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Mayrai Gindy  
*Faculty Representative*

Christopher Bove '23  
*Student Representative*

**The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees  
University Advancement and External Affairs Committee Meeting  
Thursday, January 14, 2021 - 9:45 a.m.**

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

**MINUTES**

Committee Chair Christine Heenan acknowledged that a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 9:47 a.m.

**The URI Board of Trustees University Advancement and External Affairs  
Committee voting members in attendance:**

- Ms. Christine M. Heenan, Chair
- Mr. Armand E. Sabitoni, Vice Chair
- Dr. Karina Montilla Edmonds
- Ms. Cortney Nicolato

**Other URI Board of Trustees voting members in attendance:**

- Ms. Margo Cook, Chair, Board of Trustees

**The URI Board of Trustees ex officio committee members in attendance:**

- Ms. Barbara Cottam, Chair, Board of Education
- Dr. Mayrai Gindy, Faculty Representative

**The University of Rhode Island Senior Leadership in attendance:**

- Dr. David M. Dooley, President
- Ms. Kelly K. Mahoney, Executive Director for External Relations and Communications
- Ms. Lil Breul O'Rourke, President, URI Foundation & Alumni Engagement (URIFAE)

**The URI staff members in attendance:**

- Ms. Linda Acciaro, Director, Communications and Marketing
- Ms. Heather Colby, Assistant Director, Brand Marketing and Advertising, Communications and Marketing
- Ms. Kathy DiPietro, Executive Assistant, URI Foundation & Alumni Engagement (URIFAE)
- Ms. Lauren Jensen, Assistant Legal Counsel
- Ms. Lynn Owens, Associate Secretary
- Mr. Phillip Teixeira, Lead Information Technologist, Office of the Provost
- Ms. Cheryl Trudel, Executive Assistant, External Relations and Communications

**Invited guests in attendance:**

- Ms. Diane Chace Fannon '74, Board of Directors, Executive Committee, Vice Chair/Marketing and Communications Chair, URIFAE
- Mr. Alfred J. Verrecchia '67, M.B.A. '72, Hon. '04, Board of Directors, Executive Committee Chair, URI Foundation & Alumni Engagement

**1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA**

Chair Heenan called for a motion to accept the agenda for the January 14, 2021 meeting.

On a motion duly made by Vice Chair Sabitoni and seconded by Karina Montilla Edwards, it was

VOTED: THAT The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees University Advancement and External Affairs Committee accept the January 14, 2021 meeting agenda.

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

YEAS: Christine Heenan, Karina Montilla Edmonds, Cortney Nicolato, and Armand Sabitoni.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

**2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

**Minutes of the December 16, 2020 Meeting**

Chair Heenan called for a motion to approve the minutes for the December 16, 2020 meeting.

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

VOTED:	THAT	The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees University Advancement and External Affairs Committee approve the minutes of the December 16, 2020 meeting.
	VOTE:	4 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.
	YEAS:	Christine Heenan, Karina Montilla Edmonds, Cortney Nicolato, and Armand Sabitoni
	NAYS:	0
	ABSTAINS:	0

### 3. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Chair Heenan welcomed the Committee members and guests and commenced with the first discussion item inviting Lil Breul O'Rourke, President, URI Foundation & Alumni Engagement (URIFAE) to start the discussions.

#### a. Update on Big Ideas. Bold Plans. The Campaign for the University of Rhode Island

URI Foundation & Alumni Engagement (URIFAE) President, Lil Breul O'Rourke gave an update of the 2021 fiscal calendar year success rate for the University's \$250M capital campaign. President Breul O'Rourke notified the Committee that the Campaign has reached \$ 192.7M to date towards its goal. During the presentation entitled, URI Foundation & Alumni Engagement. President Breul O'Rourke pointed out that currently there are over 11,000 new donors and many more multi-year donors. Much of the focus of giving is shifting to immediate need and is being used to support students' financial aid needs that may arise during the pandemic.

President Breul O'Rourke concluded her presentation, noting various projects including the rebranding of the Annual Fund (to "Rhody Now"); the launch of the Career Connect program--now at over 1,000 advisors and over 1,300 advisees to serve the Class of 2020 and the Class of 2021.

Chair Heenan stated that there is an earned media opportunity for the Board of Trustees to choose a day or week where members could give some time to students who may be interested in learning about the careers and various roles of the Board of Trustees and bring attention to the Career Connect program.

#### b. Marketing and Communications Update

Chair Heenan introduced Director of Communications and Marketing, Linda Acciaro, and Assistant Director of Brand Marketing and Advertising, Heather Colby to provide an update on the University communications and marketing plan, entitled, [Marketing and Communications Overview, January 14, 2021](#).

Ms. Acciaro gave a brief description of the various communication and marketing activities that are currently in place for the upcoming calendar year. Efforts include strategies, such as: a higher education

bond referendum; ongoing recruitment campaign supported by a multi-week advertising campaign in key markets; recruitment advertising via the University Magazine to stakeholders and alumni; E-blasts; digital newsletters; a public health campaign; digital US News and World Report piece that will target academic leaders to influence rankings; the Eric O'Neill Lecture Series; the Christiane Amanpour Lecture Series; online TEDx; the 5th Annual Rhode Island Food Summit; a campus-culture initiative; the Honors Colloquium; as well as a focus on the success and achievements of URI's faculty, with the development of stories and themes that convey the University's big thinking and quality of research delivered using direct communications and/or media relations, social media, web in recruitment advertising.

Heather Colby, Assistant Director of Brand Marketing and Advertising, provided a review of the 2020 Recruitment Campaign process; the strategy and the execution of the University's undergraduate marketing and advertising campaign; trend markets; the creative tactical breakdown in media flow; and snapshots of each tactic with the objective of the campaign to create interests and have students apply with the intent to enroll. TV strategy includes high price profile programs such as NBC's Good Morning America; local cable coverage on HGTV; ESPN; the Food Network, while also reaching cord cutters with live TV components, within each of those apps.

Ms. Colby reviewed the search strategy and click-through rates for the various programs of engagement (for locations such as: New York, New Jersey, Boston, Philadelphia, Hartford, New Haven) as well as the 2020 recruitment campaign digital video strategy. Chair Heenan asked if the digital ads end with a click through to the University's homepage or admissions homepage. Ms. Colby stated that the University has a specific landing page that goes along with the campaign, and users are directed to the specific area of interest; from there, users are directed to connect with an admissions advisor. Chair Heenan thanked Ms. Acciaro and Ms. Colby and asked Kelly Mahoney, Executive Director for External Relations and Communications to provide the next two updates.

**c. Government Relations Agenda for 2021**

Ms. Mahoney thanked Chair Heenan and stated that the first update relates to the government relations strategy for the University for this current year, and the second topic relates to the special election that is taking place in Rhode Island on March 2. There will also be a number of major transitions that have or will soon take place. Ms. Mahoney also provided an update on the topics that are under consideration for this year's General Assembly session.

Ms. Mahoney reported that there was a recent election of Representative Joseph Shekarchi to serve as Speaker of the Rhode Island House of Representatives as well as Majority Leader Chris Blazewski, and many other leadership positions within the House of Representatives. Additionally, Governor Gina Raimondo will likely become the U.S. Secretary of Commerce pending her confirmation hearings in Congress. This will lead to the swearing in of Lt. Governor Daniel McKee as Governor to serve the remaining term of Governor Raimondo. Chair Heenan expressed that with all of the changes, also comes an opportunity for the University to reintroduce itself, and while Rhode Island will have a new governor, with Governor Gina Raimondo heading to Washington, D.C., that will portend for the connections between business and higher education. Chair Heenan also stated her congratulations to Governor Raimondo on her nomination as the United States Secretary of Commerce.

Concluding her comments on government relations, Ms. Mahoney thanked everyone for their compliments, saying that in any transition of government there are many public servants that provide

continuity with their institutional knowledge and behind the scenes (in all areas of government branches) who are critically important, and the University is fortunate to have such people to partner with.

**d. Higher-Ed Bond Advocacy Campaign Overview**

Ms. Mahoney provided an update on the Rhode Island higher education bond initiative and outlined the strategy for marketing and communications to heighten awareness of the campaign aimed at voters for their strong support and to ensure and approve, “Question 1” of the higher education facilities bond (with \$57.3 million for URI’s Fine Arts Center), as part of the upcoming special election that will take place on March 2, 2021.

URI Board of Trustees Chair, Margo Cook, expressed her desire to have Ms. Mahoney attend the Board of Trustees meeting during the Committee Summary to spend a couple of minutes discussing the upcoming bond issue. Chair Heenan concurred and also said that while Ms. Mahoney does typically staff the Governance Committee to provide updates, that she would like for her to present on the changes in government as well as the bond issue and to anticipate questions and prepare accordingly.

**4. ADJOURN**

Chair Heenan called for a motion to adjourn the January 14, 2021 meeting.

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

VOTED THAT The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees University Advancement and External Affairs Committee adjourn the meeting of January 14, 2021.

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

YEAS: Christine Heenan, Karina Montilla Edmonds, Cortney Nicolato, and Armand Sabitoni.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

**UPCOMING MEETING**

**The next URI Board of Trustees University Advancement and External Affairs Committee Meeting is scheduled for April 22, 2021.**