 - b. Examine compensation and merit pay connected to performance management and professional development for greater organizational effectiveness
 - c. Strengthen coordination between the areas of Community, Equity, and Diversity (including the Office of Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity and Diversity) and Human Resource Administration, and other areas as applicable
 - d. Incorporate diversity and equity training into staff development programs

GOAL 05

Streamline Processes to Improve Effectiveness (Continued)

Strategy 2

Prioritize and improve information technology to better meet future technology-related needs of the institution

ACTIONS

1. Implement a shared governance process for Information Technology
2. Develop a comprehensive IT strategic plan in collaboration with the URI community
3. Develop annual priorities and a related funding plan
4. Annually assess all IT services to improve
5. Work towards the connectivity of software systems to ensure consistency and integration of systems and information across the University
6. Ensure the utilization of integrated systems and better assist staff in learning new systems

Strategy 3

Explore new business and administrative processes that serve faculty, staff, and students with the highest degree of service and efficiency

ACTIONS

1. In the Office of Budget and Financial Planning:
 - a. Implement an interactive online budget and reporting system
2. In the Office of Legal Counsel:
 - a. Delegate the review of certain types of contracts, such as maintenance agreements, equipment purchases, simple contracts, etc., and communicate the approval process broadly to campus and efficiently to approval requestors

3. Introduce new information technologies to ease processing of student forms. Develop e-forms to track the progress of graduate students and facilitate their time to completion
4. In Business Services:
 - a. Determine optimal centralization versus decentralization of business support services and consider the potential use of business support centers
 - b. Explore re-engineering opportunities with end-users; assess results for service and efficiency improvements
 - c. Develop more efficient processes for travel, purchasing, and administrative functions in all divisions and assess progress by division and function
 - d. Improve automation so that it is timely and responsive and not reliant on the presence of particular individuals
 - e. Assess processes and responses to ensure consistency, quality, and efficiency, including those in procurement
 - f. Seek greater purchasing autonomy from State; update policies and procedures in Purchasing
 - g. Streamline the Request for Proposal (RFP) and Bidding processes
 - h. Utilize URI or Board of Education Master Price Agreement (MPA) contracts for services or goods purchased in volume where no state contract exists
 - i. Complete a comprehensive study of whether travel agent services are cost- and time-effective and should be required of all offices
 - j. Work with State Administrative Office on the MPA process for state travel agency for best options or alternatives
 - k. Review Administrative Management Review Committee (AMRC) proposal to consolidate custodial services under Facilities Services and consider whether to implement

Strategy 4

Improve research administrative processes at all levels and within all units

ACTIONS

1. Streamline and improve electronic workflow for research awards, from proposal to post-award
 - a. Ensure better research compliance by reducing paperwork
2. Create more effective pool fringe rates for all URI employees to improve budget management and ease in proposal writing
3. Create a strong and effective program for mentoring potential principal investigators in grant writing and submission
4. Better aid faculty members in research administrative activities
5. Provide more effective and efficient legal support for research and compliance
6. Make the intellectual property process more effective and efficient from disclosure of inventions to patents

Strategy 5

Develop processes and practices that enable Academic Affairs to more nimbly update curriculum, solve problems, and work collaboratively across disciplines in order to better meet the needs of future learners

ACTIONS

1. Update and streamline the program proposal process and course proposal and revision processes for graduate and undergraduate courses; remove unnecessary bottlenecks
2. Improve the time it takes for all forms to be processed by assessing time to completion of various academic

processes and improving upon the process and timeliness of response and decision times

3. Address college academic issues, including those related to students, faculty, and staff, more expediently and locally, at the college level to the greatest extent possible

Strategy 6

Explore changes in long-range space, facility, and capital improvement planning, including deferred maintenance plans; and assess campus planning efforts with the community to regularly make improvements

ACTIONS

1. Comprehensively review the physical plant and maintenance priorities and develop a deferred maintenance plan with identified funding streams; report progress
2. Improve the effectiveness of capital projects planning and implementation
 - a. Track the time projects spend in various stages of capital planning; improve efficiency; identify bottlenecks; account for cost overruns
 - b. Improve accuracy of cost estimating and account in writing for cost overruns, repeating work, or underestimating cost of capital projects
3. Assess potential improvements in the areas of small project management, traffic management and parking, winter storm and snow management, and energy efficiency
4. Ensure that long-range space planning reflects institutional priorities and is conducted in broad collaboration with the community



GOAL 06

Implement a Bold Advancement Agenda

Elevate the stature of the University through robust and bold strategic advancement initiatives designed to establish a strong and sustainable financial and marketplace position.

The following strategies were coauthored between University and URI Foundation leaders and representatives:

Strategy 1

Engender a University culture of philanthropy through strong University partnerships

ACTIONS

1. Recognize the URI Foundation as the responsible organization for all fundraising on behalf of the University of Rhode Island, and as such, collaborative planning and regular reporting to the University should occur at various levels
2. Identify and jointly develop strategic funding priorities for the University through collaborative planning between institutional leaders and the Foundation
3. Educate University partners and the Foundation on the fundraising priorities of the University
4. Consider every University event an advancement opportunity, and develop coordinated cultivation and communication strategies as appropriate
5. Ensure that fundraising effectiveness, success, and accountability are embedded in the responsibilities of the deans, development officers, and Foundation leadership, and as such will be used as criteria for evaluations and hiring
6. Develop a strategy to engage students and their families as well as faculty, staff, and the University community in a manner that elicits a sense of “paying it forward” and collective interest in investing in the future of the University
7. Clearly communicate the expectation that every institutional advisory council and board member participate in University giving to model behavior critical to an advanced fundraising agenda

Strategy 2

Maximize the effective working partnership between the URI Foundation and the University, leading to the launch of a comprehensive campaign

ACTIONS

1. Clarify the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of each fundraising partner, including URI Foundation and Alumni Relations staff, VPs, deans, faculty, athletics staff, and other staff
2. Develop and communicate policies and guidelines regarding how we successfully conduct fundraising efforts/business, including standards in areas such as prospect management, gift acceptance, naming opportunities, and the comprehensive campaign
3. Collaborate on identifying University funding priorities and creating case statements for support
4. Facilitate transparent communication between the University and the Foundation through regularly delivered fundraising reports, consistent meetings, joint evaluation processes with University leadership and Foundation staff, and education regarding best practices
5. Provide ongoing education and training of best practices
6. Implement a collaborative process for the development of individual prospect strategies
7. Develop plans for each college, as well as key areas for annual giving (Annual Fund) and major gifts
8. Engage Foundation leadership to ensure that endowment sufficiently supports the University and primary gift purpose, and incentivizes future donor giving

Strategy 3

Leverage University relationships to expand the pool of individual, alumni, Foundation, and corporate prospects and donors

ACTIONS

1. Identify emerging University constituencies and friends to be evaluated as immediate or future development prospects
2. Develop processes to ensure that all appropriate University and Foundation personnel appropriately share information that assists with the development process and prospect cultivation (e.g., contact reports)
3. Ensure strategic fundraising messaging in all University and Foundation communications, where appropriate, including consistent development messaging in individual college collateral materials, websites, social media and other outlets
4. Leverage existing relationships with corporations and foundations, the Business Engagement Center, and other new business partners to expand the potential prospect base
5. Ensure that a major focus of our alumni outreach and engagement is focused on advancement and support of the University

Strategy 4

Ensure a cutting-edge infrastructure that supports a robust advancement operation

ACTIONS

1. Enhance Foundation-based prospect research, reporting, and capacity analysis and ensure that such information is accurate, timely, comprehensive, and utilized in developing prospect engagement strategies
2. Develop strategies and an actionable plan for integrating the work of the Foundation and the Alumni Association
3. Develop a strong and effective prospect and donor research component for discovery for each college and unit and ensure information is current in relation to area strategic needs
4. Work with the Foundation to develop and implement creative and effective strategies to ensure sufficient financial support to achieve a robust and successful comprehensive campaign
5. Implement best practices (Council for Aid to Education/CAE, Council for the Advancement and Support of Education/CASE) and identify processes, strategies, and resources; identify and implement changes as needed



Appendix

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

(Applied) Research and Scholarship

Applied, as opposed to theoretical, research and scholarship is focused on solving real-world problems. Students engaging in applied research and scholarship participate in the practical application of their studies to a specific client, state, business, or field-driven problem.

Certification Courses

Certification courses can be taken in addition to or separate from a degree program. When taken in addition to a degree program, a related certification enhances a student's skills and provides additional marketability after graduation. Certification is an official, accepted designation that the certified individual is capable of performing a specific task or has acquired a specific skill. Some examples of certification programs include ESL certification (teaching English as a Second Language students in literature and writing) and CA certification (Chartered Accountant).

Civic Engagement Activities

Civic engagement means actively working in and with our communities to their benefit. Activities that promote civic engagement create an opportunity for students to become involved in their community and improve living conditions.

Engaged Models of Learning

Student engagement refers to the level of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion that students show when they are learning or being taught. Levels of engagement may determine students' motivation to learn and succeed. Engaged models of learning prioritize practice and real-world application of classroom knowledge.

Engaging Pedagogies

Engaging pedagogies are theories of teaching that imagine students as active participants instead of passive consumers. Engaging pedagogies prioritize student involvement and investment. Such pedagogies allow for students and teachers to mutually share their knowledge in classroom spaces. Engaging pedagogies may include the use of active and cooperative learning, learning communities, service learning, cooperative education, inquiry and problem-based learning, and team projects.

E-Portfolio

An e-portfolio is an electronic portfolio containing student work uploaded to the Web. These portfolios can provide an alternative means for assessing student success and evaluating student progress.

Experiential Learning

Experiential learning is the process of learning through experience, and is more specifically defined as "learning through reflection on doing." Experiential learning is distinct from rote or didactic learning, in which the learner plays a comparatively passive role.

Faculty Learning Communities

A faculty learning community (FLC) is a group of faculty, often gathered from across the disciplines, who engage in active and collaborative learning and teaching. These communities may also include graduate students and staff. The communities engage in seminars, retreats, interdisciplinary projects, and other collaborative efforts. They are created for the purpose of supporting faculty and encouraging the open exchange of ideas, information, and support.

Interdisciplinary Projects

Interdisciplinary refers to the combination of two or more academic disciplines. Interdisciplinary projects are designed to allow students to combine skills and knowledge from more than one academic discipline. By combining disciplinary knowledge and skills, students can seek more complex and comprehensive solutions to real world problems and make connections between their different courses of study without the artificial separation of the classroom.

J-term

J-Term, or January Term, is a special month-long period of study during which students can take classes held both on campus and around the world.

Liberal Arts

Specific disciplines, i.e., the humanities, sciences, and social sciences.

Liberal Education/Learning

Liberal education/learning focuses on the liberal arts with the goal of developing the mind. The Association of American Colleges and Universities defines liberal education as "an approach to learning that empowers individuals and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity, and change. It provides students with broad knowledge of the wider world (e.g., science, culture, and society) as well as in-depth study in a specific area of interest." A liberal education helps students develop a sense of social responsibility, as well as strong and transferable intellectual and practical skills such as communication, analytical and problem-solving skills, and a demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-world settings. (AACU, 2015, aacu.org/leap/what-is-a-liberal-education)

Mentoring

Mentoring relationships are established with the goal of providing support, training, and advising. Mentor/mentee models deviate from instructor/student models in that mentor/mentee relationships are often cultivated outside of the classroom and can be established between peers. Peer mentoring can help new students meet the expectations of college learning.

Outcome-Based Learning

Outcome-based learning is an educational theory that bases each part of an educational system around goals (outcomes). The educational experience is designed to assist students in accomplishing these goals

Project-Based Learning

Project-based learning is a teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to a complex question, problem, or challenge. These problems are often based in the "real" world and assist students in making connections between classroom learning and life outside the academic institution.

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)

The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) draws on the reciprocal relationship between teaching and learning. An important goal of SoTL is to enhance and augment learning amongst and between individual learners by investigating the many features of discipline-specific expertise and best pedagogical practice. Scholarly teachers do things such as reflect on their teaching, use classroom assessment techniques, discuss teaching issues with colleagues, try new things,

and read and apply the literature on teaching and learning in their discipline and, perhaps, more generally. Scholarly teaching is closely linked to reflective practice.

Service Learning

Service learning incorporates community service with instruction and reflection as an initiative in teaching and learning. Service learning is intended to enrich student learning experiences, while simultaneously teaching civic responsibility, and benefiting communities. Service learning provides an opportunity to assist students in making connections between the knowledge they again and the ways it can benefit those around them.

Student Portfolio

A student portfolio is a systematic collection of student work and related material that depicts a student's activities, accomplishments, and achievements in one or more school subjects. Student portfolios may be collected over the course of their academic career or during a specific course or semester. These portfolios provide an alternate way to depict and quantify student success while simultaneously providing the student with a means of reflecting on their own progress over time.

Translational Research

Translational research is research that, when applied, will enhance human health and wellbeing. Such research is purposed to "translate" its findings into benefits in human health, environmental sustainability, and economic development that will improve the quality of life for people globally.

Unclassroom

The "unclassroom" is an educational space that is not defined or limited by the physical space of the classroom. On the University of Rhode Island's Harrington School of Communication and Media website, the unclassroom is described as "an interdisciplinary program where students will work on projects that a real-world client will use." These projects include "a course . . . partnering with the Initiative to Educate Afghan Women, a nonprofit organization based in Providence that works with partner colleges and universities to provide a full four-year U.S. undergraduate education, leadership and social entrepreneurship training for Afghan women."



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