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Mayrai Gindy
Faculty Representative

Christopher Bove '23
Student Representative

**The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees
Academic Affairs, Research, and Student Life Committee Meeting
Thursday, April 22, 2021 · 2:15 p.m.**

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

MINUTES

A formal roll call was taken verifying that a quorum was present, and Chair Kerwin called the meeting to order at 2:15 p.m.

Attendees present for this virtual meeting:

The URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs, Research, and Student Life Committee voting members:

- Mr. Neil Kerwin, Chair
- Dr. Karina Montilla Edmonds, Vice Chair
- Honorable Charles J. Fogarty
- Mr. Matthew D. Lenz

Absent: Mr. Richard Humphrey

The URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs, Research, and Student Life Committee ex officio members in attendance:

- Ms. Margo Cook, Chair, Board of Trustees
- Dr. Mayrai Gindy, Faculty Representative
- Mr. Michael McNally, Vice Chair, Board of Trustees
- Dr. David M. Dooley, President

The University of Rhode Island Senior Leadership in attendance:

- Ms. Mary Grace Almandrez, Associate Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer
- Mr. Thorrr Bjorn, Director of Athletics
- Dr. Kathy Collins, Vice President, Student Affairs

- Ms. Anne Marie Coleman, Assistant Vice President for Human Resources (joined at 2:49 p.m.)
- Ms. Michelle Curreri, Chief of Staff and Board Secretary
- Mr. Donald DeHayes, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Mr. Peter Harrington, Interim General Counsel
- 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. Lori Ciccomascolo, Assistant Vice President, Student Affairs
- Ms. Lauren Jensen, Assistant Legal Counsel
- Ms. Ann Morrissey, Special Assistant to the Provost (joined at 2:32 p.m.)
- Ms. Lynn Owens, Associate Secretary
- Ms. Shawn Simmons, Executive Assistant II
- Dr. Anne Veeger, Vice Provost

1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

Chair Neil Kerwin called for a motion that the URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs, Research, and Student Life Committee accept the agenda for the meeting of April 22, 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,
Research, and Student Life Committee accept the
Agenda for the meeting of April 22, 2021

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

YEAS: Karina Montilla Edmonds, Charles Fogarty, Neil
Kerwin, and Matthew Lenz

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

a. Minutes of the January 14, 2021 Meeting [Enclosure 2a](#)

Chair Kerwin called for a motion that the URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs, Research, and Student Life Committee approve the minutes for the meeting held January 14, 2021.

On a motion duly made by Charles Fogarty and seconded by Karina Edmonds, it was:

VOTED:	THAT	The URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs, Research, and Student Life Committee approve the minutes for the meeting held January 14, 2021.
	VOTE:	4 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.
	YEAS:	Karina Montilla Edmonds, Charles Fogarty, Neil Kerwin, and Matthew Lenz
	NAYS:	0
	ABSTAINS:	0

3. REPORT OF THE CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER

Provost Don DeHayes presented his report, saying that while fall enrollment was up slightly from what was projected, we had some concern that we would have a drop off from fall to spring because of COVID implications and restrictions. However, because of extraordinary efforts on the part of the Colleges, Graduate School, and the enrollment management team, URI had strong fall to spring retention and an influx of new students. The prospects for enrollment for the next academic year are also looking good as URI exceeded 25,000 application for Fall '21 admission, the largest applicant pool in our history.

Provost DeHayes talked about the efforts to advance the *Anti-Black Racism: Academic Affairs Action Agenda for Change*, including the very successful Academic Summit “Anti-Racism at URI: Academic Curriculum and Pedagogy” in January, which had a record attendance of 640 participants and featured Dr. Ibram X. Kendi and numerous workshops and presentations by URI faculty.

URI Online continues to move forward with a main focus on adult learners. New graduate certificates have been added, along with accelerated pathways for completing both Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees simultaneously within five years, referred to as Advanced Bachelors-Masters (ABM) programs.

We are pleased to announce that we will have a largely outdoor in-person Commencement this year, which makes our students and their families very happy.

The Provost reported that the number of students that completed degree requirements to graduate exceeded each of the last three years, despite the complications from the pandemic. (Complete details are shown in [Enclosure 3a.](#))

4. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Overview of Progress on the Student Affairs Strategic Plan: Lessons Learned During the Pandemic & Leading Through the Pandemic: Triage, Stabilization, and Transformation

Vice President for Student Affairs Kathy Collins presented the report. She noted that our students have had a “lived experience” of the changes forced by the COVID epidemic. She said that just before the shutdown, her department had completed their first strategic plan for the Division of Student Affairs. Our focus is on the student experience and supporting their time at URI so that they progress to becoming alums. We are the largest student employer on campus, we represent 1.9 million square feet of space, we are focused on the physical and mental health needs of our students. We believe that data drives our planning to move forward, but we also made a point of driving momentum among our staff. The strategic plan introduces five goals for the student experience:

- Health and Wellness
- Connectedness and Belonging
- Access and Affordability
- Preparation and Learning
- Assessment, Efficiency, and Effectiveness

She said that among many other goals, we want to build traditions and be good stewards. (Complete details are shown in [Enclosure 4a](#), [Enclosure 4ai.](#))

b. Proposed University Indigenous Land Acknowledgement Draft Statement

Mary Grace Almandrez, Chief Diversity Officer, presented the draft statement. She said that we as a university community are asked to consider making this draft statement official and have it become part of our public presentations, events and traditions. In drafting this proposal, we consulted with alum and executive director of the Tomaquag Museum, Lorén Spears. Discussion followed. Mayrai Gindy asked if the Faculty Senate would be included before the statement is finalized. Dr. Almandrez responded yes and noted that other vetting, such as consulting with historians, will be part of the finalization process. Chair Kerwin noted that the Board of Trustees will be anxious to see the input of constituent groups. (The draft statement and complete details are shown in [Enclosure 4b](#))

c. Preliminary Report of Progress on the Academic Strategic Plan

Provost DeHayes said that we expect that incoming President Parlange will wish to have his vision and imprint on the University's next update to the Academic Strategic Plan. The current plan includes six goals. For each goal, there are several strategies and action and set of metrics designed to monitor progress toward achieving the goals. The first goal, Enhancing Student Success, is especially critical to our students and to the University's reputation and financial sustainability. Provost DeHayes reported metrics demonstrating significant progress in advancing student success in recent years. (Complete details are shown in [Enclosure 4c.](#))

d. Annual Review of the Academic Affairs, Research, and Student Life Committee Charter

Chair Kerwin stated the need to review the AARSL Committee Charter as we go forward. Discussion followed. It was generally agreed that the three focus areas for the committee each deserve their own committee. Chair Kerwin said that for the range of what we are discussing, two hours at each meeting are just not enough. It was suggested that the committee might be split into two separate committees and various structures were discussed to ensure that areas of intersection across committees could be accomplished. Chair Kerwin suggested that the full board may wish to reconsider how to approach the multiple areas (Academic Affairs, Research, Student Life, and Athletics) currently incorporated into this committee by either redistributing effort or adding at least one committee. For example, perhaps a committee for Academic Affairs & Research and a Campus Life committee. ([Enclosure 4d](#))

5. ACTION ITEMS

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

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

VOTED: THAT The URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs, Research, and Student Life Committee recommend that the Board of Trustees approve the awarding of degrees, diplomas, certificates, and honors to the students who completed all applicable

academic requirements by the end of the
Spring 2021 semester.

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

YEAS: Karina Montilla Edmonds, Charles Fogarty,
Neil Kerwin, and Matthew Lenz

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

Note: This item was considered at the start of the meeting.

6. ADJOURN

Chair Kerwin thanked the Committee and called for a motion to adjourn the meeting of April 22, 2021.

On a motion duly made by Karina Montilla Edmonds and seconded by Matthew Lenz, it was

VOTED: THAT The URI Board of Trustees Academic
Affairs, Research, and Student Life
Committee adjourn the meeting of April 22,
2021.

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

YEAS: Karina Montilla Edmonds, Charles Fogarty,
Neil Kerwin, and Matthew Lenz

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

The meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

The next URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs, Research, and Student Life Committee meeting is scheduled for June 24, 2021.