

Minutes of the May 3, 2019 Meeting of the CELS Advisory Council

Call to Order: A meeting of the College of the Environment and Life Sciences Advisory Council was held at 10:00am at the CBL 435 conference room. Those in attendance were: Jonathan Feinstein, VHB Inc.; Bruce Zetter; Patrick McGuire; Kenneth Abrams, Fran Ingersoll; Dr. Kevin Killeen, Matrivax; Corey Briggs, Colden Corp.; William Bigelow, Blount Fine Foods; Norman Tashash, Genzyme, ret.; Fraser Lang, Metcalf Institute; Claire Gadrow, URI Foundation; Elizabeth O'Roarke, URI Foundation; Skip Wilson, URI Foundation; Dr. Anne Veeger, URI CELS; Dr. Carol Thornber, URI CELS; Dr. Deborah Sheely, URI CELS; Dr. Hollie Putnam, URI CELS-BIO; Dr. Michael Rice, URI CELS Faculty Secretary; Dr. David Dooley, URI President; Dr. John Kirby, URI CELS Dean presided.

URI Presentations and Discussion:

Dean Kirby

Dean Kirby outlined the elements of the CELS Draft Strategic Plan. The procedure on how the draft plan was developed using the CELS Faculty & Staff Committee Process, review and compilation by the CELS Associate Deans and the CELS Faculty Secretary. Better engagement of students in research and internships was an emphasis as well as a renewed commitment to CELS international programming. The CELS Strategic plan is designed to intertwine with the overall URI Strategic Plan. Review and input from the members of the Advisory Council was solicited. The CELS Strategic Plan is expected to be finalized soon and posted on the CELS Governance web pages.

President Dooley

President Dooley arrived 10:10am. After a brief round of introductions, he thanked the Advisory Council for their time and effort devoted to helping to assure that CELS programs, curriculum, staff development are developed to be contemporary and relevant to the needs of the state, as well as current and future business directions. He outlined the improvements at URI over the last 8 years including buildings and investment in new faculty with over 50% of the existing faculty hired during this time. URI is bucking the national trend by hiring more tenure-track faculty as opposed to part-time or contingent faculty. After his presentation, Pres. Dooley entertained questions from Council members. There was a question about other universities as models for URI to follow. He responded that we will look at peer institutions, but our main strategy is to use the state's small size to our advantage to bring people together to explore new ways to approach & solve problems; using the university as an 'idea incubator.' This has worked for a number of initiatives such as the revamping of the URI General Education system. It was novel & now being emulated by many across the country. Another question aimed at identifying barriers to future progress (both internal & external) and the relationship of URI to the state. President Dooley reiterated the core mission elements of URI are originally found in the 1862 Morrill Land Grant Act, and in RI statute as being the university of 'common Rhode Islanders' or 'the industrial classes' in the original 19th Century statutes. URI never wishes to become too removed from its important public mission. Another question went to college affordability. President Dooley stated that much of the Foundation's fundraising is geared toward funding of greater numbers and larger mean-tested merit scholarships for students.

URI Foundation Capital Campaign Presentation and Discussion:

Skip Wilson & Claire Gadrow

Skip and Claire outlined the aims and goals of the current URI Foundation Capital Campaign. The goal of the campaign is to raise \$250 million and to establish "a culture of philanthropy" here at URI. The campaign is in its leadership phase and to date \$74.72 million has been pledged or raised. Campaign priorities for URI are: Student access financially to URI; Transformative Faculty Leadership and Fostering Innovative Programs; Improving the URI Learning Experience; Resources to Respond to Strategic Opportunities. Key CELS priorities are funds for experiential learning activities and building the Metcalf Institute endowment. Secondary CELS priorities are: A faculty Chair in Infectious Diseases; A Faculty Chair in Water Quality; Supporting the Program in Coral Reef Ecology; Support for Estuarine and Coastal Research and Education.

Discussion of CELS Advisory Council Constitution and the Role of the Council:

Dean Kirby

Within the framework of the CELS Bylaws Chapter 13 'Advisory Committees' the CELS Advisory Council is considering a formal Constitution. Advisory Council members were asked to read through the draft Constitution and provide feedback.

Faculty Presentation:

Dr. Hollie Putnam, an assistant professor in Biological Sciences Department gave a presentation on coral bleaching and other effects of ocean acidification on marine organisms and the potential for using epigenetic variation in holobionts (symbiotic organisms inside corals critical for coral health and survival) as a mechanism for adapting to environmental stressors.

Adjournment: *The meeting was adjourned at 12:00pm.*

Respectfully Submitted:
Michael A. Rice, Faculty Secretary