



**Members**

Margo Cook '86, *Chair*

Michael D. Fascitelli '78

Charles Fogarty '80

Christine Heenan

Richard S. Humphrey

Neil Kerwin '73

Matthew Lenz '11

Roby Luna '04

David Martirano '91

Michael F. McNally '81, *Vice Chair*

Dr. Karina Montilla Edmonds '92

Cortney M. Nicolato '01

Vahid Ownjazayeri

Susan Petrovas '92

Yahaira "Jay" Placencia '01

Thomas Ryan '75

Armand E. Sabitoni '73

**Ex Officio Members**

Tim DelGiudice, *Chair*  
*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 Special Meeting  
Monday, April 12, 2021 • 6:00 p.m. EDT**

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

**MINUTES**

Chair Margo Cook welcomed everyone to the April 12, 2021 special virtual meeting of the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees. A roll call was taken by Interim General Counsel Peter Harrington, who acknowledged that a quorum was present. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Attendees present for this virtual meeting:

The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees voting members:

- Ms. Margo Cook, Chair
- Mr. Michael F. McNally, Vice Chair
- Dr. Karina Montilla Edmonds (arrived at 6:20 p.m.)
- Mr. Michael Fascitelli (arrived at 6:07 p.m.)
- Honorable Charles J. Fogarty, Jr.
- Ms. Christine M. Heenan
- Mr. Richard Humphrey
- Mr. Cornelius (Neil) Kerwin
- Mr. Matthew D. Lenz
- Mr. Roby Luna
- Mr. David J. Martirano
- Ms. Cortney Nicolato
- Mr. Vahid Ownjazayeri
- Mrs. Susan Petrovas
- Ms. Jay Placencia
- Mr. Thomas M. Ryan
- Mr. Armand E. Sabitoni

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

- Mr. Christopher Bove, Student Representative (arrived at 6:07 p.m.)
- Ms. Barbara Cottam, Chair, Board of Education
- Mr. Tim DelGiudice, Chair, Council on Postsecondary Education
- Dr. Mayrai Gindy, Faculty Representative

The University of Rhode Island Senior Leadership:

- Ms. Anne Marie Coleman, Assistant Vice President for Human Resources
- Ms. Michelle Curreri, Chief of Staff and Board Secretary
- Mr. Peter Harrington, Interim General Counsel

The University of Rhode Island staff members:

- Ms. Robin Cawley, Executive Assistant II
- Ms. Lauren Jensen, Assistant Legal Counsel
- Ms. Lynn Owens, Associate Secretary

**1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA**

Chair Cook called for a motion that the URI Board of Trustees accept the agenda for the meeting of April 12, 2021.

On a motion duly made by Neil Kerwin and seconded by Armand Sabitoni, it was

VOTED:            THAT            The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees accept the agenda for the meeting of April 12, 2021.

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

YEAS:            Margo Cook, 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

Karina Montilla Edmonds and Michael Fascitelli were not present for the vote.

**2. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

The Board of Trustees may seek to enter into executive session for the following item:

- a. Discussion regarding the URI Presidential Search finalists, pursuant to R.I.G.L. §42-46-5(a)(1).

Chair Cook stated that the Board will now seek to move into Executive Session for a discussion regarding the URI Presidential Search finalists, pursuant to R.I.G.L. § 42-46-5(a)(1). In accordance with that provision, the affected person was notified in advance in writing that the Board may be discussing his job performance and character at this meeting and was advised of his right to require that any such discussion be held at an open meeting. As the affected individual had not requested that the Board's discussion be held at an open meeting, she called for a motion.

On a motion duly made by Neil Kerwin and seconded by David Martirano and Jay Placencia, it was

VOTED:            THAT        The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees convene into Executive Session for a discussion regarding the URI Presidential Search finalists, pursuant to R.I.G.L. § 42-46-5(a)(1).

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

YEAS:            Margo Cook, 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

Karina Montilla Edmonds and Michael Fascitelli were not present for the vote.

At 6:06 p.m., the Board entered Executive Session. Virtual public access was paused. The following University staff members were present:

- Ms. Robin Cawley, Executive Assistant II
- Ms. Anne Marie Coleman, Assistant Vice President for Human Resources
- Ms. Michelle Curreri, Chief of Staff and Board Secretary

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- Mr. Peter Harrington, Interim General Counsel
- Ms. Lauren Jensen, Assistant Legal Counsel
- Ms. Lynn Owens, Associate Secretary

At 6:20 p.m., the Board returned to 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 April 12, 2021.

On a motion duly made by Armand Sabitoni and seconded by Jay Placencia, it was

VOTED            THAT:     The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees seal the minutes of the Executive Session that took place on April 12, 2021.

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

**3. ACTION ITEMS FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- a. Appointment of the new President of the University of Rhode Island.

Chair Cook called on Trustee Tom Ryan, Chair of the URI Presidential Search Committee, to provide an abbreviated description of the process which has brought the Board of Trustees to this point.

Trustee Tom Ryan stated that on August 20, 2020, Isaacson Miller, a nationally recognized search firm, was selected. The URI Presidential Search Committee launched on October 5, 2020, and an Advisory Search Committee launched on October 8, 2020. On October 20-21, 2020, the Search Committee held two days of town hall meetings with faculty, staff, and community members to get feedback on what they thought the next presidential profile should look like.

Trustee Ryan highlighted that top-of-mind themes emerged from the feedback, including strong evidence of success in the following areas: student success;

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fundraising; financial challenges; justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. He reported that on October 29, 2020, the Advisory Search Committee met again; the presidential profile was completed on November 11, 2020.

Trustee Ryan stated that initially 300 prospects were identified, including 34% people of color, 40% who identified as women. The pool of candidates was narrowed down to 200. Isaacson Miller, in conducting its due diligence, vetted the candidates for seriousness, culture, experience, probability of success. The list was narrowed to 100, then subsequently narrowed to the top 20. The Search Committee reviewed biographies and candidate letters, and ranked the candidates, coming up with the top nine. Of the top nine, three were provosts, six were deans, four from public universities, three from private universities, and two from international universities. The group consisted of three white men, three white women, one Asian woman, one Asian man, one black man. The group was narrowed to the top four; one white male, one white woman, one black male, and an Asian male. Two sets of interviews were held with the top four candidates; one with the whole Search Committee; one with a smaller group of the Search Committee. Observers from the university community were included in the interviews.

Trustee Ryan reported that the Selection Committee chose two finalists to advance in the process. Each finalist was introduced to the campus community during a public forum, one held on March 29, 2021 and one held on March 30, 2021. In parallel with the forums, Isaacson Miller conducted reference checks. Following the campus forums, each finalist met with the Board of Trustees and members of Dr. Dooley's executive committee (senior leadership). A campus survey was conducted after the forums. The results of the survey were consistent - both candidates were collegial, set the right values, had the right experience - but essentially, one candidate rose above the other based on greater experience, more experience in international (relations), research, work on diversity, efforts around the humanities and collective bargaining units. Comments from the Advisory Search Committee were much the same; one candidate was clearly the favorite. Reference checks mirrored the survey results, with some detail.

Trustee Ryan said that on April 1, 2021, the URI Presidential Search Committee met again to consider the information gathered at the public forums, the reference checks, and the survey information from the University community. He announced that the Committee voted unanimously to recommend to the Board of Trustees Dr. Marc B. Parlange as the twelfth president of the University of Rhode Island.

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Chair Cook emphasized that the recommendation of the URI Presidential Search Committee was unanimous.

Chair Cook called for a motion that the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees approve the appointment of Dr. Marc B. Parlange as the new President of the University of Rhode Island.

On a motion duly made by Neil Kerwin and Armand Sabitoni, and seconded by Tom Ryan, it was

VOTED        THAT:        The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees approve the appointment of Dr. Marc B. Parlange as the new President of the University of Rhode Island.

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

Chair Cook confirmed that the motion was approved by a unanimous vote; Dr. Marc B. Parlange was appointed the new President of the University of Rhode Island. She pronounced that this is a momentous occasion for all of us at the University, and she stated that she couldn't be more thrilled. She commended Board member Tom Ryan for all the work he's done as Chair of the URI Presidential Search Committee.

- b. Authorization of the Board Chair to negotiate an employment contract with the new President of URI, subject to approval by the Board.

Chair Cook called for a motion that the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees authorize the Board Chair to negotiate an employment contract with the new President of URI, subject to the approval of the Board.

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

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VOTED        THAT:     The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees authorize the Board Chair to negotiate an employment contract with the new President of URI, subject to the approval of the Board.

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

**4.     ADJOURN**

Chair Cook declared that the University of Rhode Island was about to start a new era, and praised the work of the Board and all involved in the process of selecting URI's next president. She noted that she was excited to celebrate with everyone virtually at the April Board meeting, and in person in June.

Chair Cook called for a motion that the URI Board of Trustees adjourn the meeting.

On a motion duly made by Jay Placencia and Neil Kerwin and seconded by David Martirano, it was

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

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

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ABSTAINS: 0

At 6:35 p.m., this meeting ended.

**The next regular meeting of the URI Board of Trustees is scheduled for April 23, 2021.**