



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

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

**The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees
University Advancement and External Affairs Committee Meeting
Friday, June 17, 2022 · 2:00 p.m. EDT**

**The University of Rhode Island
Alumni Center — Beagle Board Room
73 Upper College Road, Kingston, RI 02881**

OFFICIAL MINUTES

Committee Chair Christine Heenan welcomed everyone and thanked guests for attending the June 17, 2022, meeting of the University Advancement and External Affairs Committee of the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees.

At 2:01 p.m. Chair Heenan took a roll call and acknowledged that a quorum of members was present and called the meeting to order.

The Committee held a hybrid meeting. Some Committee members participated remotely, and some gathered in person. A recording of the meeting is available at: <https://web.uri.edu/trustees/meetings/>

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

- Ms. Christine M. Heenan, Committee Chair (remote)
- Mr. Armand E. Sabitoni, Committee Vice Chair (remote)
- Ms. Cortney Nicolato (in person)
- Ms. Barbara Cottam, Chair, Board of Education (ex officio, non-voting) (remote)
- Mr. Michael F. McNally, URI Board of Trustees Vice Chair (ex officio, voting) (remote)
- Dr. Marc B. Parlange, President (ex officio, non-voting) (remote)

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

- Mr. Vahid Ownjazayeri
- Ms. Margo Cook, URI Board of Trustees Chair (ex officio, voting)
- Mr. Dennis J. Duffy, Chair, R.I. Council on Postsecondary Education (non-voting) (remote)

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

- Ms. Linda Acciaro, Interim Executive Director for External Relations and Communications (remote)
- Laura L. Beauvais, Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affair (remote)
- Ms. Alyssa Boss, General Counsel (remote)
- Ms. Lil Breul O'Rourke, President, URI Foundation & Alumni Engagement (remote)

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 (remote)
- Ms. Michelle Curreri, Secretary to the Board of Trustees (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)
- Ms. Cheryl Trudel, Executive Assistant (remote)

Guests in attendance:

- Mr. Alfred J. Verrecchia '67, M.B.A. '72, Hon. '04, Board of Directors, Executive Committee Chair, URIFAE (remote)

Committee Chair Heenan read into the record the University of Rhode Island Land Acknowledgement Statement:

“The University of Rhode Island occupies the traditional stomping ground of the Narragansett Nation and the Niantic People. We honor and respect the enduring and continuing relationship between the Indigenous people and this land by teaching and learning more about their history and present-day communities, and by becoming stewards of the land we, too, inhabit.”

1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

Chair Heenan called for a motion to accept the agenda for the June 17, 2022 meeting.

On a motion duly made by Vice Chair Sabitoni and seconded by Courtney Nicolato, it was

VOTED: **THAT** The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees University Advancement and External Affairs Committee accept the June 17, 2022 meeting agenda.

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

YEAS: Christine Heenan, Michael McNally, Courtney Nicolato, and Armand Sabitoni.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Minutes of the April 21, 2022 Meeting [Enclosure 2.a.](#)

Chair Heenan called for a motion to approve the minutes for the April 21, 2022 meeting. On a motion duly made by Vice Chair Sabitoni and seconded by Michael McNally, it was

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

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

YEAS: Christine Heenan, Michael McNally, Cortney Nicolato, and Armand Sabitoni.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

3. DISCUSSION ITEMS

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

Mr. Carlos Lopez Estrada and Ms. Lauren Burgess, directors of Legislative and Government Relations, reviewed a presentation titled, "[The University of Rhode Island Advancement and External Affairs Subcommittee.](#)" which outlined the state budget and a review of the legislative team's progress and successful accomplishments related to the Blue Economy and the Narragansett Bay Campus (NBC).

Mr. Lopez Estrada provided updates that included securing a \$100M bond for the replacement of the NBC Horn building; \$37M in the Rhode Island Capital Plan (RICAP) Fund (also for the NBC); with total dollars received from RICAP, for the year, at \$140M for repair and maintenance of facilities.

Chair Heenan invited Ms. Lauren Burgess to also provide the Committee with updates and an overview of the new approach towards federal relations that Ms. Burgess has initiated since she arrived at the University.

Ms. Burgess provided an overview of the proactive and strategic long-term approach they are stewarding, with ongoing efforts to advance the University's agenda by engaging the University's Congressional delegation and champions of the University to secure millions of dollars in congressionally-directed spending for new projects earmarked for the University. Opportunity for success with the Economic Development Administration (EDA) Build Back Better Regional Challenge grant for \$7M of matching funds was noted, and if successful, would support the Blue Technology Innovation Center.

Ms. Burgess explained that the legislative team has started the process for the upcoming fiscal year 2023, with a focus on a much more synergistic strategy to move the University's agenda forward.

Chair Heenan thanked both Mr. Lopez Estrada and Ms. Burgess and asked Committee members if they had any questions.

Mr. McNally stated that while the team did a great job securing funding, efforts started too late to impact greater funding and that the State also needs to provide greater funding as well.

Chair Heenan responded by asking Mr. McNally if his perspective was relative to the General Assembly's priorities over the past year as opposed to a multi-year process of being a central priority that is viewed as a critical engine of economic development and state advancement. Mr. McNally concurred with Chair Heenan's assessment of his comment.

Chair Heenan stated that the topic would be great to discuss at the Board's retreat. She proceeded to open the floor to Committee members for comments and discussion in which several members provided comments.

**b. Update - Big Ideas. Bold Plans. The Campaign for the University of Rhode Island;
RhodyNow [Enclosure 3.b.](#)**

Jeffrey Cabral, Vice President, URI Foundation & Alumni Engagement, provided an overview of a presentation titled, "[URI Foundation & Alumni Engagement](#)" and reported on the progress of the current Campaign which has raised gifts totaling \$234M towards the \$300M goal as of June 16, 2022, with anticipation of reaching \$240M by the fall. Several gifts are pending, including \$3M in anonymous gifts towards the NBC bond, \$5M for the Economic Development Administration Blue Economy, as well as other gifts.

Vice President Cabral also provided an overview of Campaign commitments by purpose (endowed, RhodyNow, and operating gifts). There are several \$1M donor requests in the pipeline. He informed the Committee that a recession and current stock market conditions may have some psychological effect where donors could hold off when considering making gifts. Vice President Cabral informed the Committee that institutions across the country are also expressing the same concern and that the team is doing a great deal to offset any hesitancy. He is optimistic that they will make the \$300M Campaign goal.

Vice President Cabral stated that they had a strong annual fund performance this year, surpassing the fiscal year goal of \$2.5M and are nearing 6,000 RhodyNow donors while referencing a gain of

over 1,000 new donors from last October's Annual Day of Giving. He also referenced a recent nationwide survey that was conducted on annual fund results at colleges and universities in which only 28% of respondents stated that they have seen an increase in donors and dollars for this fiscal year. We are pleased that URI may end in the top 28 percent. Vice President Cabral thanked the Committee and guests for their support and gifts.

Committee member Nicolato asked Vice President Cabral to explain the difference between the donor numbers from the fiscal year 2017 to the fiscal year 2022. He stated that the difference is the implementation of "best practices" starting in fiscal year 2020, where prior to 2020 every gift was counted regardless of the amount. This inflated the numbers drastically. Fiscal years 2021 and 2022 utilized "best practices" to count gifts of \$55 and above to provide a true assessment.

Ms. Nicolato also asked what the demographic makeup is of the RhodyNow donors. Vice President Cabral stated that it varies across all demographics of our population. Next year they will be looking at how donors want to be engaged and will be increasing their text-to-give and social media platforms and outreach to younger donors, in combination with the standard practices of direct mail solicitations. Vice President Cabral also mentioned the new online giving platform that was just launched. They are also close to launching a brand-new webpage for the Foundation and Alumni Engagement. Chair Heenan thanked Vice President Cabral and moved to Discussion item 3.c.

c. Search Update – Vice President, Communications & Marketing

Chair Heenan announced the addition of a new Vice President for Communications and Marketing, Matthew McDonald, who currently serves as the associate vice president for Communications at the University of Miami. Chair Heenan provided an overview of Mr. McDonald's expertise and her knowledge of his career from her time in Boston when Mr. McDonald was creating riveting competitiveness and global attention from his tenure at Northeastern University.

Chair Heenan also took the time to thank Interim Executive Director for External Relations and Communications, Ms. Linda Acciardo, for her role in the search committee that brought Mr. McDonald to the University. Chair Heenan also thanked Ms. Acciardo for her years of service at the University overseeing every aspect of communications. President Parlange concurred with Chair Heenan and thanked Ms. Acciardo for her service and commitment to the University, for serving on the search committee for the new vice president, and for postponing her retirement.

4. ADJOURN

Chair Heenan thanked everyone and called for a motion to adjourn the June 17, 2022 meeting.

On a motion duly made by Cortney Nicolato and seconded by Vice Chair Armand Sabitoni, it was

URI Board of Trustees University Advancement and External Affairs Committee Meeting
June 17, 2022

VOTED THAT The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees University Advancement and External Affairs Committee adjourn the meeting of June 17, 2022.

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

YEAS: Christine Heenan, Michael McNally, Cortney Nicolato, and Armand Sabitoni.

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

The meeting adjourned at 2:43 p.m.

UPCOMING MEETING

The next URI Board of Trustees University Advancement and External Affairs Committee Meeting is scheduled for September 22, 2022.

Official