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Student Representative

**The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees
Academic Affairs and Research Committee Meeting
Thursday, September 23, 2021 • 1:30 p.m., Lecture Hall 308
Rhode Island Nursing Education Center
350 Eddy Street, Providence, RI 02903**

MINUTES

A formal roll call was taken verifying that a quorum of members was present in person, and Chair Kerwin called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

The URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs and Research Committee members in attendance:

- Mr. Neil Kerwin, Committee Chair
- Dr. Karina Montilla Edmonds, Committee Vice Chair (remote)
- Honorable Charles J. Fogarty
- Mr. Matthew D. Lenz
- Ms. Susan Petrovas (remote)
- Dr. Mayrai Gindy, Faculty Representative (ex officio, non-voting)
- Mr. Michael McNally, Vice Chair, Board of Trustees, (ex-officio, voting)
- Dr. Marc L. Parlange, President (ex officio, non-voting)

Absent: Mr. Richard Humphrey

The URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs and Research Committee member not in attendance:

- Ms. Margo Cook (ex officio)

The University of Rhode Island Senior Leadership in attendance:

- Ms. Alyssa Boss, General Counsel
- Ms. Michelle Curreri, Chief of Staff and Board Secretary
- Dr. Donald DeHayes, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Dr. Laura L. Beauvais, Incoming Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Dr. Peter Snyder, Vice President, Research and Economic Development

The University of Rhode Island staff members in attendance:

- Ms. Robin Cawley, Executive Assistant II
- Ms. Shawn Simmons, Executive Assistant II (remote)
- Dr. Anne Veeger, Vice Provost
- Ms. Ellen Reynolds, M.S., Assistant Vice President for Student Health and Wellness and Director of Health Services
- Dr. Gifty Ako-Adounvo, Vice Provost (remote)
- Dr. Dean Libutti, Vice Provost

1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

Chair Neil Kerwin called for a motion that the URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs and Research Committee accept the agenda for the meeting of September 23, 2021.

On a motion duly made by Charles Fogarty and seconded by Matt Lenz, it was

VOTED: THAT The URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs and Research Committee accept the Agenda for the meeting of September 23, 2021

VOTE: 6 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Karina Montilla Edmonds, Charles Fogarty, Neil Kerwin, Susan Petrovas, Michael McNally, and Matthew Lenz

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

a. Minutes of the June 24, 2021 Meeting [Enclosure 2a](#)

Chair Kerwin called for a motion that the URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs and Research Committee approve the minutes for the meeting held June 24, 2021.

On a motion duly made by Matt Lenz and seconded by Karina Edmonds, it was:

VOTED: THAT The URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs and Research Committee approve the minutes for the meeting held June 24, 2021.

VOTE: 6 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Karina Montilla Edmonds, Charles Fogarty, Neil Kerwin, Susan Petrovas, Michael McNally, and Matthew Lenz

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

3. REPORT OF THE CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER

Provost Don DeHayes presented his report, which will be his last before retirement. He first discussed the ongoing effort to re-open the campus for in-person teaching, learning and activities. The COVID-19 prevention efforts will include easy access to testing and an indoor masking mandate for faculty, staff and students. He then presented a brief enrollment update, saying that URI is poised to have a solid year enrollment-wise, despite many challenges (COVID, demographics) and that in response to COVID-related recruitment challenges, our community pivoted to recruit students. We received 25,105 undergrad applications (+1,000, highest ever) and a 12% growth in graduate applications.

He mentioned URI's response to the crisis in Afghanistan – we will participate in the IIE-SRF Alliance, assisting displaced Afghan students and scholars. He also said that URI welcomed 127 new international students (126% increase over Fall 2020 pandemic year and on par with Fall 2019 pre-pandemic numbers.)

With regard to diversity and inclusion investments, he said that URI will launch a cohort model for three Distinguished Multicultural Postdoctoral Fellows and provide four new Diversity Coordinators in the colleges (A&S, Health Sciences, GSO, & UCAS) as well as other efforts.

He announced that in addition to 45 new faculty members, he is pleased to announce the following new deans: Brenton DeBoef, Ph.D., – Dean of the Graduate School; Anthony Marchese, PhD, Dean of the College of Engineering and Vincent and Estelle Murphy Professor of Engineering; and Danielle Dennis, Ph.D., Interim Dean of the

Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies. Since Provost DeHayes is retiring, he announced that Dr. Laura Beauvais will take over as interim provost on October 1, 2021.

Regarding upcoming issues to be handled by Academic Affairs, he listed the NECHE Interim 5-year Report, and that the URI Mission statement will be revisited, along with the University Strategic Plan. (Complete details are shown in [Enclosure 3a.](#))

In the interest of time, Chair Kerwin proceeded to Item No. 5 Action Items before beginning the discussion on Covid-19 and the FY 21 Research Report.

4. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. COVID-19 Update

Vice Provost Anne Veeger and Ellen Reynolds, Assistant Vice President for Student Health and Wellness and Director of Health Services, presented an update on URI's preparations for a return to face-to-face classes during the fall semester and COVID-19's continuing impact on URI. Her points of discussion included the fact that URI continues to perform routine surveillance testing on the Kingston campus 5 days a week and will be adding 2 days per week to the Feinstein Providence campus starting next week to allow URI to monitor the transmission within its community. Testing data continues to help Health Services make informed decisions based on the trends noted, very similar to what the University did last year. Consistent with CDC recommendations, URI required unvaccinated students with an approved exemption to obtain a point of origin test within 3 days of arrival to campus, and currently require them to provide proof of testing twice per week. Additionally, URI continues to strongly encourage all vaccinated members of the community who are coming to campus to participate in regular testing. URI has a 94% vaccination rate for students (full and partially vaccinated) and continues to record a less than 1% positivity rate. (Complete details are shown in [Enclosure 4a.](#))

b. FY21 Research Report

Dr. Peter Snyder presented the FY21 Research Report. His points of discussion included URI's core facilities including the Biomedical INBRE Core, Diving Research and Safety Program, Engineering Analytical Facility, Marine Science Research Facility, RI Consortium for Nanoscience and Nanotechnology, which are all organized core research equipment facilities under a common URI framework. He discussed current priorities, including a new electronic research administration system, long-term planning for animal care facilities infrastructure, and reimaging the role, mission, and branding of the URI Research Foundation.

Another high-priority project will be the launch of a university-wide signature research program, “Plastics: Land to Sea” among others. (Complete details are shown in [Enclosure 4b](#))

Due to time constraints, Chair Kerwin asked that Dr. Snyder come back to the next committee meeting with the Research Foundation presentation.

c. Academic Strategic Planning Process

Incoming Interim Provost Dr. Laura Beauvais gave a brief statement regarding her appreciation of Provost DeHayes and her hope for good relationships and results during her time as Interim Provost. She stated that the update of the Strategic Plan will be high on her list of projects. (The existing plan can be seen in [Enclosure 4c](#).) Chair Kerwin noted the critical importance of process and buy-in. Provost Beauvais noted that there would be one, combined strategic plan and it would probably be ready by the end of spring.

5. ACTION ITEMS

- a. Chair Kerwin called for Action on Item 5a: Review of the awarding of degrees, diplomas, certificates, and honors for students who have completed all applicable academic requirements at the conclusion of the Summer 2021 semester and recommendation to the Board of Trustees [Enclosure 5a](#).

Therefore, on a motion duly made by Matt Lenz and seconded by Karina Edmonds, it was:

VOTED:	THAT	The URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs and Research Committee recommend that the Board of Trustees approve the awarding of degrees, diplomas, certificates, and honors to be conferred by the President to the candidates who have completed their requirements at the conclusion of the Summer 2021 term and who have been approved by the faculty of the University of Rhode Island.
	VOTE:	6 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative
	YEAS:	Karina Montilla Edmonds, Charles Fogarty, Neil Kerwin, Susan Petrovas, Michael McNally and Matthew Lenz

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

- b. Chair Kerwin called for Action on Item 5b: Review of the awarding of tenure for three University of Rhode Island faculty members – Dr. Ellen McGough, Dr. Anthony Marchese, and Dr. David Townson as set forth in the enclosures, [Enclosure 5.b.i.](#), [Enclosure 5.b.ii.](#), [Enclosure 5.b.iii.](#)

Therefore, on a motion duly made by Charles Fogarty and seconded by Matt Lenz, it was:

VOTED: THAT The URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs and Research Committee recommend that the Board of Trustees approve the awarding of tenure for the three University of Rhode Island faculty members as set forth in the enclosures above, and as recommended and presented.

VOTE: 6 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative

YEAS: Karina Montilla Edmonds, Charles Fogarty, Neil Kerwin, Susan Petrovas, Michael McNally and Matthew Lenz

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

6. ADJOURN

Chair Kerwin thanked the Committee and called for a motion to adjourn the meeting of September 23, 2021.

On a motion duly made by Charles Fogarty and seconded by Matthew Lenz, it was

VOTED: THAT The URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs and Research Committee adjourn the meeting of September 23, 2021.

VOTE: 6 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

URI Board of Trustees
Academic Affairs and Research Committee meeting
September 23, 2021

YEAS: Karina Montilla Edmonds, Charles Fogarty,
Neil Kerwin, Michael McNally, Matthew
Lenz and Susan Petrovas

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

The meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

The next URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs and Research Committee meeting
is scheduled for November 4, 2021.