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**The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees  
Student Life and Athletics Committee Meeting  
Thursday, January 20, 2022 · 3:15 p.m.**

**The University of Rhode Island  
Higgins Welcome Center, Hope Room  
45 Upper College Road, Kingston, RI 02881**

**OFFICIAL MINUTES**

The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees Student Life and Athletics Committee held a hybrid meeting in accordance with Governor McKee's Executive Order 22-01. Public access to the meeting was available via the YouTube video platform.

Committee Chair Thomas Ryan conducted a formal roll call and confirmed that a quorum of members was present. The meeting was called to order at 3:24 p.m.

The URI Board of Trustees Student Life and Athletics Committee members participating:

- Mr. Thomas Ryan, Committee Chair (in person)
- Mr. Christopher Bove, Student Representative (ex officio, non-voting) (in person)
- Ms. Margo Cook, Board of Trustees Chair (ex officio, voting) (in person)
- Mr. Michael Fascitelli (remote)
- Mr. Roby Luna (remote)
- Mr. Michael McNally, Board of Trustees Vice Chair (ex officio, voting) (in person)
- Dr. Marc B. Parlange, President (ex officio, non-voting) (in person)
- Ms. Jay Placencia (in person)

The URI Board of Trustees Student Life and Athletics Committee member not present:

- Mr. David Martirano, Committee Vice Chair

URI President’s Leadership Council in attendance:

- Mr. Thorr Bjorn, Athletics Director (in person)
- Ms. Alyssa Boss, General Counsel (in person)
- Dr. Kathy Collins, Vice President for Student Affairs (in person)
- Ms. Elizabeth Breul O’Rourke, President, URI Foundation and Alumni Engagement (in person)
- Ms. Abigail Rider, Vice President of Administration and Finance (in person)

URI Staff members in attendance:

- Ms. Abby Benson, Senior Advisor to the President (in person)
- Ms. Robin Cawley, Executive Assistant II (in person)
- Ms. Michelle Curreri, Secretary to the Board of Trustees (in person)
- Ms. Lauren Jensen, Associate General Counsel (in person)
- Ms. Carol Pegg, M.Ed., Executive Assistant II (remote)
- Dr. Michael Rice, URI Faculty Senate Vice President (in person)

## 1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

Committee Chair Ryan called for a motion that the URI Board of Trustees Student Life and Athletics Committee accept the agenda for the meeting of January 20, 2022.

On a motion duly made by Jay Placencia and seconded by Roby Luna, it was

VOTED:	THAT	The URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs and Student Life Committee accept the Agenda for the meeting of January 20, 2022.
	VOTE:	6 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.
	YEAS:	Margo Cook, Michael Fascitelli, Roby Luna, Michael McNally, Jay Placencia, and Thomas Ryan
	NAYS:	0
	ABSTAINS:	0

## 2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Committee Chair Ryan called for a motion that the URI Board of Trustees Student Life and Athletics Committee approve the Minutes of the September 23, 2021 meeting of the Committee.

On a motion duly made by Mike McNally and seconded by Jay Placienca, it was

VOTED:	THAT	The URI Board of Trustees Student Life and Athletics Committee approve the Minutes for the meeting of September 23, 2021.
	VOTE:	6 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.
	YEAS:	Margo Cook, Michael Fascitelli, Roby Luna, Michael McNally, Jay Placencia, and Thomas Ryan
	NAYS:	0
	ABSTAINS:	0

### 3. DISCUSSION ITEMS

#### a. Student Success at URI [Enclosure for items 3.a., 3.b.](#)

Dr. Kathy Collins provided an overview of the Division of Student Affairs stating that it is a comprehensive division consisting of 24 different units, is one of the largest employers at the University, and has auxiliary (dining, housing, health services, campus bookstore, and the Memorial Union) units which are self-supporting and receive no funding from tuition or State dollars.

Dr. Collins provided further detail on the URI dining and catering operations highlighting the magnitude, size, and scope of the services that the team provides. She provided a timeline that illustrated the evolution of the department into a more expansive and modernized function. In fall 2021, dining services provided an average of 12,500 meals per day. By using technology (mobile apps, etc.) and satellite locations, there are various options provided for the students, staff, and faculty.

Dr. Collins reported that 72% of dining's revenue comes from meal plan sales, 24% from catering, and 3% from RAM account (partnerships with outside vendors that students can use their RAM card to pay for goods and services). Dining Services plays a large role in recruitment and persistence at URI.

Prospective students are becoming much more interested in what food will be served to them, how it is sourced, etc. and request to tour the dining halls to make sure it meets their expectations. Dining services also plays a vital role in helping students with food insecurity with their "Share a Swipe for Hope" program and by funding a full-time professional that addresses food insecurity.

**- COVID update**

Dr. Collins also provided COVID updates for faculty, staff, and students. It is required that all eligible faculty, staff, and students provide proof of vaccination and booster. Universal indoor masking is required regardless of vaccination status, testing is available, and isolation/quarantine spaces are available for students should they test positive.

**b. Update on Mental Health Services at URI**

Dr. Collins noted that with the ongoing pandemic it has led to increased mental health issues. She also stated that there has been a 30% increase in counseling demands. Dr. Collins shared that the counseling center has added new enhancements to their treatment for students. URI is working collaboratively to approach this by providing wellness classes, mental health first aid, after hours services and more.

Dr. Collins added that Student Affairs is moving forward with a new integrated health and counseling center that will further emphasize the Division's approach to mental health.

Dr. Collins will share an in-depth report on Mental Health at the April meeting.

**c. Athletic Director Report: Addition of Women's Lacrosse [Enclosure for items 3.c. 3.b.](#)**

Athletic Director Thorr Bjorn presented his report noting that the addition of Women's Lacrosse was derived from a gender equity perspective. The team will be added over time to build coaching, additional staff, and begin recruitment. Adding Women's Lacrosse will help URI Athletics meet NCAA equity standards while adding more opportunities for women to play Division 1 (D1) athletics rather than taking away male opportunities to meet Title IX.

Chair Margo Cook asked how this helps in terms of URI's demographics and giving URI a benefit beyond gender diversity because there are only certain regions of the US where lacrosse is popular. Athletic Director Bjorn stated that the pressure will be on the coaches' recruiting to find the first group. Many factors will play a role in attracting students--facilities, majors offered at URI, etc.

**d. Update on the Soloviev Family Basketball Facility**

Athletic Director Bjorn provided an update on the Soloviev Family Practice Facility noting that out of a project cost of \$7.9 million, there has been \$7.3 million in pledges that have been received and of that, \$6.2 million cash has been received--the project is on target. He further noted that this is the largest fundraising initiative that athletics has taken on solo.

**e. Fall Team Report Cards**

Athletic Director Bjorn reported that athletics had a good fall season; Football had the most wins in 20 years, Women's Soccer had their first Atlantic 10 berth since 2016, Men's Soccer reached the Atlantic 10 Semifinals for the seventh time in nine years, the Men's and Women's basketball programs are undefeated at home. He also noted that athletics had the largest gift to a Women's sport (basketball (\$125,000) for travel).

Committee Chair Ryan asked about coverage of URI sports in local papers. Director Bjorn stated that they're not getting coverage until two days later. He said that it may be due to a lack of staffing at the local papers.

Regarding grades of student athletes, Director Bjorn reported that there continues to be a lot of academic success. Many students have 3.2 GPAs, and 40% are on the Dean's list.

**4. ADJOURN**

Committee Chair Ryan called for a motion to adjourn the January 20, 2022 meeting.

On a motion duly made by Jay Placencia and seconded by Roby Luna, it was

VOTED:	THAT	The URI Board of Trustees Student Life and Athletics Committee adjourn the meeting of January 20, 2022.
	VOTE:	6 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.
	YEAS:	Margo Cook, Michael Fascitelli, Roby Luna, Michael McNally, Jay Placencia, and Thomas Ryan
	NAYS:	0
	ABSTAINS:	0

The meeting adjourned at 4:23 p.m.

**UPCOMING MEETING**

**The next URI Board of Trustees Student Life and Athletics Committee meeting is scheduled for April 21, 2022.**