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Student Representative

**The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees
Academic Affairs and Research Committee Meeting
Thursday, April 21, 2022 • 1:45 p.m. EDT**

**The University of Rhode Island
The Coastal Institute, Hazard Room
215 South Ferry Rd, Narragansett, RI 02882**

OFFICIAL MINUTES

Committee Chair Neil Kerwin welcomed everyone to the April 21, 2022, meeting of the Academic Affairs and Research Committee of the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees. He conducted a roll call attendance and determined that a quorum was present. At 1:45 p.m., this meeting was called to order.

The Committee held a hybrid meeting, with some Committee members gathered in person, and some members participated remotely. Public access to the meeting was made available via the YouTube video platform.

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

- Mr. Neil Kerwin, Committee Chair (in person)
- Dr. Karina Montilla Edmonds, Committee Vice Chair (remote)
- Honorable Charles J. Fogarty (in person)
- Mr. Richard Humphrey (remote)
- Mr. Matthew Lenz (in person)
- Ms. Susan Petrovas (remote)
- Dr. Bethany Jenkins (ex officio, non-voting, in person)

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

- Ms. Margo Cook, Board Chair (ex officio, voting)
- Mr. Michael McNally, Board Vice Chair (ex officio, voting)
- Dr. Marc Parlange, URI President (ex officio, non-voting)

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

- Dr. Laura L. Beauvais, Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs (in person)
- Dr. Peter J. Snyder, Vice President, Research & Economic Development (in person)
- Ms. Anne Marie Coleman, Assistant Vice President, Human Resources Administration (in person)

The University of Rhode Island staff members in attendance:

- Dr. Cynthia Cruger, College of Health Sciences (remote)
- Ms. Michelle Curreri, Secretary to the Board of Trustees (in person)
- Mr. Peter Harrington, Associate General Counsel (in person)
- Dr. Sarah Larson, College of Health Sciences (remote)
- Ms. Shawn Simmons, Executive Assistant (remote)
- Dr. Anne Veeger, Vice Provost for Academic Faculty Initiatives (in person)

1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

Committee Chair Kerwin introduced Dr. Bethany Jenkins, who is joining the committee as the faculty representative. He then called for a motion that the URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs and Research Committee accept the agenda for the meeting of April 21, 2022.

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

VOTED THAT: The URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs and Research Committee accept the Agenda for the meeting of April 21, 2022.

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

YEAS: Karina Montilla Edmonds, Charles Fogarty, Richard Humphrey, Neil Kerwin, Matthew Lenz, Susan Petrovas.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Minutes of the January 20, 2022 Meeting [Enclosure 2.a.](#)

Committee Chair Kerwin called for a motion that the URI Board of Trustees Academic

Affairs and Research Committee approve the minutes for the meeting held January 20, 2022.

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 approve the minutes for the meeting held January 20, 2022.

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

YEAS: Karina Montilla Edmonds, Charles Fogarty, Richard Humphrey, Neil Kerwin, Matthew Lenz, Susan Petrovas.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

Committee Chair Kerwin then asked the committee for permission to change the order of the agenda, thereby allowing the action items to be taken up first.

6. ACTION ITEMS

- a. Review of the awarding of undergraduate and graduate degrees, diplomas, certificates, and honors to be conferred by the President to the candidates who will have completed their requirements at the conclusion of the Spring 2022 term and who have been approved by the faculty of the University of Rhode Island, and recommendation for approval to the URI Board of Trustees. [Enclosure 6.a.](#)

Committee Chair Kerwin called for a motion that the Academic Affairs and Research Committee of the URI Board of Trustees recommend that the 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 will have completed their requirements at the conclusion of the Spring 2022 term and who have been approved by the faculty of the University of Rhode Island.

On a motion duly made by Karina Montilla Edmonds and seconded by Susan Petrovas, it was

VOTED THAT: The Academic Affairs and Research Committee of the URI Board of Trustees recommend that the Board of Trustees approve the awarding of undergraduate and graduate degrees, diplomas, certificates, and honors conferred by the President to the candidates who will have completed their requirements at the conclusion of the Spring 2022 term and

who have been approved by the faculty of the University of Rhode Island, 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, Matthew Lenz, Susan Petrovas, Richard Humphrey.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS:0

- b.** Review of the creation of a new Bachelor of Science in Nutrition within the College of Health Services, and recommendation for approval to the URI Board of Trustees. [Enclosure 6.b.](#)

Interim Provost Beauvais explained that the creation of a new Bachelor of Science in Nutrition is desirable for our students and is supported by Dean Cynthia Cruger and Professor Sarah Larson of the College of Health Sciences. The Provost noted that this change will make a Bachelor of Science degree out of a currently existing sub-plan, making the Nutrition degree more flexible and transparent and distinct from the Dietetics degree. Conversation ensued between Committee members and the Provost about similar programs at other New England colleges and whether the new degree will impact on the budget.

Committee Chair Kerwin called for a motion that the Academic Affairs and Research Committee of the URI Board of Trustees recommend that the Board of Trustees approve the creation of a new Bachelor of Science degree in Nutrition within the College of Health Sciences, as recommended and presented in [Enclosure 6.b.](#)

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

VOTED THAT: The Academic Affairs and Research Committee of the URI Board of Trustees recommends that the Board of Trustees approve the creation of a new Bachelor of Science degree in Nutrition, as recommended and presented.

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

YEAS: Karina Montilla Edmonds, Charles Fogarty, Richard Humphrey, Neil Kerwin, Matthew Lenz, Susan Petrovas.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS:0

- c. Review of the awarding of posthumous academic degrees to the following students at Commencement 2022, and recommendation for approval to the URI Board of Trustees:

Ms. Leah Ribner-Martin, College of Environment and Life Sciences
Ms. Kathryn Bergmann, College of Environment and Life Sciences
Mr. Alex Banner, College of Business *
Mr. Maximus Julian, College of Business
[Enclosure 6.c. \(updated\) *](#)

**Due to a scrivener's error, the wrong first name was used for Mr. Banner in board materials; it has been corrected in the wording of the updated recommendation memorandum, these minutes and the Board resolution.*

These students passed away during the school year but had satisfied the requirements as listed in the University Manual and were recommended for the posthumous degree by the deans of their colleges. Provost Beauvais commented that students must have attained at least 50% of their degree credits. The department chair and dean of the college may recommend to the President, who may then recommend to the Board of Trustees that the degrees be given.

Committee Chair Kerwin called for a motion that the Academic Affairs and Research Committee of the URI Board of Trustees recommend that the Board of Trustees approve the awarding of posthumous academic degrees to the following students at Commencement 2022, as recommended and presented in Enclosure 6.c. (updated).

Ms. Leah Ribner-Martin, College of Environment and Life Sciences
Ms. Kathryn Bergmann, College of Environment and Life Sciences
Mr. Alex Banner, College of Business
Mr. Maximus Julian, College of Business

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

VOTED THAT: The Academic Affairs and Research Committee of the URI Board of Trustees recommend that the Board of Trustees approve the awarding of posthumous degrees at Commencement 2022 to the students listed, as recommended and presented.

Ms. Leah Ribner-Martin, College of Environment and Life Sciences
Ms. Kathryn Bergmann, College of Environment and Life Sciences
Mr. Alex Banner, College of Business
Mr. Maximus Julian, College of Business

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

YEAS: Karina Montilla Edmonds, Charles Fogarty, Richard
Humphrey, Neil Kerwin, Matthew Lenz, Susan Petrovas.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAIN:0

3. REPORT OF THE CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER

a. Update on searches

Interim Provost Laura Beauvais reported that she is overseeing several important searches right now – a new executive director for the Ryan Institute for Neuroscience, a new dean for the College of Business, and a new dean for University College for Academic Success.

b. Update on the fifth-year interim report to NECHE, JCAP work on mission statement, update on revision of URI's core values

The Provost noted that an interim report is due in August to the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE), the accrediting body for URI. A working group is preparing a draft report, which is an abbreviated edition of the comprehensive report. She reported that the Joint Committee on Academic Planning (JCAP) is working on updating its mission and cornerstone values statements.

c. Update on faculty annual reviews, promotion and tenure

Faculty reviews are complete and tenure recommendations will come to the Board of Trustees for approval at the June meeting.

d. Progress report on revised Honorary Degree nomination process

The annual honorary degree process is being updated. A draft of new criteria and timelines are being developed with the Honorary Degree Committee that will align better with the board policy and its calendar.

e. Update on search for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) deans

Recent diversity initiatives include appointing new assistant deans for equity and inclusion. The College of Arts & Sciences and the Graduate School of Oceanography have hired candidates, while the College of Health Sciences and the University College for Academic Success are continuing to search for their candidates.

f. COVID Report

Provost Beauvais provided a COVID update report, noting that URI has done well managing COVID on campus this year. Mask mandates were gradually removed

from campus as part of a very smooth transition back to a more normal state. The University is thinking about plans for the fall.

g. Commencement 2022

Provost Beauvais encouraged all the board members to attend Commencement exercises on May 20-22.

Adding to her report, the Provost stated that a delegation from the Cape Coast University in Ghana recently visited the University and met with various college faculty and deans to renew a Memorandum of Understanding and to develop future research and educational programs. In May, URI will recognize and celebrate its 50 years of research and work in Indonesia, hosting several Indonesian provincial governors, Senior Ministry Officials, and members of the Rhode Island national Congressional delegation as part of the 50th anniversary celebration. The U.S. Department of State has decoupled travel risk advisories from COVID rates so that international programs can begin to get back to a more normal flow.

4. REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Dr. Peter Snyder, Vice President for Research and Economic Development reported to the Committee on the following items:

a. Update on EPSCoR (Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research) Track I submission:

The EPSCOR Track 1 application was not funded so URI will revise and resubmit, adding focus to water contamination by plastics. URI is applying for a bridge grant to carry the program through the next year while a resubmittal is prepared. Dr. Snyder noted that the University expects to receive that grant and should hear back about funding in April 2023.

b. Submission of the Economic Development Administration Build Back Better Regional Challenge (EDA BBBRC) grant application, timeline for next steps:

Dr. Snyder reported that URI's submission has been quite successful. URI is now responding to another round of questions from the EDA and is in a good place with regard to the process. The application is being revised to reduce the budget and will be resubmitted. MIT's Lincoln Labs recently visited the University and was extremely excited to provide some funding to collaborate with URI. Dr. Snyder expects that the University will hear about an award by the end of September.

c. Completed external audits of structure and resourcing of Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) and of Research Development Office:

Dr. Snyder reported that URI successfully completed external audits of its programs. Staffing limitations have been an issue, but the audits went well. Dr. Snyder is working with senior leadership to explore how URI can improve its services. The annual budget for the

division has been essentially static since 2011, whereas its grant portfolio has doubled. The division has added only one additional staff person in OSP since 2011, whereas the workload has doubled.

Dr. Snyder noted that later this year he will invite the Board for a deep dive into the budget issues, which include already being over budget on the 2023 budget. He reported that faculty are not being appropriately assisted or incentivized in grant preparation. Worried that URI will see a diminishment of enthusiasm and a loss of talent, President Parlange will speak more about these issues at tomorrow's board meeting. Committee member Bethany Jenkins offered support to Vice President Snyder noting that the University doesn't have the human resources to obtain the funding it could possibly access. She remarked that URI needs approximately six more positions added to its grant support efforts centrally, and additional positions within several of the colleges. Additional discussion followed. Anne Marie Coleman, Assistant Vice President for Human Resources said that they are currently researching additional staffing.

- d. URI's participation in international summit on plastics pollution

Concluding his report, Dr. Snyder noted that URI just participated in an international summit on plastics pollution and has a unique opportunity to host a follow-up summit involving a number of different countries, which should be a very high visibility event.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. **Annual review of the AAR Committee Charter** [Enclosure 5.a.](#)

Committee Chair Kerwin explained that the Committee is obligated to review its charter each year to ensure that it is accurate and to provide any edits or changes that are needed. He noted that the membership is accurate. He proposed that the members of the committee review the charter in detail and recommend to him any needed changes by mid-May

- b. **Annual review of the AAR Committee Calendar** [Enclosure 5.b.](#)

Committee Chair Kerwin asked that the committee conduct the same review of the calendar as set out above. He suggested that the committee might benefit if the workload was more evenly distributed throughout the year. Any proposed revisions will be circulated to the committee members.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Committee Chair Kerwin called for a motion to adjourn the meeting of April 21, 2022.

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

VOTED: THAT: The URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs and
Research Committee adjourn the meeting of April

URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs and Research Committee Meeting
April 21, 2022

21, 2022.

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

YEAS: Karina Montilla Edmonds, Charles Fogarty, Richard Humphrey, Neil Kerwin, Matthew Lenz, 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 June 23, 2022.