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Dr. Karina Montilla Edmonds '92

Cortney M. Nicolato '01

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Yahaira "Jay" Placencia '01

Thomas Ryan '75

Armand E. Sabitoni '73

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*R.I. Council on Postsecondary
Education*

Barbara Cottam, *Chair*
R.I. Board of Education

Mayrai Gindy
Faculty Representative

Christopher Bove '23
Student Representative

The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees Meeting
Friday, January 21, 2022 • 9:30 a.m. EST
The University of Rhode Island
Robert J. Higgins Welcome Center, Hope Room
45 Upper College Road, Kingston, RI 02881

OFFICIAL MINUTES

Chair Margo Cook welcomed everyone to the January 21, 2022, meeting of the University of Rhode Island (URI) Board of Trustees and announced that a hybrid meeting was being held in accordance with Governor McKee's Executive Order 22-01. Public access to the meeting was available via the Facebook Live video platform.

At 9:37 a.m., General Counsel Alyssa Boss conducted a roll call attendance and reported that a quorum of voting members was present. Chair Cook called the meeting to order.

Attendees present for this meeting included:

The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees voting members:

- Ms. Margo Cook, Chair (in person)
- Mr. Michael F. McNally, Vice Chair (in person)
- Dr. Karina Montilla Edmonds (remote)
- Mr. Michael Fascitelli (remote)
- Honorable Charles J. Fogarty, Jr. (in person)
- Ms. Christine M. Heenan (in person)
- Mr. Richard Humphrey (remote, joined at 10:47 a.m.)
- Mr. Neil Kerwin (remote)
- Mr. Matthew D. Lenz (in person)
- Mr. Roby Luna (remote)
- Mr. David J. Martirano (remote)
- Ms. Cortney Nicolato (in person)
- Mr. Vahid Ownjazayeri (in person)
- Ms. Susan Petrovas (remote)
- Ms. Jay Placencia (in person)
- Mr. Thomas M. Ryan (in person)
- Mr. Armand E. Sabitoni (remote)

URI Board of Trustees
January 21, 2022 Meeting

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

- Mr. Christopher Bove, Student Representative (in person) (arrived at 9:42 a.m.)
- Ms. Barbara Cottam, Chair, Board of Education (in person)
- Dr. Mayrai Gindy, Faculty Representative (in person)

The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustee ex officio member not present:

- Mr. Tim DelGiudice, Chair, Council on Postsecondary Education

The University of Rhode Island President's Leadership Council members in attendance:

- Dr. Marc B. Parlange, President (in person)
- Dr. Laura L. Beauvais, Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs (in person)
- Ms. Abby Benson, Senior Advisor to the President and Chief of Staff (in person)
- Ms. Alyssa Boss, General Counsel (in person)
- Ms. Anne Marie Coleman, Assistant Vice President for Human Resources (in person)
- Dr. Kathy Collins, Vice President for Student Affairs (in person)
- Ms. Lil Breul O'Rourke, President, URI Foundation and Alumni Engagement (URIFAE) (in person)
- Ms. Abigail Rider, Vice President for Administration and Finance (in person)
- Dr. Peter Snyder, Vice President for Research and Economic Development (in person)

The University of Rhode Island staff members in attendance:

- Ms. Chelsea Berry, Communications Specialist (in person)
- Dr. Paula Bontempi, Dean, Graduate School of Oceanography (remote)
- Ms. Lauren Burgess, Director, Legislative and Government Relations (in person)
- Ms. Audrey Cardany, URI Faculty Senate President (in person)
- Ms. Robin Cawley, Executive Assistant II (in person)
- Ms. Carol Connolly, Assistant Legal Counsel (remote)
- Ms. Jennifer Critcher, Assistant Director, Coastal Resources Center (remote)
- Ms. Michelle Curreri, Secretary to the Board of Trustees (in person)
- Mr. Peter Harrington, Associate General Counsel (remote)
- Dr. Bethany Jenkins, incoming URI Board of Trustees Faculty Representative (in person)
- Mr. Carlos Lopez Estrada, Director, Legislative and Government Relations (in person)
- Ms. Lynn Owens, Associate Secretary to the Board of Trustees (in person)
- Dr. Michael Rice, URI Faculty Senate Vice President (in person)
- Ms. Elin Torell, Senior Coastal Resources Manager (remote)
- Dr. J.P. Walsh, Director, Coastal Resources Center (remote)

Invited Guest:

- Vinita Bahri-Mehra, Partner, Kegler Brown Hill & Ritter (remote)

1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

Chair Cook called for a motion that the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees accept the Agenda for the meeting of January 21, 2022.

On a motion duly made by Jay Placencia and seconded by Cortney Nicolato, it was

VOTED: THAT The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees accept the agenda for the meeting of January 21, 2022.

VOTE: 16 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Margo Cook, Karina Montilla Edmonds, Michael Fascitelli, Charles Fogarty, Christine Heenan, Neil Kerwin, Matthew Lenz, Roby Luna, David Martirano, Michael McNally, Cortney Nicolato, Vahid Ownjazayeri, Susan Petrovas, Jay Placencia, Thomas Ryan, and Armand Sabitoni.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

Richard Humphrey was not present for the vote.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

a. Minutes of the November 4, 2021 Plenary Session [Enclosure 2.a.](#)

Chair Cook called for a motion that the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees approve the minutes of the November 4, 2021 Plenary Session as set forth in Enclosure 2.a.

On a motion duly made by Jay Placencia and seconded by Matthew Lenz, it was

VOTED: THAT The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees approve the minutes of the November 4, 2021 Plenary Session, as set forth in Enclosure 2.a.

VOTE: 16 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Margo Cook, Karina Montilla Edmonds, Michael Fascitelli,

Charles Fogarty, Christine Heenan, Neil Kerwin, Matthew Lenz, Roby Luna, David Martirano, Michael McNally, Cortney Nicolato, Vahid Ownjazayeri, Susan Petrovas, Jay Placencia, Thomas Ryan, and Armand Sabitoni.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

Richard Humphrey was not present for the vote.

b. Minutes of the November 5, 2021 Meeting [Enclosure 2.b.](#)

Chair Cook called for a motion that the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees approve the minutes of the November 5, 2021 Meeting as set forth in Enclosure 2.b.

On a motion duly made by Michael McNally and seconded by Neil Kerwin and Vahid Ownjazayeri, it was

VOTED: THAT The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees approve the minutes of the November 5, 2021 Meeting, as set forth in Enclosure 2.b.

VOTE: 16 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Margo Cook, Karina Montilla Edmonds, Michael Fascitelli, Charles Fogarty, Christine Heenan, Neil Kerwin, Matthew Lenz, Roby Luna, David Martirano, Michael McNally, Cortney Nicolato, Vahid Ownjazayeri, Susan Petrovas, Jay Placencia, Thomas Ryan, and Armand Sabitoni.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

Richard Humphrey was not present for the vote.

3. OPEN FORUM

Chair Cook reported that no one signed up to speak during the Open Forum.

4. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chair Cook called for a motion that the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees enter into Executive Session for the following item:

- a. Discussion regarding potential and anticipated litigation, pursuant to R.I.G.L. §42-46-5(a)(2).

On a motion duly made by Charles Fogarty and Vahid Ownjazayeri, and seconded by Christine Heenan, it was:

VOTED: THAT The URI Board of Trustees enter into Executive Session for the following item:

- a. Discussion regarding potential and anticipated litigation, pursuant to R.I.G.L. §42-46-5(a)(2).

VOTE: 16 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Margo Cook, Karina Montilla Edmonds, Michael Fascitelli, Charles Fogarty, Christine Heenan, Neil Kerwin, Matthew Lenz, Roby Luna, David Martirano, Michael McNally, Cortney Nicolato, Vahid Ownjazayeri, Susan Petrovas, Jay Placencia, Thomas Ryan and Armand Sabitoni.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

Richard Humphrey was not present for the vote.

At 9:41 a.m., the Board entered into Executive Session. Virtual public access was paused.

At 10:39 a.m., the Board reconvened in Open Session. Virtual public access resumed.

Chair Cook called for a motion that the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees seal the minutes of the Executive Session that took place on January 21, 2022.

On a motion duly made by Jay Placencia and seconded by Neil Kerwin and Cortney Nicolato, it was

VOTED THAT: The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees seal the minutes of the Executive Session that took place on January 21, 2022.

VOTE: 16 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Margo Cook, Karina Montilla Edmonds, Michael Fascitelli, Charles Fogarty, Christine Heenan, Neil Kerwin, Matthew Lenz, Roby Luna, David Martirano, Michael McNally, Cortney Nicolato, Vahid Ownjazayeri, Susan Petrovas, Jay Placencia, Thomas Ryan, and Armand Sabitoni.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

Richard Humphrey was not present for the vote.

5. ACTION ITEMS

- a. Approval of the Revocation of the Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters conferred upon Lieutenant General Michael Flynn (retired) by the University of Rhode Island. [Enclosure 5.a.](#)

Chair Cook reminded everyone of the process that the University and the Board of Trustees follow when considering honorary degrees. She confirmed that the process has been followed and, in fact, strengthened by the creation of the URI Board of Trustees Honorary Degree policy. She asked President Parlange to explain the process and thinking behind why this matter is in front of the Board today.

President Parlange stated that, based on the recommendation to him by the Honorary Degree Committee which met on December 10, 2021, it is his recommendation to the Board of Trustees that it revoke the honorary degrees of General Michael Flynn (retired) and Mayor Rudolph Giuliani.

He stated that in 2003, Mayor Giuliani was awarded the Doctor of Laws *Honoris Causa*, based on his leadership in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. In 2014, General Flynn, a 1981 graduate of the University and a three-star Army general, was awarded an honorary doctorate of humane letters.

President Parlange noted that the awarding of honorary degrees has significant importance for URI, as it is intended to honor those who represent the highest levels of our core values, which is why he makes this recommendation with seriousness and consideration of all stakeholders.

The Honorary Degree Committee considered this matter under former President David Dooley's tenure; however, he chose not to forward a recommendation to the Board. President Parlange stated that since joining the University last summer, he has been presented with this issue on numerous occasions by many concerned members of the URI community and was formally asked by the Faculty Senate to address it, which is why he requested that the Committee reconvene and present an updated recommendation. He confirmed that he agrees with the Committee's findings, that General Flynn and Mayor Giuliani no longer represent

the highest level of our values that were evident when we first bestowed the degree for the following reasons:

- General Flynn pleaded guilty twice to a felony count of “willfully and knowingly” lying to the FBI in exchange for a plea agreement.
- In June 2021, at a conference in Dallas, Texas, General Flynn appeared to suggest that a military coup was needed in the U.S., much like the one staged by the military in Myanmar in 2021.
- In November 2021, during a rally in San Antonio, Texas, General Flynn called for the establishment of “one religion” in the U.S. His behavior was widely condemned as a violation of the doctrine of religious freedom enshrined in the first amendment of the U.S. Constitution.
- Mayor Giuliani participated in the January 6, 2021, rally that incited the assault on the Capitol building in Washington D.C. His words encouraged domestic terrorist behavior aimed at preventing Congress from certifying the outcome of the 2020 presidential election.
- Mayor Giuliani has been suspended from practicing law in both Washington D.C., and the State of New York over his unfounded claims of rampant fraud during the 2020 presidential election. The courts have determined there is evidence that Mayor Giuliani has made false and misleading statements in representing President Trump and the Trump campaign in connection with Trump's failed reelection efforts.

The President noted that the URI cornerstones, a set of values we hold dear, asks all community members to pursue knowledge with honesty, integrity and courage; respect the rights and dignity of each individual and group; reject prejudice and intolerance, and work to understand differences; accept personal responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

President Parlange concluded by saying it is clear that behavior by General Flynn and Mayor Giuliani is inconsistent with the values and standards that we embody and seek to instill in every member of the community. As a civic institution, URI has the privilege and responsibility to sustain and preserve American democracy by inspiring and modeling good citizenship. Revoking these honorary degrees reinforces our values, and it allows us to lead with truth and integrity.

Vice Chair McNally noted that, as trustees of the University, it was incumbent upon the Board to not get politics involved. All political views should be respected, especially at a university. He asked the President if he can assure the Board that this was objective in nature, and not political. The President responded by saying it is extremely important that we respect all views and that we recognize that we will have differences in views; that is important at URI and is part of our foundation and our values. He noted that based on the facts he listed, they no longer represent the highest level of our values. The Honorary Degree Committee did a very thorough and careful job to respect the facts of the matter and the actions taken by both Mayor Giuliani and General Flynn.

Board member Ryan inquired about the process going forward if someone decided that another honorary degree that was bestowed on an individual should be taken away. Board member and faculty representative Mayrai Gindy reviewed the process whereby any member of the URI community can bring forward a name for consideration to award or revoke an honorary degree. She noted that in this case it was brought forward by the duly elected Faculty Senate Executive Committee, a 6-member committee that represents the entire faculty at URI. The Executive Committee's recommendation went forth to the Honorary Degree Committee made up of faculty, staff, students, a community member and an alumni member. The recommendation of the Honorary Degree Committee is then forwarded to the President, who has the option of bringing it to the Board for action. She confirmed that the Honorary Degree Committee followed this process in these cases. Any future recommendation would follow the same process.

Board member Fogarty asked if anyone else had their URI honorary degree revoked. President Parlange reported that Dan Doyle's honorary degree was revoked.

Board member Bove stated that, in listening to the President and reading the supporting material, he felt confident that the shared governance process was followed and that the matter was properly reviewed by the faculty and the Honorary Degree Committee. He expressed his support of the President's recommendation.

Chair Cook noted the importance of understanding that the process had been followed. The Honorary Degree Committee did a lot of work to make sure the faculty's request and the recommendation of the Committee were justified. The President then pressure-tested that work, ensuring that it was not political, based on facts and not judgement, before bringing it to the Board. The process has been strengthened by putting a Board policy in place.

Chair Cook called for a motion that the URI Board of Trustees approve the Revocation of the Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters conferred upon Lieutenant General Michael Flynn (retired) by the University of Rhode Island, as recommended and presented.

On a motion duly made by Vahid Ownjazayeri and seconded by Neil Kerwin, it was

VOTED:	THAT	The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees approve the Revocation of the Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters conferred upon Lieutenant General Michael Flynn (retired) by the University of Rhode Island, as recommended and presented.
	VOTE:	17 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.
	YEAS:	Margo Cook, Karina Montilla Edmonds, Michael Fascitelli,

Charles Fogarty, Christine Heenan, Richard Humphrey, Neil Kerwin, Matthew Lenz, Roby Luna, David Martirano, Michael McNally, Cortney Nicolato, Vahid Ownjazayeri, Susan Petrovas, Jay Placencia, Thomas Ryan, and Armand Sabitoni.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

- b. Approval of the Revocation of the Honorary Doctor of Laws conferred upon former Mayor Rudolph Giuliani by the University of Rhode Island. [Enclosure 5.b.](#)

Chair Cook called for a motion that the URI Board of Trustees approve the Revocation of the Honorary Doctor of Laws conferred upon former Mayor Rudolph Giuliani by the University of Rhode Island, as recommended and presented.

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

VOTED: THAT The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees approve the Revocation of the Honorary Doctor of Laws conferred upon former Mayor Rudolph Giuliani by the University of Rhode Island, as recommended and presented.

VOTE: 17 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Margo Cook, Karina Montilla Edmonds, Michael Fascitelli, Charles Fogarty, Christine Heenan, Richard Humphrey, Neil Kerwin, Matthew Lenz, Roby Luna, David Martirano, Michael McNally, Cortney Nicolato, Vahid Ownjazayeri, Susan Petrovas, Jay Placencia, Thomas Ryan, and Armand Sabitoni.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

- c. Approval of the awarding of Honorary Degrees for Commencement 2022.

Chair Cook referred to President Parlange to define the process of selecting a candidate to receive an honorary degree. The President reported that the Honorary Degree Committee received over twenty nominations. After thorough review of the candidates, he is bringing forward the name of one finalist for consideration. The President shared confidentially with Board members the name and background of the finalist. Upon Board approval, URI will

contact the finalist to ascertain interest and availability. The name of the awardee is not released at this time.

Chair Cook called for a motion that the URI Board of Trustees approve the awarding of an Honorary Degree for Commencement 2022, as recommended and presented.

On a motion duly made by Matthew Lenz and seconded by Jay Placencia, it was

VOTED:	THAT	The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees approve the awarding of an Honorary Degree for Commencement 2022, as recommended and presented.
	VOTE:	17 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.
	YEAS:	Margo Cook, Karina Montilla Edmonds, Michael Fascitelli, Charles Fogarty, Christine Heenan, Richard Humphrey, Neil Kerwin, Matthew Lenz, Roby Luna, David Martirano, Michael McNally, Cortney Nicolato, Vahid Ownjazayeri, Susan Petrovas, Jay Placencia, Thomas Ryan, and Armand Sabitoni.
	NAYS:	0
	ABSTAINS:	0

6. REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEE CHAIRS AND ACTION ITEMS

a. Academic Affairs and Research Committee Report

(i) Update – January 20, 2022, Committee Meeting

Committee Chair Kerwin reported on Committee meeting activity. He noted that Provost Beauvais gave a presentation consisting of three parts:

1. **Key Academic Performance Metrics: graduation and persistence.** The University undergraduate student body is improving with regard to persistence and rate of graduation, both measured in four- and six-year intervals. There are some gaps between the overall performance of the undergraduate student body and certain segments, notably Pell-eligible students, but the University is hard at work closing those gaps. Committee Chair Kerwin was impressed with not only the trend line but the speed with which the University is achieving the objectives.
2. **Academic Efforts in Support of Student Success:** Several initiatives are underway at the University to support student success, including the Academic Enhancement

Center, which provides peer tutoring and Career and Experiential Learning to enhance the core undergraduate academic experience and to give students an opportunity to explore potential career options. The University has 9,700 employers that they consider partners in the placement of students for internship and career activity.

Vice Chair Edmonds noted that she was impressed with the entrepreneurial activities discussed and the support for students who are interested in starting companies.

Committee Chair Kerwin reported that the Committee did not have a chance to discuss in depth the undergraduate research program but will revisit that as a topic because the engagement of students as undergraduates in the research process with senior faculty has been demonstrated at a number of universities to have a positive effect on both persistence and graduation rates.

3. **COVID-19 update:** The University continues to experience very high rates of vaccination and is looking forward to the resumption of classes in the spring term. The University is planning an in-person commencement ceremony on the quad.

- (ii) **ACTION ITEM:** Approval of the awarding of undergraduate and graduate degrees, diplomas, certificates, and honors to be conferred by the President to the candidates who have completed their requirements at the conclusion of the Fall 2021 term and who have been approved by the faculty of the University of Rhode Island. [Enclosure 6.a.\(ii\)](#)

Committee Chair Kerwin called for a motion that the URI Board of Trustees approve the awarding of undergraduate and graduate degrees, diplomas, certificates, and honors to be conferred by the President to the candidates who have completed their requirements at the conclusion of the Fall 2021 term and who have been approved by the faculty of the University of Rhode Island, as recommended and presented in Enclosure 6.a.(ii).

On a motion duly made by Margo Cook and seconded by Thomas Ryan and Cortney Nicolato, it was

VOTED: THAT The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees approve the awarding of undergraduate and graduate degrees, diplomas, certificates, and honors to be conferred by the President to the candidates who have completed their requirements at the conclusion of the Fall 2021 term and who have been approved by the faculty of the University of Rhode Island, as recommended and presented.

VOTE: 17 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Margo Cook, Karina Montilla Edmonds, Michael Fascitelli,

Charles Fogarty, Christine Heenan, Richard Humphrey, Neil Kerwin, Matthew Lenz, Roby Luna, David Martirano, Michael McNally, Cortney Nicolato, Vahid Ownjazayeri, Susan Petrovas, Jay Placencia, Thomas Ryan, and Armand Sabitoni.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

- (iii) ACTION ITEM: Approval to advance Film Media Studies from “Program” to “Department” status. [Enclosure 6.a.\(iii\)](#)

Committee Chair Kerwin called for a motion that the URI Board of Trustees approve the advancement of Film Media Studies from “Program” to “Department” status, a recommended and presented in Enclosure 6.a.(iii).

On a motion duly made by David Martirano and seconded by Karina Montilla Edmonds, it was

VOTED: THAT The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees approve the advancement of Film Media Studies from “Program” to “Department” status, as recommended and presented.

VOTE: 17 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Margo Cook, Karina Montilla Edmonds, Michael Fascitelli, Charles Fogarty, Christine Heenan, Richard Humphrey, Neil Kerwin, Matthew Lenz, Roby Luna, David Martirano, Michael McNally, Cortney Nicolato, Vahid Ownjazayeri, Susan Petrovas, Jay Placencia, Thomas Ryan and Armand Sabitoni.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

- (iv) ACTION ITEM: Approval of the awarding of Faculty Tenure to Dr. Melissa Sutherland, Professor of Nursing, College of Nursing. [Enclosure 6.a.\(iv\)](#)

Committee Chair Kerwin called for a motion that the URI Board of Trustees approve the awarding of Faculty Tenure to Dr. Melissa Sutherland, Professor of Nursing, College of Nursing, as recommended and presented in Enclosure 6.a.(iv).

On a motion duly made by Thomas Ryan and seconded by Jay Placencia, it was

VOTED: THAT The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees approve the awarding of Faculty Tenure to Dr. Melissa Sutherland, Professor of Nursing, College of Nursing, as recommended and presented.

VOTE: 17 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Margo Cook, Karina Montilla Edmonds, Michael Fascitelli, Charles Fogarty, Christine Heenan, Richard Humphrey, Neil Kerwin, Matthew Lenz, Roby Luna, David Martirano, Michael McNally, Cortney Nicolato, Vahid Ownjazayeri, Susan Petrovas, Jay Placencia, Thomas Ryan and Armand Sabitoni.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

- (v) DISCUSSION ITEM: Establishment and registration of a University of Rhode Island branch office in the Republic of Fiji and the USAID-funded Pacific Islands Fisheries Project known as “OurFish OurFuture” under the leadership and direction of URI’s Coastal Resources Center.

- Dr. J.P. Walsh, Director, Coastal Resources Center

Committee Chair Kerwin concluded his report by saying the Committee was briefed on the establishment and registration of the University of Rhode Island branch office in the Republic of Fiji and the USAID-funded Pacific islands fishery project known as “OurFish OurFuture”.

b. Institutional Risk and Compliance Committee Report

- (i) Update – January 20, 2022 Committee Report

Committee Chair Roby Luna reported on activity at the Committee meeting. Assistant Vice President Kara Larsen provided a review of the University’s annual compliance reporting obligations and their timing and reported that there were no impediments that would prevent proper filing of mandated reports. Chief Michael Jagoda provided an overview of the Annual Clery Report on Crime. Committee members expressed their support of the Chief’s tactical plan to maintain safety.

Committee members received a thorough presentation on URI’s security posture. Chief Information Security Officer Mike Khalfayan reviewed the University’s strategy for maintaining the integrity of its technological infrastructure. The Committee will revisit some

policies in support of and to carry out the strategic goals and security mission of the University.

During its meeting, the Committee also reviewed the National Science Foundation's audit of the EPSCoR program. The major takeaway was that URI was one of three universities selected for the audit. The National Science Foundation issued their report in October, 2021. URI will resolve the findings by the end of January 2022.

Committee Chair Luna introduced Dr. J.P. Walsh, Director of the Coastal Resources Center, and professor in the Graduate School of Oceanography. Dr. Walsh provided a high-level summary of URI's plans to establish a URI branch office in the Republic of Fiji in support of the USAID-funded Pacific Islands Fisheries Project known as "OurFish Our Future".

Director Walsh reported that the Coastal Resources Center (CRC) in the Graduate School of Oceanography (GSO) has received a \$15 million award from USAID to implement the "OurFish OurFuture" Program in the Pacific Islands. In order to fulfill the award milestones, and as advised by USAID, URI needs to register a time-limited project-oriented branch office in Fiji. The "OurFish OurFuture" Program is an exciting five-year partnership (2021-2026) that will address the social and ecological drivers of illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing that are degrading coastal fisheries and biodiversity and negatively impacting local livelihoods, food stability, and maritime security in the Pacific Islands region. Director Walsh noted that the University has gone through the registration process in the past to support its current project in the Philippines. Outside legal counsel has been consulted.

President Parlange expressed his support of the project.

- (ii) ACTION ITEM: Approval of the full resolution set forth in [Enclosure 6.b.\(ii\)](#) through which the Board, in summary, is approving the establishment and registration of a University of Rhode Island branch office in the Republic of Fiji and the taking of all necessary and appropriate actions, by the University President or his designees, including the submission of all required applications, authorizations and designations required by governmental agencies in the Republic of Fiji, to enable the establishment and registration of the branch office, and to undertake the performance and administration of the USAID-funded Pacific Islands Fisheries Project known as "OurFish OurFuture" under the leadership and direction of URI's Coastal Resources Center. Enclosure 6.b.(ii)

-Dr. J.P. Walsh, Director, Coastal Resources Center

Committee Chair Luna called for a motion that the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees approve the full resolution set forth in Enclosure 6.b.(ii) through which the Board, in summary, is approving the establishment and registration of a University of Rhode Island branch office in the Republic of Fiji and the taking of all necessary and appropriate actions, by the University President or his designees, including the submission of all required applications, authorizations and designations required by governmental agencies in the Republic of Fiji, to enable the establishment and registration of the branch office, and to undertake the performance and administration of the USAID-funded Pacific Islands Fisheries

Project known as “OurFish OurFuture” under the leadership and direction of URI’s Coastal Resources Center. Enclosure 6.b.(ii)

On a motion duly made by Margo Cook and seconded by Matthew Lenz, it was

VOTED: THAT The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees approve the full resolution set forth in Enclosure 6.b.(ii) through which the Board, in summary, is approving the establishment and registration of a University of Rhode Island branch office in the Republic of Fiji and the taking of all necessary and appropriate actions, by the University President or his designees, including the submission of all required applications, authorizations and designations required by governmental agencies in the Republic of Fiji, to enable the establishment and registration of the branch office, and to undertake the performance and administration of the USAID-funded Pacific Islands Fisheries Project known as “OurFish OurFuture” under the leadership and direction of URI’s Coastal Resources Center, as recommended and presented.

VOTE: 17 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Margo Cook, Karina Montilla Edmonds, Michael Fascitelli, Charles Fogarty, Christine Heenan, Richard Humphrey, Neil Kerwin, Matthew Lenz, Roby Luna, David Martirano, Michael McNally, Cortney Nicolato, Vahid Ownjazayeri, Susan Petrovas, Jay Placencia, Thomas Ryan and Armand Sabitoni.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

c. Finance and Facilities Committee Report

(i) Update – January 20, 2022 Committee Meeting

Committee Chair Fascitelli reported on four informational items presented to the Committee:

1. **Kushner Authorizations.** The Kushner authorizations make it possible for URI to incur a financial obligation. URI has submitted four Kushners to the Governor for recommendation to the General Assembly: 1) The Facility Service Sector Upgrade in the amount of \$13M;

- 2) Utility Infrastructure in the amount of \$15.5M; 3) the Communicative Disorders Lease at Independence Square; and 4) the Physical Therapy Lease at Independence Square. Board approval of the leases and resolutions authorizing the debt issuance are expected to be brought forward at the June 2022 Board meeting in conjunction with the Board's approval of the Capital Improvement Plan for FY24-28.
2. **The Nuclear Science Center License.** The Committee discussed the Nuclear Science Center at the Narragansett Bay Campus and the Atomic Energy Commission. The underground lease will be brought to the Finance and Facilities Committee for renewal at the April meeting.
 3. **Procurement Regulations.** The Committee discussed the ongoing work to modernize procurement regulations. The regulations are out of date and currently under review by the Office of the General Counsel and will be brought to the Committee at the April meeting.
 4. **Annual Information Relating to URI Bondholders.** The Committee reviewed the annual compilation of information for bondholders. Committee Chair Fascitelli encouraged Board members to review the report as it provides a good overview of URI operations.

Committee Chair Fascitelli reviewed the details of one action item--the approval of the first amendment to the ground lease between URI and the URI Foundation and Alumni Engagement. The Committee recommended approval of the action in Item 6.c.(iii).

- (ii) DISCUSSION ITEM: Report on Approvals Under the Delegation of Authority to the President Relating to Land and Property [Enclosure 6.c.\(ii\)](#)

No discussion.

- (iii) ACTION ITEM: Approval of the First Amendment to the Ground Lease Agreement dated December 8, 1999 between the University of Rhode Island/Board of Governors for Higher Education for the State of Rhode Island and the University of Rhode Island Foundation and Alumni Engagement, as extended, thus extending the term of the Ground Lease an additional 10 years until February 18, 2032 with an additional 10-year extension option. [Enclosure 6.c.\(iii\)](#)

Committee Chair Fascitelli called for a motion that the URI Board of Trustees approve the First Amendment to the Ground Lease Agreement dated December 8, 1999, between the University of Rhode Island/Board of Governors for Higher Education for the State of Rhode Island and the University of Rhode Island Foundation and Alumni Engagement, as extended, thus extending the term of the Ground Lease an additional 10 years until February 18, 2032 with an additional 10-year extension, as recommended and presented in Enclosure 6.b.(iii).

On a motion duly made by Thomas Ryan and seconded by Armand Sabitoni, it was

VOTED: THAT The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees approve
the First Amendment to the Ground Lease Agreement dated

December 8, 1999, between the University of Rhode Island/Board of Governors for Higher Education for the State of Rhode Island and the University of Rhode Island Foundation and Alumni Engagement, as extended, thus extending the term of the Ground Lease an additional 10 years until February 18, 2032, with an additional 10-year extension, as recommended and presented.

VOTE: 17 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Margo Cook, Karina Montilla Edmonds, Michael Fascitelli, Charles Fogarty, Christine Heenan, Richard Humphrey, Neil Kerwin, Matthew Lenz, Roby Luna, David Martirano, Michael McNally, Cortney Nicolato, Vahid Ownjazayeri, Susan Petrovas, Jay Placencia, Thomas Ryan and Armand Sabitoni.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

d. Executive Committee Report

(i) Update – January 21, 2022 Committee Meeting

Chair Cook reported on items discussed during the Committee meeting. Assistant Vice President Anne Marie Coleman provided the Committee with an update on collective bargaining. She stated that the Committee discussed conducting an annual review of the President, as well as a 360-degree comprehensive review leading into a contract review. She noted that this will be the first presidential review conducted by the URI Board of Trustees. The Compensation Subcommittee of the Executive Committee is responsible for conducting the President's performance assessment and presenting it to the full Board for consideration. A process will be created identifying the structure of the review and its framework.

e. Governance Committee Report

(i) Update – January 20, 2022 Committee Meeting

Committee Chair Cortney Nicolato reported on the Committee's discussion items. She said that the University is working with its legislative and government affairs partners on proposed legislation around maintaining the Board in areas of policy and process, quorum and remote meetings. Committee members talked about the nomination process to ensure that the Board has a group of candidates at its disposal to be able to share with the governor. The Committee has a nomination form that will be added to the website for members of the public to submit

nominations. URI is partnering with the URI Foundation on Board engagement and pipeline development to consider great alumni for board appointments.

Committee Chair Nicolato announced that student representative Christopher Bove and faculty representative Mayrai Gindy are leaving the Board, as their terms end on February 1. She thanked both outgoing members for their participation, thoughtful engagement and leadership on the Board, as well as their commitment to assist with the transition.

President Parlange expressed his gratitude to outgoing board members Bove and Gindy and announced that Hannah Bachert will serve as the new student representative, and Dr. Bethany Jenkins will serve as the new faculty representative. More information was shared during the President's report.

Committee Chair Nicolato concluded her report by saying that the Committee is making plans for the Board's annual retreat in June. She reported that the President would like to discuss the University's Strategic Plan and get the Board's feedback on it.

f. Student Life and Athletics Committee Report

(i) Update – January 20, 2022 Committee Report

Committee Chair Thomas Ryan reviewed the items discussed at the Committee meeting. Vice President Kathy Collins made a presentation on student success at URI, provided a COVID update, and spoke of mental health services at URI. All eligible faculty, staff, and students must provide proof of vaccination and booster. Universal indoor masking is required regardless of vaccination status.

Committee Chair Ryan noted that there has been a 30% increase in mental health visits, and URI's mental health staff is overloaded. Vice President Collins reported that URI is on par with the national average. COVID has created challenges for not only students, but faculty and staff. Committee Chair Ryan noted that this is something that the Board will have to address going forward from a budget standpoint. Dining services was discussed during the Committee meeting, with staffing being a major challenge.

Committee Chair Ryan reported on Athletic Director Thorr Bjorn's presentation to the Committee, which included an update on the new Soloviev Family Practice Facility, the largest fundraising initiative the Athletics Department has done. The facility should be completed in 2023. He spoke of the addition of the Division I women's lacrosse team and the fall team report card. URI Athletics teams had a good fall season. Director Bjorn reported that student athletes' grades reflect their continuing academic success.

g. University Advancement and External Affairs Committee Report

(i) Update – January 20, 2022, Committee Meeting

Committee Chair Christine Heenan reported on items discussed during the Committee meeting. She introduced two new colleagues in government relations and legislative affairs; Director Carlos Lopez Estrada and Director Lauren Broccoli Burgess. The Committee heard from URIFAE President Lil Breul O'Rourke and Jeff Cabral, Vice President of Development, about campaign progress and The Day of Giving. The URI Foundation has now raised \$228 million. The Foundation is pleased with the momentum of the Campaign. Committee members discussed whether the money is going to where the University most needs it and agreed to look at that further for a future meeting.

Committee Chair Heenan urged the Board to consider discussing further where we are with respect to endowed chairs and professorships. It is an important thing for URI to understand as a dimension of its academic competitiveness and research enterprise. It's an area where the University is behind; URI has made some progress in this Campaign but not to either its current level peers or its aspirational peers.

Committee Chair Heenan concluded by saying The Day of Giving was extraordinarily successful, not just in the amount raised, but in capturing 1,000 new donors. Participation rate is a key indicator and it's also where your future major donors are coming from. A lot of that money was directed to the RodyNow funds and speaks to donor interest in helping current students facing financial difficulty.

The URI Board of Trustees paused its meeting at 11:49 a.m. Following the lunch break, the meeting resumed at 12:24 p.m.

7. DISCUSSION ITEM

- a. Review of Current Research Programs and Overview of URI Research Foundation
[Enclosure 7.a.](#)
- Dr. Peter J. Snyder, Vice President for Research and Economic Development

Chair Cook introduced Dr. Peter Snyder, Vice President for Research and Economic Development, who shared a presentation on URI's current research programs and provided an overview of the URI Research Foundation. The presentation can be found [here](#).

Dr. Snyder shared with Board members copies of the most recent issue of *Momentum Magazine*. Moving through his presentation, Dr. Snyder gave an overview of research being conducted at the University, including awards and funding received over the past year, as well as an introduction to the URI Research Foundation, which provides research programs; obtains and protects IP rights and promotes URI technology commercialization; promotes education; and enhances URI's contribution to economic development in Rhode Island and beyond.

Dr. Snyder highlighted the mission and vision of the URI Division of Research and Economic Development. He provided an overview of the University's Division of Research and Economic Development which includes economic development, major research programs centers and institutes, and research administration. He shared a snapshot of research awards received

including \$123 million in receivables (federal grants, contracts, state contracts with other state agencies, and partnerships with non-profits and other entities) along with ARRA Awards and COVID Emergency Funds (not competitive research awards). Notable recent activity in 2021 was itemized. Dr. Snyder remarked that URI is looking for cross-discipline, cross-college opportunities, hitting on major problems we face as a society or a species.

Dr. Snyder described the structure of risk management in research, listed the types of risk related to URI research, and noted the inherent risk in conducting research of any kind. The Institutional Review Board, a self-governing entity, focuses on the ethics of the research. Referring to scientific integrity at URI, he noted that URI adopts the highest standards and best practices and conforms to National Institute of Health standards. Responding to inquiry about possible risk arising from partnerships and research relationships, Dr. Snyder reported that URI chooses its partners well, with principal investigators and the assistant general counsel conducting due diligence.

The URI Research Foundation was created by the University of Rhode Island Research Foundation Act of 2007 to obtain, manage and protect Intellectual Property rights and promote URI technology commercialization, to provide research programs and promote education, and to enhance URI's contribution to economic development in Rhode Island and beyond. It is a separate 501c3 non-profit foundation entitled URI Research Foundation, often doing business as URI Ventures to avoid confusion with the URI Foundation.

Dr. Snyder outlined the benefits of a research foundation for a public university in terms of intellectual property management and commercialization, industrial/partner contracts and donations, human resources and other functions. He spoke of the close alignment between the URI Research Foundation and the priorities of URI and listed the industry engagement.

Polaris MEP: 2013 – URI Research Foundation became the home to Rhode Island's manufacturing extension partnership (Polaris MEP) and, together with URI, the small business development center. In 2021, Polaris MEP had a \$26M RI economic impact, influencing 1,600 jobs. The goal of Polaris MEP, funded by the Department of Commerce, is to help manufacturers redesign and retool everything from process engineering to online resources for a modern environment.

401 Tech Bridge: 2019 – As a result of the State Innovation bond process, the 401 Tech Bridge Innovation Campus was formed and became a separate affiliate of the URI Research Foundation. In partnership with the Office of Naval Research and nearly seventy textiles and manufacturing and development companies in Rhode Island, a research laboratory is being developed and built in Portsmouth, RI, where these entities can interact in a safe environment with appropriate equipment and talent. 401 Tech Bridge impacts in 2021 include \$8 million in funding for facility buildout and program startup, and a \$1.5 million economic impact in awards to industry partners.

Blue Economy Tech Cluster: The URI Research Foundation is serving as lead applicant for RI's Build Back Better Regional Challenge submittal, intended to transform regional economies and supercharge business/regional growth clusters through a collection of collaborative, aligned projects designed to grow new industries and scale existing ones. The grants would support

workforce, entrepreneurship, planning, and infrastructure activities. Dr. Snyder listed RI Blue Economy Tech Cluster partners. Planned projects include the RI Smart Bay Platform and Infrastructure Development; the RI/URI Blue Tech Innovation Center; implementation of a blue economy workforce development pipeline; support of ocean-based renewables infrastructure; and improvements to aquaculture, fisheries, and seafood technology. The Phase I proposal was selected, valued at \$500,000 (1 of 60 allowed to apply for Phase 2 funding valued at \$100 million per grantee).

Dr. Snyder concluded his report by reviewing the URI Research Foundation's innovation and entrepreneurship support efforts, including an update on Rogue Ventures Partners fund activity, updates on the URI Innovation Campus, defense industry initiatives, and future growth and impact potential.

Board members discussed with Dr. Snyder the benefits of a research foundation for a public university. Vice Chair McNally inquired about filling the Board seat on the Research Foundation Board of Directors. Trustee Ryan noted that URI must figure out a way to communicate its impact on Rhode Island's economy, as well as national impacts and international partnerships. In response to Trustee Edmonds' inquiry regarding social equity, Dr. Snyder reported that workforce development and equity and diversity cuts across every area and is mandated by the EDA grant.

Chair Cook thanked Dr. Snyder for his presentation.

8. REPORT OF THE CHAIR

- Alternate Retirement Plan Committee

Chair Cook reported on the Alternate Retirement Plan Committee. When URI was overseen by the Council on Postsecondary Education, an Alternate Retirement Plan existed and was governed by the Council. Non-classified professional staff and faculty participate in the 403(b) plan. When the URI Board of Trustees was created, it was agreed that URI employees would continue to participate in the existing Plan. Last year a request for proposals process began to select a recordkeeper for the Plan. It was decided that a joint standing committee be formed for making ongoing decisions related to the Plan. The fiduciary committee would be responsible for things like interpreting investment policies, monitoring plan assets, modifying the menu of investment options, consenting to fee structures, engaging advisors and fiduciaries, evaluating performance of the Plan and amending the Plan as needed. The Alternate Retirement Plan Committee will report annually to the Finance and Facilities Committee to make sure the investments are being managed properly.

- Recognition of Outgoing Board Members: Christopher Bove, Mayrai Gindy

Chair Cook announced that a URI Board of Trustees perpetual plaque will be installed in Green Hall that will have each of the trustees' names on the plaque at the end of their term. Christopher Bove and Mayrai Gindy will be the first trustees' names on the plaque. During last night's

dinner, the two outgoing board members received proclamations that listed their accolades and things they had accomplished while on the Board.

Chair Cook thanked Christopher Bove and Mayrai Gindy for their service to the University, assisting in the formation of the Board and helping to steer the Board during the pandemic.

Christopher Bove addressed the Chair, President Parlange, his fellow trustees and members of the senior leadership team, noting that it has been a pleasure and a privilege working with them to get the Board going, leading through the pandemic, and selecting a new president. He thanked everyone for believing in him and encouraging him to think big. He expressed his confidence that the Board will be well served by its next student representative.

Mayrai Gindy echoed Christopher Bove's sentiments.

9. REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

- URI Strategy: Community, Scholarship and Rhode Island
- American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 – The Build Back Better Framework – URI leading regional coalition

President Parlange gave an update on University life following his successful 'listening tour' with stakeholders across all campuses, including faculty, staff, students, alumni, community members, and elected officials. From his perspective, the University is in good health, Rhody pride is strong, and URI is poised for another successful semester. Enrollment continues to break records, trending ahead of where the University was last year, and the student body is growing more diverse. Since his last report to the Board, he's had the pleasure of cheering on nearly all URI student athletes, hosting faculty art exhibitions, recognizing community members with Lifetime Service awards, and attending conferences and events with government leaders and industry partners.

The President welcomed Hannah Bachert '23 and Dr. Bethany Jenkins to the URI Board of Trustees, who will serve as student representative and faculty representative, respectively. He provided an update on COVID protocol at the University. He spoke of ongoing equity, diversity, inclusion and social justice initiatives.

The President stated that URI is the research flagship university of the State of Rhode Island, noting its important partnerships and regional alliances with other research universities. He asserted that in order to become the research university URI is capable of becoming, the University must build and support its PhD programs. He stressed the importance of applying resources to research scholarships and exploring ways to promote impactful research and entrepreneurship through programs and partnerships.

The President noted that URI's 10-year Strategic Plan is being developed, with the help of a Strategic Planning Steering Committee, comprised of faculty, staff, and students, who will help guide and formulate this important initiative. He reviewed the timeline for strategic planning with the goal of finalizing the plan by the fall.

The President reported that URI is also in the process of pursuing important federal funding opportunities through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and the Federal Infrastructure Bill. URI is pursuing \$310M in APRA funding for the Life Sciences building, the Narragansett Bay Campus revitalization, the Academic Success Center, and the Student Health and Counseling Center building. The University is working to secure federal infrastructure funds for improvements to the Narragansett Bay Campus, as well as air quality initiatives and improvements to campus water, sewer and broadband infrastructure. A taskforce has been formed to strategize and pursue national grant awards, federal earmarks and congressionally directed spending.

President Parlange reported that URI is the recipient of an important [EDA Build Back Better Regional Challenge grant](#), which will position the University to apply for up to \$100M in federal funding and allow us to lead in the Blue Economy. The URI Research Foundation's Blue Economy Technology Cluster proposal addresses economic disparities across the state by building a pipeline of jobs, attracting industry partners to our state, creating a minority small business accelerator, and training and educating people that will have access to jobs for better economic benefit.

Looking ahead, the President reported that we are advancing the University's ambitious goals thanks to *Big Ideas. Bold Plans.* The Campaign for URI. More than \$228M has been raised to make transformative change in the areas of student access, research, and global reach, and we have set our sights on a new campaign goal of \$300M.

In terms of student success, President Parlange noted that URI provides some \$100M per year for undergraduate student success. Graduate student funding is quite small in comparison, and he hopes to direct more resources to support PhD students by increasing graduate student fellowships to attract and retain the most accomplished and deserving students regardless of financial resources.

In conclusion, President Parlange stressed that URI is the flagship state university. One of his top priorities is to position URI as a top-tier research institution through collaboration with outstanding schools and the pursuit of groundbreaking research that has a global impact.

Chair Cook thanked the President for his presentation. She stated that this is a strong and collaborative Board. She affirmed that because we all believe in the University, we believe in the state.

10. ADJOURN

Chair Cook called for a motion to adjourn.

On a motion duly made by Jay Placencia and seconded by Courtney Nicolato, it was

VOTED: THAT The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees adjourn the meeting.

URI Board of Trustees
January 21, 2022 Meeting

VOTE: 15 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members
voted in the negative.

YEAS: Margo Cook, Karina Montilla Edmonds, Michael Fascitelli,
Charles Fogarty, Christine Heenan, Neil Kerwin, Matthew Lenz, Roby
Luna, David Martirano, Michael McNally, Cortney Nicolato, Vahid
Ownjazayeri, Jay Placencia, Thomas Ryan and Armand Sabitoni.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

Susan Petrovas and Richard Humphrey left the meeting prior to the vote.

At 2:37 p.m., this meeting ended.

The next URI Board of Trustees Meeting is scheduled for April 22, 2022.