



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

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

**The University of Rhode Island
Ocean Science and Exploration Center, Challenger Room
Narragansett Bay Campus
15 Pier Road, Narragansett, RI 02882**

OFFICIAL MINUTES

Ex Officio Members

Dennis J. Duffy, '80, *Chair*
*R.I. Council on Postsecondary
Education*

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

Bethany D. Jenkins
Faculty Representative

Hannah Bachert '23
Student Representative

Committee Vice Chair Armand Sabitoni welcomed everyone and thanked guests for attending the April 21, 2022, meeting of the University Advancement and External Affairs Committee of the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees.

At 1:47 p.m., Vice Chair Sabitoni took a roll call. In the absence of a quorum, action on Agenda Items 1 and 2 was deferred until Trustees Margo Cook and Cortney Nicolato joined the meeting at 2:09 p.m.

The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees University Advancement and External Affairs Committee members present:

- Mr. Armand E. Sabitoni, Committee Vice Chair (remote)
- Ms. Cortney Nicolato (in person, arrived at 2:09 p.m.)
- Mr. Vahid Ownjazayeri (in person)
- Ms. Barbara Cottam, Chair, Board of Education (ex officio – non-voting) (in person, arrived at 1:49 p.m.)
- Mr. Dennis J. Duffy, Chair, R.I. Council on Postsecondary Education (non-voting) (in person)
- Ms. Margo Cook, URI Board of Trustees, Chair (ex officio - voting) (in person, arrived at 2:09 p.m.)

URI Board of Trustees
University Advancement and External Affairs Committee Meeting
April 21, 2022

The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees University Advancement and External Affairs Committee members not present:

- Ms. Christine M. Heenan, Committee Chair
- Mr. Michael F. McNally, URI Board of Trustees Vice Chair (ex officio - voting)
- Dr. Marc B. Parlange, President (ex officio – non-voting)

The University of Rhode Island President’s Leadership Council members present:

- Ms. Linda Acciaro, Interim Executive Director for External Relations and Communications (in person)
- Ms. Abby Benson, Senior Advisor and Chief of Staff to the President (in person, arrived at 1:49 p.m.)
- Ms. Alyssa Boss, General Counsel (in person)
- Ms. Lil Breul O’Rourke, President, URI Foundation & Alumni Engagement (URIFAE) (in person)

The University of Rhode Island staff members present:

- Ms. Lauren Burgess, Director, Legislative and Government Relations (in person)
- Mr. Jeffrey Cabral, Vice President for Development, URIFAE (in person)
- Mr. Carlos Lopez Estrada, Director, Legislative and Government Relations (in person)
- Ms. Cheryl Trudel, Executive Assistant (remote)

Guests in attendance:

- Ms. Diane Chace Fannon ‘74, Board of Directors, Executive Committee Vice Chair, Marketing and Communications Chair, URIFAE (remote)
- Mr. Alfred J. Verrecchia ’67, M.B.A. ’72, Hon. ’04, Board of Directors, Executive Committee Chair, URIFAE (in person)

Vice Chair Sabitoni welcomed a new member of the URI Board of Trustees, Mr. Dennis J. Duffy, to the Committee. Mr. Duffy was recently appointed by Governor McKee to serve as Chair of the R.I. Council on Postsecondary Education.

Vice Chair Sabitoni informed the Committee that they would advance to Agenda Item 3.a. for discussion while waiting for additional Committee members to join the meeting.

3. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Annual Review University Advancement and External Affairs Committee Charter [Enclosure 3.a.](#)

Vice Chair Sabitoni reviewed the charter and asked members if they had any desire for deletions, amendments, suggestions, and/or ideas to broaden the mission, purpose, and responsibility of the charter. Committee members had no comments.

b. Annual Review of the University Advancement and External Affairs Committee Calendar [Enclosure 3.b.](#)

Vice Chair Sabitoni informed the Committee of the upcoming meeting dates as outlined in Enclosure 3.b., and asked Committee members for feedback related to the current Committee meeting schedule (held the day before each full Board meeting). Committee member Nicolato commented that the Board of Trustees will consider holding Committee meetings within a week of the Board meetings and that further discussion about this topic would continue at the April 22, 2022 Board meeting. Vice Chair Sabitoni concurred with Committee Nicolato, saying it would be helpful to have the time to develop further content for discussion.

Vice Chair Sabitoni commenced with Discussion Item 3.c., inviting Carlos Lopez Estrada and Lauren Burgess, Directors of Legislative and Government Relations, to address the Committee.

c. Update – Legislative and Government Relations [Enclosure 3.c.](#)

Carlos Lopez Estrada and Lauren Burgess reviewed a presentation titled, "[The University of Rhode Island Government Relations Update.](#)" which outlined their progress and major accomplishments: new legislation that was passed into law on March 28, 2022, allowing URI Board of Trustee members to attend meetings remotely; securing millions of dollars in congressionally directed spending for projects specifically earmarked for the University; and reviewed ongoing advocacy efforts that are critical to advancing the University's agenda.

Mr. Lopez Estrada spoke to the Committee about how members of the Board of Trustees can help advance the University's goals based on their experience and, expertise. Mr. Lopez Estrada concluded the presentation with a comment that the government affairs team's strategic approach has raised remarkable awareness at the state level and has put the University at the forefront.

Vice Chair Sabitoni thanked Ms. Burgess and Mr. Lopez Estrada saying that they had done a remarkable job in support of the University's priorities in collaboration with the President.

Vice Chair Sabitoni moved to the next agenda topic, Discussion Item 3.d., and invited Lil Breul O'Rourke, President, URI Foundation & Alumni Engagement (URIFAE), to address the Committee.

d. Update – Big Ideas. Bold Plans. The Campaign for the University of Rhode Island and Presidential Introduction Events [Enclosure 3.d.](#)

Lil Breul O'Rourke, President, URI Foundation & Alumni Engagement thanked Vice Chair Sabitoni and acknowledged the presence of Committee guests, Mr. Alfred Verrecchia and Ms. Diane Chace Fannon, before proceeding with the review of a presentation titled, "[URI Foundation & Alumni Engagement.](#)" She highlighted the five pillars of the campaign and the various types of gifts recently received, such as student access scholarships; Champlin Foundation for research equipment; a gift from Charlotte Metcalf to support a new leadership position for the Metcalf Institute; innovative and distinctive program support for Disability Services; and an endowed scholarship for a student in the ROTC Program.

President O'Rourke also provided an update on the progress towards the goal of the Big Ideas. Bold Plans. The Campaign for the University of Rhode Island has raised to date gifts totaling \$230.61M towards the \$300M goal. She also provided an overview of Campaign pledges by gift type. Currently, there are over 29,000 donors to the campaign.

President O'Rourke concluded her presentation with an overview of the recent Presidential Engagement Tour, which included six cities and nearly 500 alumni and friends.

President O'Rourke introduced Mr. Jeff Cabral, Vice President for Development, who provided an overview of the Rhody Now program. The program has a total of 5,300 donors, reflecting a 17 % increase over last year; \$2.2M raised for immediate-use cash; planned gifts have 502 Oliver Watson Society members, with \$89.4M expected bequests.

At 2:10 p.m., Vice Chair Sabitoni conducted a roll call and reported that a quorum of members was present.

1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

Vice Chair Sabitoni called for a motion to accept the agenda for the April 21, 2022 meeting.

On a motion duly made by Vahid Ownjazayeri and seconded by Cortney Nicolato, it was

VOTED:	THAT	The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees University Advancement and External Affairs Committee accept the April 21, 2022 meeting agenda.
	VOTE:	4 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.
	YEAS:	Margo Cook, Cortney Nicolato, Vahid Ownjazayeri, and Armand Sabitoni.
	NAYS:	0
	ABSTAINS:	0

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

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

Vice Chair Sabitoni called for a motion to approve the minutes for the January 20, 2022 meeting.

On a motion duly made by Cortney Nicolato and seconded by Vahid Ownjazayeri, it was

VOTED: THAT The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees University Advancement and External Affairs Committee approve the minutes of the January 20, 2022 meeting.

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

YEAS: Margo Cook, Cortney Nicolato, Vahid Ownjazayeri, and Armand Sabitoni

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

At 2:24 p.m., Board of Trustees Chair Margo Cook left the meeting.

3. DISCUSSION ITEMS

e. Search Update – Vice President, Communications & Marketing

Vice Chair Sabitoni provided an update on the status of the national search for a vice president for the Department of Communications & Marketing. He stated that the application deadline closed on April 8th. The Search Committee met on April 14th and reviewed more than sixty (60) applicants. Virtual interviews will commence within the week. Finalists will be invited for on-campus interviews with opportunities to present to the University community and stakeholders.

4. ADJOURN

Vice Chair Sabitoni thanked everyone and called for a motion to adjourn the April 21, 2022 meeting.

On a motion duly made by Vahid Ownjazayeri and seconded by Cortney Nicolato, it was

VOTED THAT The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees University Advancement and External Affairs Committee adjourn the meeting of April 21, 2022.

VOTE: 3 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

YEAS: Cortney Nicolato, Vahid Ownjazayeri, and Armand Sabitoni.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

The meeting adjourned at 2:26 p.m.

URI Board of Trustees
University Advancement and External Affairs Committee Meeting
April 21, 2022

UPCOMING MEETING

The next URI Board of Trustees University Advancement and External Affairs Committee Meeting is scheduled for June 23, 2022.