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Melissa Sutherland, Ph.D., FAAN  
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Hannah Bachert '23  
*Student Representative*

**The University of Rhode Island  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
Friday, April 21, 2023 • 9:00 a.m. EDT**

**The University of Rhode Island  
The Alumni Room, The Ryan Center  
1 Lincoln Almond Plaza, Kingston, RI 02881**

**OFFICIAL MINUTES**

Chair Margo Cook welcomed everyone to the April 21, 2023, meeting of the University of Rhode Island (URI) Board of Trustees and noted that the meeting was being held in person, with some board members participating remotely via Webex. Virtual public access to the meeting was available via the YouTube Livestream video platform. A recording of the meeting is available for viewing at: <https://web.uri.edu/trustees/meetings/>.

Board Secretary Michelle Curreri conducted a roll call attendance and reported that a quorum of voting members was present. Chair Cook called the meeting to order at 9:13 a.m.

Attendees present for this meeting included:

The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees members:

- Ms. Margo Cook, Chair (in person)
- Mr. Michael F. McNally, Vice Chair (in person)
- Mr. Michael Fascitelli (in person)
- Ms. Christine Heenan (in person)
- Dr. Neil Kerwin (remote)
- Mr. Roby Luna (remote)
- Dr. Karina Montilla Edmonds (remote)
- Ms. Cortney Nicolato (in person)
- Mr. Vahid Ownjazayeri (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."*

The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees (continued):

- Ms. Susan Petrovas (in person)
- Ms. Jay Placencia (in person)
- Mr. Armand Sabitoni (in person)
- Dr. Marc Parlange, President (ex officio) (non-voting) (in person)
- Ms. Hannah Bachert, Student Representative (non-voting) (in person)
- Dr. Melissa Sutherland, Faculty Representative (non-voting) (in person)

The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees members not present:

- Mr. David Caprio
- Honorable Charles J. Fogarty
- Mr. Richard Humphrey
- Mr. Matthew D. Lenz
- Mr. David Martirano
- Mr. Thomas Ryan

The University of Rhode Island President's Leadership Council members in attendance:

- Ms. Abby Benson, Senior Advisor to the President and Chief of Staff (in person)
- Mr. Thorr Bjorn, Director of Athletics (in person)
- Ms. Alyssa Boss, General Counsel (in person)
- Ms. Anne Marie Coleman, Assistant Vice President, Human Resources (in person)
- Dr. Bethany Jenkins, Interim Vice President, Research and Economic Development (in person)
- Dr. Dean Libutti, Associate Vice President Enrollment Services (in person)
- Mr. Matthew McDonald, Vice President for Communications and Marketing (in person)
- Ms. Lil Breul O'Rourke, President, URI Foundation and Alumni Engagement (in person)
- Dr. Ellen Reynolds, Vice President for Student Affairs (in person)
- Ms. Abigail Rider, Vice President for Administration and Finance (in person)
- Dr. Sean Rogers, Vice President, Community, Equity, Diversity (in person)
- Dr. Barbara Wolfe, Provost and Executive Vice President, Academic Affairs (in person)

The University of Rhode Island staff members in attendance:

- Mr. Sam Adams, Director of Emergency Preparedness (in person)
- Ms. Chelsea Berry, Communications Specialist (in person)
- Ms. Lauren Burgess, Director, Legislative and Government Relations (in person)
- Mr. Jeff Cabral, Vice President for Development, URI Foundation and Alumni Engagement (in person)
- Mr. Karl Calvo, Assistant Vice President, Facilities (in person)
- Mr. Ryan Carrillo, Director, Planning & Real Estate Development (in person)
- Ms. Robin Cawley, Legal Assistant (in person)

- Ms. Michelle Curreri, Secretary to the Board of Trustees (in person)
- Mr. Carlos Lopez Estrada, Director, Legislative and Government Relations (remote)
- Chief Michael Jagoda, Police Chief and Director, Public Safety (in person)
- Dr. E. Paul Larrat, Dean, College of Pharmacy (in person)
- Ms. Lynn Owens, Associate Secretary to the Board of Trustees (in person)
- Mr. John Poehlmann, Assistant Vice President, Financial Strategy and Planning (remote)
- Dr. John Stringer, Executive Director, Institutional Research (in person)
- Mr. Garrett Waller, Associate Athletics Director, Development (in person)

Special guest:

- Reva Goyal, incoming URI Board of Trustees student representative (in person)

Chair Cook acknowledged that the University of Rhode Island occupies the traditional homeland of the Narragansett Nation and the Niantic People.

Chair Cook recognized Abigail Rider and expressed the Board's sincere gratitude for her contributions during her tenure as Vice President for Administration and Finance. She celebrated Vice President Rider's dedication to URI and noted that her role as liaison to the Finance and Facilities, Institutional Risk and Compliance and ad hoc special Real Estate Committees has been invaluable to the success of these committees. Chair Cook expressed her gratefulness for the impact that Vice President Rider has had on the Board and congratulated her on her retirement.

Chair Cook welcomed the Board's newest faculty representative, Professor Melissa Sutherland, of the College of Nursing, who replaced Dr. Bethany Jenkins on the Board. Chair Cook thanked Bethany for her service to the Board and added that the Board looks forward to working with Bethany in her new role as Interim Vice President for Research and Economic Development.

Chair Cook expressed her thanks to graduating student representative Hannah Bachert for her service to the Board. She stated that Hannah epitomized what the Board expected of a student representative and benefited from her service.

## **1. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

### **a. Minutes of the February 16, 2023, Board Meeting. [Enclosure 1.a.](#)**

Chair Cook called for a motion that the URI Board of Trustees approve the minutes of its February 16, 2023, Board meeting.

On a motion duly made by Jay Placencia and seconded by Michael Fascitelli, it was

VOTED:        THAT        The URI Board of Trustees approve the minutes of the February 16, 2023 Board meeting.

VOTE:        12 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members

voted in the negative.

YEAS: Margo Cook, Michael Fascitelli, Christine Heenan, Neil Kerwin, Roby Luna, Michael McNally, Karina Montilla Edmonds, Cortney Nicolato, Vahid Ownjazayeri, Susan Petrovas, Jay Placencia, Armand Sabitoni.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

## 2. OPEN FORUM

Chair Cook reported that no one registered to speak during the Open Forum.

## 3. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chair Cook called for a motion that the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees enter into Executive Session for the following items:

- a. Discussion regarding pending litigation, pursuant to R.I.G.L. § 42-46-5(a)(2):
  - (i) Burt and Thomson v. Board of Trustees of the University of Rhode Island (1<sup>st</sup> Cir. No. 23-1188 and 23-1192) (Consolidated)
- b. Discussions or considerations related to the acquisition or lease of real property for public purposes, or of the disposition of publicly held property wherein advanced public information would be detrimental to the public interest, pursuant to R.I.G.L. § 42-46-5(a)(5), including Student Housing, URI Campuses and Peckham Farm.
- c. Discussion of a matter related to the question of the investment of public funds where the premature disclosure would adversely affect the public interest, pursuant to R.I.G.L. § 42-46-5(a)(7).

On a motion duly made by Armand Sabitoni and seconded by Christine Heenan, it was

VOTED:                    THAT                    The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees enter into Executive Session for the following items:

- a. Burt and Thomson v. Board of Trustees of the University of Rhode Island (1<sup>st</sup> Cir. No. 23-1188 and 23-1192) (Consolidated), pursuant to R.I.G.L. § 42-46-5(a) (2).
- b. Discussions or considerations related to the acquisition or lease of real property for public purposes, or of the disposition of publicly held property wherein advanced public information

would be detrimental to the public interest, pursuant to R.I.G.L. § 42-46-5(a)(5), including Student Housing, URI Campuses, and Peckham Farm.

- c. Discussion of a matter related to the question of the investment of public funds where the premature disclosure would adversely affect the public interest, pursuant to R.I.G.L. § 42-46-5(a)(7).

VOTE: 12 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Margo Cook, Michael Fascitelli, Christine Heenan, Neil Kerwin, Roby Luna, Michael McNally, Karina Montilla Edmonds, Cortney Nicolato, Vahid Ownjazayeri, Susan Petrovas, Jay Placencia, Armand Sabitoni.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAIN: 0

At 9:24 a.m., the Board convened into Executive Session. Virtual public access paused.

At 11:13 a.m., the Board returned to Open Session. Virtual public access resumed.

Chair Cook called for a motion that the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees seal the minutes of the Executive Session that took place on April 21, 2023.

On a motion duly made by Neil Kerwin and seconded by Jay Placencia, it was

VOTED: THAT The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees seal the minutes of the Executive Session that took place on April 21, 2023.

VOTE: 12 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Margo Cook, Michael Fascitelli, Christine Heenan, Neil Kerwin, Roby Luna, Michael McNally, Karina Montilla Edmonds, Cortney Nicolato, Vahid Ownjazayeri, Susan Petrovas, Jay Placencia, Armand Sabitoni.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAIN: 0

#### 4. REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEE CHAIRS AND ACTION ITEMS

##### a. Academic Affairs and Research Committee Report

###### (i) Update – April 6, 2023, Committee Meeting

Committee Chair Neil Kerwin reported on activity at the April 6, 2023, Committee meeting. He asked Provost Barbara Wolfe, Chief Academic Officer, to share a summary of her report to the committee.

Provost Wolfe reported that Dr. Sean Rogers will serve as Dean of the College of Business starting June 2023. She reviewed the process of awarding honorary degrees, noting the addition of another worthy candidate under consideration by the Board today. She spoke of the annual faculty promotion and tenure review process. Regarding the planned sale of the Shepard Building, she discussed the University's options to return some programming to Kingston, to increase use of the RI Nursing Education Center and to explore other Providence locations. The provost reported that the colleges are defining key performance indicators (KPIs) within their areas as they relate to the University's Strategic Plan. Several programs are undergoing external review tied to the accreditation process. She reminded board members of the upcoming Commencement 2023 ceremonies.

Provost Wolfe thanked Dr. Snyder for his service to the University and noted Dr. Jenkins' appointment to interim Vice President for Research and Development.

###### (ii) ACTION ITEM: Approval of the awarding of an additional honorary degree for Commencement 2023.

Committee Chair Kerwin called for a motion that the Board of Trustees approve the awarding of an additional honorary degree for Commencement 2023 as recommended.

On a motion duly made by Karina Montilla Edmonds and seconded by Cortney Nicolato and Roby Luna, it was

VOTED:	THAT	The URI Board of Trustees approve the awarding of an additional honorary degree for Commencement 2023 as recommended.
	VOTE:	12 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.
	YEAS:	Margo Cook, Michael Fascitelli, Christine Heenan, Neil Kerwin, Roby Luna, Michael McNally, Karina Montilla Edmonds, Cortney Nicolato, Vahid Ownjazayeri, Susan Petrovas, Jay Placencia, Armand Sabitoni.
	NAYS:	0

ABSTAINS: 0

- (iii) ACTION ITEM: 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 Spring 2023 term and who are approved by the faculty of the University of Rhode Island. [Enclosure 4.a.\(iii\)](#)

Committee Chair Kerwin called for a motion that the URI 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 Spring 2023 term and who are approved by the faculty of the University of Rhode Island, as recommended and presented in [Enclosure 4.a.\(iii\)](#).

Cortney Nicolato congratulated Hannah Bachert on her upcoming graduation.

On a motion duly made by Jay Placencia and seconded by Karina Montilla Edmonds, it was

VOTED: THAT The URI 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 Spring 2023 term and who are approved by the faculty of the University of Rhode Island, as recommended and presented in [Enclosure 4.a.\(iii\)](#).

VOTE: 12 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Margo Cook, Michael Fascitelli, Christine Heenan, Neil Kerwin, Roby Luna, Michael McNally, Karina Montilla Edmonds, Cortney Nicolato, Vahid Ownjazayeri, Susan Petrovas, Jay Placencia, Armand Sabitoni.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

- (iv) ACTION ITEM: Approval of the awarding of tenure, effective June 18, 2023, to Dr. Kenneth Rubin, Graduate School of Oceanography, who has met the requirements for tenure at the University of Rhode Island. [Enclosure 4.a.\(iv\)](#)

Provost Wolfe provided background information on Dr. Rubin.

Committee Chair Kerwin called for a motion that the URI Board of Trustees approve the granting of tenure, effective June 18, 2023, to Dr. Kenneth Rubin, Graduate School of Oceanography, who has met the requirements for tenure at the University of Rhode Island, as recommended and presented in [Enclosure 4.a.\(iv\)](#).

On a motion duly made by Karina Montilla Edmonds and seconded by Susan Petrovas, it was

VOTED:        THAT        The URI Board of Trustees approve the granting of tenure, effective June 18, 2023, to Dr. Kenneth Rubin, Graduate School of Oceanography, who has met the requirements for tenure at the University of Rhode Island, as recommended and presented in [Enclosure 4.a.\(iv\)](#).

VOTE:        12 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS:        Margo Cook, Michael Fascitelli, Christine Heenan, Neil Kerwin, Roby Luna, Michael McNally, Karina Montilla Edmonds, Cortney Nicolato, Vahid Ownjazayeri, Susan Petrovas, Jay Placencia, Armand Sabitoni.

NAYS:        0

ABSTAINS:   0

(v)        ACTION ITEM: Approval of the following academic program closures:

- Closure of the URI B.S. in Non-Profit Administration
- Closure of the URI B.S. in Professional Leadership Studies  
[Enclosure 4.a.\(v\)](#)

Committee Chair Kerwin called for a motion that the URI Board of Trustees approve the following academic program closures, as recommended and presented in [Enclosure 4.a.\(v\)](#):

- Closure of the URI B.S. in Non-Profit Administration
- Closure of the URI B.S. in Professional Leadership Studies

Provost Wolfe provided information on the closure of these programs. Board members discussed the allocation of resources to programs that are not highly utilized at URI. Chair Cook noted that while the Board has asked URI's leadership to look at the University's allocation of resources, this action does not mean that URI will not continue to address and meet the outcomes in support of the non-profit community and professional leadership.



Provost Wolfe noted that programs being closed are undergraduate programs with low enrollment and demand and lack of faculty members dedicated to the programs. She noted that there are different opportunities for leadership across the University, and there may be future opportunities for certificate programs in these areas. Committee Chair Kerwin agreed with the demand on the graduate side of this development and encouraged KPI mapping regarding URI's role in non-profit programming.

Board member Nicolato registered her viewpoint on how URI should continue to satisfy the objective of supporting the non-profit community in more effective ways. She noted that the non-profit community within Rhode Island accounts for 17 percent of the workforce. Rhode Island is one of the states with the most non-profit entities per capita in the country; these entities are critical to the success of the state and its economic development. She encouraged URI to continue to meet the need and objectives of the non-profit community in other areas, such as training, minors, graduate-level programming, and certification.

Board member Heenan added that URI must make sure it invests in programs that have impact and encouraged University leadership to continue to expend institutional energy around what is the right way for URI to support non-profit management and leadership in Rhode Island.

President Parlange added that with the new dean in the College of Business there are opportunities to explore in graduate-oriented non-profit management programming and professional leadership studies. He stressed that the University supports the non-profit community in many ways and will continue to do so.

On a motion duly made by Karina Montilla Edmonds and seconded by Christine Heenan, it was

VOTED:        THAT        The URI Board of Trustees approve the following academic program closures, as recommended and presented in [Enclosure 4.a.\(v\)](#):

- Closure of the URI B.S. in Non-Profit Administration
- Closure of the URI B.S. in Professional Leadership Studies

VOTE:        9 members voted in the affirmative, 1 member voted in the negative, 2 members abstained.

YEAS:        Margo Cook, Michael Fascitelli, Christine Heenan, Neil Kerwin, Roby Luna, Michael McNally, Karina Montilla Edmonds, Susan Petrovas, Armand Sabitoni.

NAYS:        Cortney Nicolato

ABSTAINS:   Jay Placencia, Vahid Ownjazayeri

- (vi) ACTION ITEM: Approval of the creation of the Ph.D. in Education graduate degree program. [Enclosure 4.a.\(vi\)](#)

Committee Chair Kerwin called for a motion that the URI Board of Trustees approve the creation of the following academic program, as recommended and presented in [Enclosure 4.a.\(vi\)](#):

- Creation of the Ph.D. in Education graduate degree program

Provost Wolfe provided information on this new Ph.D. program. Board member Nicolato expressed her thoughts on the high need for this new program and the critical role URI plays in K-12 education in Rhode Island.

On a motion duly made by Jay Placencia and seconded by Cortney Nicolato and Karina Montilla Edmonds, it was

VOTED: THAT The URI Board of Trustees approve the creation of the following academic program, as recommended and presented in [Enclosure 4.a.\(vi\)](#):

- Creation of the Ph.D. in Education graduate degree program

VOTE: 12 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Margo Cook, Michael Fascitelli, Christine Heenan, Neil Kerwin, Roby Luna, Michael McNally, Karina Montilla Edmonds, Cortney Nicolato, Vahid Ownjazayeri, Susan Petrovas, Jay Placencia, Armand Sabitoni.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

b. Finance and Facilities Committee Report

- (i) Update – April 17, 2023, Committee Meeting

Committee Chair Ownjazayeri reported on activity at the April 17, 2023, Committee meeting, and called upon Vice President Rider to provide details on the following items.

- (ii) DISCUSSION ITEM: Capital Improvement Plan FY2025-2029 [Enclosure 4.b.\(ii\)](#)

Vice President Rider introduced the proposed Capital Improvement Plan and the timeline for presentation, approval and submittal to the State of Rhode Island. Director Carrillo reviewed the University's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for Fiscal Year 2025-2029. An executive summary of the CIP Plan was provided to the Board members in advance of the meeting. The Board was invited to comment on the proposed CIP and will be asked to approve the final proposal at the June Board meeting.

- (iii) ACTION ITEM: Approval of a Steam Plant Services Agreement/Contract between NORESKO, LLC and the University of Rhode Island, effective April 1, 2023. [Enclosure 4.b.\(iii\)](#)

Vice President Rider provided background on this steam services agreement, the steam plant at URI, and NORESKO's expertise in this area.

Committee Chair Ownjazayeri called for a motion that the URI Board of Trustees approve the University entering into that certain Steam Plant Services Agreement between The University of Rhode Island and NORESKO, LLC, dated effective April 1, 2023 as presented (the "Contract") and that the President and the Vice President for Administration and Finance each be authorized to execute and deliver the Contract on behalf of the University of Rhode Island, as recommended and presented in [Enclosure 4.b.\(iii\)](#).

On a motion duly made by Armand Sabitoni and seconded by Susan Petrovas, it was

VOTED: THAT The URI Board of Trustees approve the University entering into that certain Steam Plant Services Agreement between The University of Rhode Island and NORESKO, LLC, dated effective April 1, 2023 as presented (the "Contract") and that the President and the Vice President for Administration and Finance each be authorized to execute and deliver the Contract on behalf of the University of Rhode Island, as recommended and presented in [Enclosure 4.b.\(iii\)](#).

VOTE: 12 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Margo Cook, Michael Fascitelli, Christine Heenan, Neil Kerwin, Roby Luna, Michael McNally, Karina Montilla Edmonds, Cortney Nicolato, Vahid Ownjazayeri, Susan Petrovas, Jay Placencia, Armand Sabitoni.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

- (iv) ACTION ITEM: Approval of the demolition of the building located behind 3045 Kingstown Road (identified by the Town of South Kingstown Assessor's Office as Building 25, Plat 23-1, Lot 1, URI Kingston Campus). [Enclosure 4.b.\(iv\)](#)

Committee Chair Ownjazayeri called for a motion that that the URI Board of Trustees approve the request to demolish the building located behind 3045 Kingstown Road identified by the Town of South Kingstown Assessor's Office as Building 25, Plat 23-1, Lot 1 at the University of Rhode Island Kingston Campus, as recommended and presented in the [Enclosure 4.b.\(iv\)](#).

On a motion duly made by Neil Kerwin and seconded by Armand Sabitoni, it was

VOTED: THAT: The URI Board of Trustees approve the request to demolish the building located behind 3045 Kingstown Road identified by the Town of South Kingstown Assessor's Office as Building 25, Plat 23-1, Lot 1 at the University of Rhode Island Kingston Campus, as recommended and presented in the [Enclosure 4.b.\(iv\)](#).

VOTE: 12 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Margo Cook, Michael Fascitelli, Christine Heenan, Neil Kerwin, Roby Luna, Michael McNally, Karina Montilla Edmonds, Cortney Nicolato, Vahid Ownjazayeri, Susan Petrovas, Jay Placencia, Armand Sabitoni.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

Committee Chair Ownjazayeri thanked Vice President Rider for her service to the University.

c. Governance Committee Report

- (i) Update – April 6, 2023, Committee Meeting

Committee Vice Chair Jay Placencia reported on activity at the April 6, 2023, Committee meeting. The committee charter and calendar were reviewed. She reported that Board members Sabitoni, Placencia, Fogarty, Lenz, and Cook were reappointed by the Governor and confirmed by the State Senate on March 28, 2023.

Responding to questions about the reappointment process, Chair Cook explained how the Governor's office is working through the appointment and reappointment process, a process

that applies to all boards and commissions in Rhode Island. Those selected for reappointment will be notified and must be physically present for the Senate Committee interviews. She thanked Christine Heenan and Susan Petrovas who have notified her that they have other commitments and will no longer serve.

President Parlange spoke about the University's appointment process for student trustee. Revaa Goyal has been selected to serve on the Board upon Hannah's graduation, and. President Parlange provided background information about Revaa.

Committee Vice Chair Placencia reminded all that the Board retreat will be held on June 29, 2023, and Committee liaison Abby Benson shared preliminary information about it. With the launch of URI's Strategic Plan, the retreat will focus on the larger trends in higher education and research. This year's speaker is Michael Ledford, president of Lewis-Burke Associates, our federal consultancy who URI recently engaged to help us connect more with Congress and other federal agencies. Mr. Ledford has two decades of experience in public policy. He will provide a high-level view from Washington, D.C. followed by a panel discussion led by the provost and deans, focusing on how the colleges are looking at the trends and moving their initiatives forward to meet the objectives of the Strategic Plan.

Chair Cook added that that Board will also conduct an annual self-assessment again to reassess how the Board is going and how things can be done differently. Committee Vice Chair Placencia reported that the self-assessment form will be sent to Board members after this meeting.

Committee Vice Chair Placencia added that the URI Board of Trustees Orientation Manual has been updated and serves as a helpful resource for the onboarding of new board members. The updated document can be found in the BoardEffect library.

Committee Chair Nicolato called attention to the 2022 Annual Report provided to Board members at this meeting. The report will be presented to the Governor and other key government officials.

d. Institutional Risk and Compliance Committee Report

(i) Update – April 18, 2023, Committee Meeting

Committee Chair Karina Montilla Edmonds reported on activity at the April 18, 2023, Committee meeting. There were no action items. She noted that certain proposed changes to the committee charter and calendar were reviewed.

Vice President Rider noted that the Committee reviewed progress made under new board procurement regulations. The streamlined process is working well. She stated that the Committee also reviewed the development of the University's Risk Register. She reported that successful cyber security improvements resulted in a reduction in URI's insurance premium.

e. Student Life and Athletics Committee Report

(i) Update – April 6, 2023, Committee Meeting

Committee Vice Chair Placencia reported on activity at the April 6, 2023, Committee meeting. She noted that certain proposed changes to the committee charter and calendar were reviewed. She called upon Vice President Reynolds and Athletics Director Bjorn to speak to their committee meeting reports.

Vice President Reynolds reviewed her student affairs report, which included a Housing and Residential Life Master Plan and Capital Improvement Plan Update, a Dining Services Capital Improvement Update, including renovations to Hope Dining Hall, and a URI Greek Life update. She noted that 500 additional beds in Brookside II are on target. URI is hoping to advance fire and safety protection improvements, adding generators to allow sheltering in place. She reported on Fraternity Circle Phase II project/improvements to lighting and recreational space. Vice President Reynolds added that URI is advancing the housing and residential life master study, a 15-year plan around our housing to make sure we are meeting today's needs and into the future for residential students.

Athletics Director Bjorn reviewed his report, which included Name, Image and Likeness in College Athletics/URI, an update on URI athletics facilities, including the Soloviev Practice Facility, Meade Stadium East Stands and the Outdoor Track. Board members were invited to tour the facilities following the meeting.

## **5. REPORT OF THE CHAIR**

a. Highlights URI Day – March 28, 2023

Chair Cook shared highlights from the successful URI Day on March 28, 2023, at the Rhode Island State House. Hundreds of URI supporters celebrated URI's role as Rhode Island's flagship public university at the State House on URI Day. URI programs were highlighted along with the impactful work of the students, faculty and staff, including hands-on research demonstrations. URI is moving the state forward in areas, such as the blue economy, health care, education and workforce development, and helping to improve the lives of all Rhode Islanders. State legislators heard directly from their student-constituents and learned about the return-on-investment URI provides to the state. URI Day bolstered ongoing efforts to increase awareness and support from the state.

Chair Cook recognized Governor McKee, Speaker Shekarchi, Senate President Ruggerio, Secretary of State Greg Amore, House Majority Leader Chris Blazewski, Majority Leader Chris Pearson, Senate Majority Leader Ryan Pearson, Minority Leader Jessica de La Cruz, Representative Carol Hagan McEntee, Representative Fogarty, Senator Sosnowski, Senator Pam Lauria and all other general assembly members for their support and attendance at URI Day.

b. Recognition of outgoing Board members

Chair Cook thanked Professor Bethany Jenkins for her service to the Board as faculty representative. She noted that while Bethany's role as board member has ended, we are pleased that her service to the Board continues as interim Vice President for Research and Economic Development.

Chair Cook also thanked Hannah Bachert for her service to the Board as student representative. On behalf of the Board, she congratulated Hannah on her upcoming graduation and wished her continued success in graduate school.

Concluding her report, Chair Cook recognized Jay Placencia for being named one of Providence Business News' honorees in the 2023 Providence Business News Business Women Awards in the financial services industry.

Chair Cook congratulated Armand Sabitoni on his retirement from the Laborer's International Union of North America.

**6. REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT** [Presentation](#)

- a. **Campus Update:** President Parlange's presentation included an update on administrative changes since the last Board meeting. He celebrated student scholarship awards and highlighted recent community events, including sporting events, URI Day, the first event in the James R. Langevin Symposium Series exploring critical cybersecurity issues, and the recent groundbreaking of the Matunuck Shellfish Hatchery and Research Center cultivating aquaculture innovation and economic growth in Rhode Island.

President Parlange spoke about the University budget and the consequences of year after year cuts in state funding to URI. He reminded the Board that over the last nineteen years, there has been a 37% drop in state appropriations. The University's rankings reflect the fundamental damage that has been done. President Parlange itemized the FY23 operational deficit of \$11.3M, noting additional expenses including increased utility costs and additional tuition needs for families. URI has responded to the deficit by freezing hiring and making changes to certain essential services – one-time, unsustainable actions that mask the real problem. He stated that URI must change how we budget as a university, how we plan as a university, and how we incentivize the actions that we take as a university.

President Parlange reviewed URI's FY24 operating budget request (\$32M) versus the Governor's recommended budget (\$7.9M). URI's budget request includes special significant initiatives that will benefit the State of Rhode Island. He reviewed URI's Capital Plan request and the Governor's recommended Capital Plan. The President discussed generating revenue using an incentive-based budget model and outlined next steps and action items.

**b. Strategic Plan KPI Dashboard Demonstration**

Focus URI Plan books were provided to the Board members.

Dr. John Stringer reviewed next steps for the Strategic Plan key performance indicators and demonstrated the website dashboard to be used for online reporting. The website is now live and can be found at the Institutional Research website and will be linked to the Strategic Plan website shortly. Chair Cook encouraged Dr. Stringer to report to the Board the University's progress on a yearly basis, or sooner if there are significant changes, with updated results presented to the Board as addendums on a quarterly basis.

President Parlange reported that each school and administrative unit is in the process of drafting their supporting plans to the Strategic Plan. We will make regular updates to the Board.

- c. Transfer Update:** Associate Vice President Dean Libutti reviewed the transfer process at URI and the current new transfer student enrollment. The Joint Admission Agreement (JAA) Summary was created (prior to the Promise Program) to help CCRI students transfer to URI with no loss of credits. Prior to the creation of the JAA, the Program-to-Program plan was utilized to assist with transfers in specific program areas. He noted that he and President Parlange have participated in national and statewide transfer meetings and initiatives and agree that more work needs to be done.

Associate Vice President Libutti noted that efforts are underway to include URI in the Hope Scholarship legislation for equity and access reasons. Board member Nicolato spoke about United Way's support of the Hope Scholarship and the need to expand it to include all state institutions. She stressed that access to education needs to be critical to Rhode Islanders.

President Parlange concluded his presentation with a reminder about upcoming events, including the May 5, 2023, ribbon cutting for the Narragansett Dawn pier at the Bay Campus and Commencement 2023 events.

**7. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

- a. Big Ideas. Bold Plans. The Campaign for the University of Rhode Island - Update
- Lil Breul O'Rourke, President, URI Foundation and Alumni Engagement
  - Jeff Cabral, Vice President for Development, URI Foundation and Alumni Engagement [Presentation](#)

President O'Rourke and Vice President Jeff Cabral made a presentation to the Board. They highlighted Foundation events, board participation, and faculty and staff campaign support. President O'Rourke noted that the Foundation is undertaking its Strategic Plan to be in alignment with URI's plan, which will guide the Foundation's work throughout the campaign and after. She highlighted an online grant writing course and a new advocacy program with in-state alumni. President O'Rourke spoke of the Foundation's commitment to get the funds in to help fulfill the



University's mission despite the challenges presented due to the economy, impending Supreme Court decisions on affirmative action, and the impact of Name, Image and Likeness on fundraising.

Chair Cook thanked both Christine Heenan and Susan Petrovas for their service to the Board.

b. URI Campus Safety [Presentation](#)

- Michael Jagoda, Director of Public Safety and Police Chief
- Sam Adams, Director of Emergency Management

Chair Cook noted the importance of everyone being aware of safety procedures that are in place at URI in case of an event on campus.

Police Chief Michael Jagoda introduced URI's director of emergency management to provide an armed aggressor preparedness briefing. The Chief stated that the goal of URI's comprehensive all hazards preparedness is protection of life. He noted an increase in active shooter incidents across the country.

Director Sam Adams presented a "URI Armed Aggressor Preparedness Briefing," reviewing URI's emergency management process ("mitigate, prepare, respond, recover"), national preparedness standards, key preparedness elements, training activities, support services and incident communications, URI's task-oriented preparedness approach, and areas of improvement.

c. URI Marketing Campaign [Presentation](#)

- Matthew McDonald, Vice President for Communications and Marketing

Vice President McDonald acknowledged the formation of the Foundation's Committee on Advancement and Communication Strategy. He will continue to share updates on the work of the committee.

Vice President McDonald provided a high-level overview of his Office of External Relations and Communications (the "Office"), what it entails and what they do, including communications and marketing. The Office advances the mission and global reputation of URI through powerful storytelling; strategic marketing; and timely delivery of information across owned, earned and paid channels. The Office handles news and editorial content, crisis communications, media relations, enterprise web and digital communications, marketing, social media, video and photography, graphic design, employee communications, consultation with the colleges and administrative units. Vice President McDonald stressed the importance of engagement and collaboration within his department, working together to tell the URI story.

Board members discussed a brand awareness and advocacy marketing campaign which will build awareness, align perception, instill pride and set the foundation for all other work at the University. We need voters to feel inspired by URI and to vote for future bond referendums. We have an obligation to tell people what we do and how we make life better. It is important to

highlight the value that we bring to the state and show how much more we can do if we are properly funded. Educating elected officials, alum and supporters will turn them into activists.

Chair Cook thanked Vice President McDonald for his presentation and noted that he is hitting all the right points. She encouraged him to consider expanding the URI written brand from an intra-RI visual to a national view.

## **8. ADJOURN**

Chair Cook called for a motion that the URI Board of Trustees adjourn the meeting.

On a motion duly made by Armand Sabitoni and seconded by Cortney Nicolato, it was

VOTED:        THAT        The URI Board of Trustees adjourn the meeting.

VOTE:        8 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members  
voted in the negative.

YEAS:        Margo Cook, Neil Kerwin, Michael McNally, Karina Montilla  
Edmonds, Cortney Nicolato, Vahid Ownjazayeri, Jay Placencia,  
Armand Sabitoni.

NAYS:        0

ABSTAINS: 0

Michael Fascitelli, Christine Heenan, Roby Luna and Susan Petrovas left the meeting prior to the vote.

At 2:58 p.m., this meeting ended.

The next URI Board of Trustees Meeting is scheduled for June 29, 2023.