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*Faculty Representative*

Christopher Bove '23  
*Student Representative*

**The University of Rhode Island  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
Thursday, January 14, 2021 • 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. EST**

**PURSUANT TO GOVERNOR RAIMONDO'S EXECUTIVE  
ORDER, THIS MEETING WAS HELD VIRTUALLY USING THE  
WEBEX PLATFORM (BOARD MEMBERS ONLY) AND  
FACEBOOK LIVE (PUBLIC VIEWING)**

**MINUTES**

Chair Cook welcomed the members of the University of Rhode Island (URI) Board of Trustees to the Plenary Session at 3:32 p.m. and asked Attorney Harrington to take a roll call attendance. There were no action items for this meeting, and therefore, a quorum was not necessary.

Attendees present for this virtual meeting:

The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees voting members:

- Ms. Margo Cook, Chair
- Dr. Karina Montilla Edmonds
- Mr. Michael Fascitelli
- Honorable Charles J. Fogarty
- Ms. Christine Heenan
- Mr. Matthew Lenz
- Mr. Roby Luna
- Mr. Michael F. McNally, Vice Chair
- Ms. Cortney Nicolato
- Mr. Vahid Ownjazayeri
- Ms. Jay Placencia

The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees ex officio members:

- Mr. Christopher Bove, Student Representative
- Ms. Barbara Cottam-Chair, Board of Education
- Dr. David M. Dooley, President
- Dr. Mayrai Gindy-Faculty Representative

The University of Rhode Island Staff

- Ms. Anne Marie Coleman, Assistant Vice President for Human Resources
- Ms. Michelle Curreri, Chief of Staff and Secretary to the URI Board of Trustees
- Dr. Donald DeHayes, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Mr. Peter Harrington, Interim Legal Counsel
- Ms. Lauren Jensen, Assistant Legal Counsel
- Dr. Elizabeth Mendenhall, Assistant Professor of Marine Affairs
- Dr. Marcus Nevius, Assistant Professor of History
- Dr. Brennan Phillips, Assistant Professor of Ocean Engineering
- Dr. Katharina Quinlan, Assistant Professor, College of Pharmacy
- Ms. Shawn Simmons, Executive Assistant II, Office of the Provost
- Dr. Peter Snyder, Vice President for Research and Economic Development
- Dr. Meng (Matt) Wei, Assistant Professor of Oceanography

**1. Discussion Item**

**a. Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work at URI: Building Careers and Major Initiatives**

Chair Cook began the discussion by emphasizing the importance of the Plenary Session as a way to educate the Board members in regard to the research, scholarship, creative work, and career building taking place at URI. The discussion was turned over to Dr. Donald DeHayes, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dr. Peter Snyder, Vice President for Research and Economic Development.

Provost DeHayes provided background information on URI as the state's flagship public research institution where most of the faculty are not only teaching undergraduate and graduate students, but also actively engaged in various aspects of research, scholarship, and creative work. As a Land and Sea Grant institution, URI's research often focuses on advancing workforce development, economic opportunity, and the quality of life of the citizens of Rhode Island.

Dr. Snyder thanked the Board for the opportunity to discuss URI's research mission and provided a presentation entitled "[Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work at URI: Building Careers and Major Initiatives at URI.](#)" Dr. Snyder highlighted the University's mission to nurture and sustain research. He provided data in terms of funded research received through the Division of Research and Economic Development--\$117M this year (an all-time high), and the overall economic impact on the state in terms of jobs created and dollars spent by the University to support its research.

This informative meeting highlighted five professors who shared their research and expertise with URI Board members.

- Dr. Brennan Phillips, Assistant Professor in Ocean Engineering, highlighted the work that he and his students have performed in the [Undersea Robotics and Imaging Lab](#), which included various methods of 3D printing and a currently-funded project with Schmidt Ocean Institute. Dr. Phillips work was recently highlighted in the Fall 2020 issue of *Momentum: Research & Innovation*.

- Dr. Marcus Nevius, Assistant Professor of History, whose research interests include the history of slave resistance, slavery-based economies, and abolition during the age of revolutions, shared an outline of his recently-published book entitled, [“City of Refuge”: Dismal Plantation in the Revolutionary War Era](#). The book defines the way in which scholars dealt with the actions of enslaved people who hid in swamps and mountain valleys in an effort to remain as free as possible while still legally enslaved. Dr. Nevius was also featured in the *Momentum: Research & Innovation* Spring 2020 issue.
- Dr. Katharina Quinlan, Assistant Professor in the College of Pharmacy, shared an overview of her research interests which include spinal cord nerve degeneration, neural injury, and the development of biomarkers and treatment for neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer’s Parkinson’s, and ALS. Dr. Quinlan provided a presentation entitled, [What are your neurons saying about their health?](#) which highlighted the types of research taking place in the Quinlan Lab. Dr. Quinlan expressed gratitude for the more than \$2M in external funding that has been received in addition to her lab team which consists of a majority of women and underrepresented people in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).
- Dr. Matt Wei, Associate Professor of Oceanography, highlighted research being performed by him and four Ph.D. students. His interest is focused on earthquake physics and nuclear monitoring as shown in his [presentation](#).

Before introducing the final presenter in the Plenary Session, Dr. Snyder provided information regarding current initiatives for the human contamination of air and water due to micro and nano plastics. He shared that the University has partnered with the Ocean Agency, a philanthropic foundation that raises money for ocean science. The partnership has allowed the future unveiling of a position paper focusing on areas ranging from dealing with microfibers from textiles, the tools to measure and image plastics, the behavior of plastics, the impact on our health and food web, and solutions to combat this problem.

- Dr. Elizabeth Mendenhall, Assistant Professor in Marine Affairs and Political Science, shared a presentation entitled, [Global Ocean Governance](#). Dr. Mendenhall and her colleagues focus on marine and coastal issues while researching the treaties, institutions, and organizations that determine who can do what and where in the ocean.

Board member Fascitelli inquired as to how research is prioritized and how funding decisions are made. Due to time constraints, Dr. Snyder was not able to answer the question, but suggested it be discussed at a later date.

Several board members applauded and commended the work of the faculty, and Chair Cook reiterated that the purpose of the Plenary Sessions is to understand more about URI.

Chair Cook called for a motion that the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees adjourn the Plenary Session of January 14, 2021.

URI Board of Trustees Plenary Session  
January 14, 2021

On a motion duly made by Cortney Nicolato and seconded by Vice Chair McNally, it was

VOTED: THAT: The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees adjourn the meeting of January 14, 2021.

VOTE: 11 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Margo Cook, Karina Montilla Edmonds, Michael Fascitelli, Charles Fogarty, Christine Heenan, Matthew Lenz, Roby Luna, Michael McNally, Cortney Nicolato, Vahid Ownjazayeri, Jay Placencia

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

The URI Board of Trustees Plenary Session of January 14, 2021 adjourned at 5:02 p.m.

**The next meeting of the URI Board of Trustees is scheduled for April 22, 2021.**