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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, September 10, 2020 • 2:15 p.m.**

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

MINUTES

Chair Rouse took a formal roll call attendance and acknowledged that a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 2:16 p.m.

Attendees present for this virtual meeting:

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

- Dr. Cecilia Rouse, Chair (remote)
- Dr. Karina Montilla Edmonds, Vice Chair (remote)
- Honorable Charles Fogarty (remote)
- Mr. Matthew D. Lenz (remote)

Other Board of Trustees members:

- Ms. Margo Cook, Chair of the URI Board of Trustees, (remote)

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

- Dr. Mayrai Gindy, Faculty Representative (remote)
- Mr. Christopher Bove, Student Representative (remote)

The University of Rhode Island Staff:

- Ms. Michelle Curreri, Chief of Staff and Board Liaison (remote)
- Don DeHayes, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs (remote)
- Dr. Peter Snyder, Vice President, Research and Economic Development (remote)
- Dr. Kathy Collins, Vice President for Student Affairs (remote)

- Ms. Anne Marie Coleman, Assistant Vice President, Human Resource Administration (remote)
- Mr. Thorr Bjorn, Director, Athletics (remote)
- Dr. Mary Grace Almandrez, Associate Vice President, Community, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (remote)
- Louis Saccoccio, J.D., General Counsel (remote)

1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

Chair Rouse called for a motion that the URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs, Research and Student Life Committee accept the agenda for the meeting of September 10, 2020.

On a motion duly made by Dr. Karina Montilla Edmonds 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 September 10, 2020

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

YEAS: Karina Montilla Edmonds, Charles Fogarty, Matthew Lenz,
Cecilia Rouse

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

Chair Rouse noted that she wanted to rearrange the order of the discussion items so the Committee would start with the personnel.

2. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. **Recommend Board approval for awarding of degrees for students who have completed all degree requirements at the conclusion of Summer Session in August.**

Chair Rouse referred to Provost DeHayes to discuss this item. Provost DeHayes stated that approximately 600 students completed their academic requirements for their undergraduate, graduate degrees and certificates throughout the summer and asked the Committee to recommend to the Board approval for the awarding of those degrees and certificates to this group of students.

Provost DeHayes stated there was some speculation as to why there was such a large number of degrees and certificates and that some related to the number of students last spring semester who received an unsatisfactory grade that did not count against them and then came back to complete the course over the summer. In addition, because this was the first summer session with 100% virtual delivery, it may have created more opportunities for students to take classes while working.

Chair Rouse asked if 600 is unusually large and what is the typical number. Provost DeHayes answered it was typically half of that number; however, the 600 includes students who have completed double majors and may be on this list twice because they received two bachelor's degrees.

Chair Rouse asked the Committee if there was further discussion.

Upon no further discussion, Chair Rouse asked for a motion that the Academic Affairs, Research and Student Life Committee of the URI Board of Trustees recommend that the Board of Trustees approve the awarding of degrees for students who have completed all degree requirements at the conclusion of summer session in August as recommended and presented.

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 awarding of degrees to students who have completed degree requirements at the conclusion of the session in August as recommended and presented
	VOTE:	4 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative
	YEAS:	Karina Montilla Edmonds, Charles Fogarty, Matthew Lenz, Cecilia Rouse
	NAYS:	0
	ABSTAINS:	0

b. Review goals and outcomes of research, scholarship, and creative work of the faculty and economic development efforts and impacts of university partnerships and initiatives

Chair Rouse asked Dr. Peter Snyder to provide an overview for discussion of this agenda item.

Dr. Snyder stated that he addressed and provided the full Board with the strategic map for the research division which lists six goals to create measurable outcomes.

Chair Rouse asked for thoughts from the Committee as to adding this to October's agenda or any other questions. Ms. Edmonds noted that she would welcome placing this on October's agenda and asked if Dr. Snyder could share if he would be introducing new metrics or if the metrics had already been established. Dr. Snyder answered that he intends to provide an annual "report card" that will consist of several new metrics to be proposed, as well as existing metrics (e.g., number of clients for the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) each year, and percentage of

minority/female-owned businesses assisted by the SBDC). He noted that several of these metrics will be specific to URI, whereas others will allow for benchmarking against similar research universities.

Chair Rouse noted that she would welcome this to be added to October's agenda. Dr. Snyder stated that if the committee would like the October meetings to be the annual meeting where he reports a thorough overview of the activities of the Research and Economic Development Enterprise, he would be happy to do so.

c. Approval of Awarding Tenure to Sara Feldstein Ewing, James Prochaska Professor of Psychology

Chair Rouse referred to Provost DeHayes to discuss this item. Provost DeHayes stated that James Prochaska is a world-renowned psychologist and recently-retired professor who established the James Prochaska Chair of Population Health. A search was completed, and Dr. Sara Feldstein Ewing was selected and accepted this position as a full professor. Provost DeHayes further noted that Dr. Feldstein Ewing is a very prestigious and accomplished scholar.

Mr. Lenz asked if it had to be renewed every year or is the endowment in perpetuity. Provost DeHayes answered that the endowment is in perpetuity and the appointment of Dr. Feldstein Ewing is lifetime.

Upon no further discussion Chair Rouse asked for a motion to award tenure to Dr. Sara Feldstein Ewing.

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

VOTED THAT: The URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs, Research, and Student Life Committee approve the awarding of tenure to Dr. Sara Feldstein Ewing as recommended and presented

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

YEAS: Karina Montilla Edmonds, Charles Fogarty, Matthew Lenz, Cecilia Rouse

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

d. Update on creation of metrics and planned action steps of the current Research and Economic Development Strategic Plan

Discussion of this item was combined into item b.

The Committee opened discussion about the process they may use for their review and approval of new academic majors and programs that come to the Committee following the shared governance review process.

Provost DeHayes shared that when a new academic major is proposed, it includes a comprehensive and rigorous review process involving the department, college, and faculty senate committees as well as a vote of the full faculty senate and the President. He also noted that the Faculty Senate leadership has recently carefully reviewed and streamlined that process while maintaining rigor and high standards to ensure that new program reviews are timely. Therefore, it will be important that the committee is sensitive to maintaining the efficiency of the process when considering such actions. He further stated that they are in the process of investing in a new curriculum management system that will allow for efficient movement of proposals for new programs that are under review.

Chair Rouse asked what the typical length of time from department proposal to approval is. Provost DeHayes stated it took about six months to one year. Dr. Gindy added that it varies on the complexity of the program. For instance, if it was for a certificate or a minor, it may take a semester, whereas if it was a complete program, she concurred with Mr. DeHayes that it could take up to one year.

Chair Rouse stated that she would like to hear from other Committee members, but added that this Board meets frequently enough that could have a preview before a program is presented as complete and have notice that something was in the works so the Committee would have a chance to understand the proposed program. Chair Rouse continued that the Committee should certainly not be viewed as a way of slowing the process down, but should not just be rubber stamping programs. The committee should have a chance to ask questions and provide feedback and respond.

Mr. Lenz mentioned the concept of shared governance and commented that perhaps the Committee periodically invite the chair of the Faculty Senate to let them know that they are partners in this and bring together the whole concept of shared governance. Chair Rouse agreed and noted that the Committee definitely should be scheduling time to meet regularly with the Chair of Faculty Senate.

Dr. Gindy stated that the Committee should distinguish what programs or credentials must receive Board approval and which ones might fall below a certain threshold that could be “noticed” by the Board because that could also improve efficiency. It is a long process; however, all the stops along the way have been given credibility and scrutiny and have gone through a meticulous process, and if they are not going to change or affect the strategic vision of the university and fall under a certain threshold that this Committee could establish, perhaps they can be noticed to the Board and that could streamline the process as well. Dr. Gindy added that big changes or big programs, such as combining or terminating colleges and the like, might perhaps deserve some more attention and weight by the Board.

Chair Rouse stated that the Board hasn't worked out how that has been established. She stated that she would have to consult with others on how to establish such a rubric. It is her sense that the Board would want notice before it's a fait accompli.

Provost DeHayes stated that he liked Chair Rouse's suggestion of an early view of a program perhaps in parallel with the senate proposal review process. The Committee could think about when the right time might be to propose to the Board for discussion a broad approach focused on areas of interest of the Board regarding new program proposals, such as alignment with the Academic Strategic Plan, market, cost-benefit considerations, and post-graduate opportunities for students in the new major. The proposal to the Board and that process could coincide with the faculty process. This approach might be helpful to expedite the process and still ensure the Board and this Committee could weigh in in a meaningful way.

Chair Rouse agreed and also stated that the calendar is meant to be flexible so if something comes up, it should be possible to have a meeting fairly quickly as long as the work is done ahead of time.

Chair Rouse stated that she would do some work regarding best practices in approvals and these types of programs and asked Dr. DeHayes, and his team working with Dr. Gindy and others to consider when in the URI faculty senate process might be the right time for any new certificate or program to potentially come to the Committee through a parallel process. Provost DeHayes suggested that we may bring some preliminary ideas for discussion at the next committee meeting in October.

Ms. Edmonds asked how often proposals are declined and at what point. Dr. DeHayes answered that the hope is that they are declined much earlier in the process so they don't spend a year of faculty time developing every detail to have it turned down in the end. Most often they are turned down at the College level; less often on the Faculty Senate level.

Before adjournment, Chair Rouse stated Margo Cook, Chair of the Board of Trustees, would like this Committee to decide what topics of interest it would like to pursue. The idea is for the Board Chair and Vice Chair to devise a calendar making sure that the Board and the Committee are getting a complete view of the institution.

Ms. Edmonds stated that she would like to see the Committee address the graduation rate at URI, and in light of the COVID situation, if there is some support that could be put in place for students. Provost DeHayes added there will be an extensive report shared at the January meeting.

Dr. Collins stated the importance of the University's efforts in diversity and inclusive excellence and what we are doing to recruit and retain diverse faculty and staff. Dr. Collins also added that this is a large committee with a wealth of information in terms of those who are represented, and Student Affairs would want to provide updates as it relates to COVID health practices and auxiliaries. Chair Rouse stated that these updates would be something that the full Board would like to hear about.

Chair Rouse stated that she would like the Committee to hear from students about their experiences at URI.

Mr. Lenz stated that he would like to hear how Faculty Senate makes decisions on the design of courses and programs and establishing the relationship between the Committee and Faculty Senate.

Chair Cook stated that there is a definite need to get input from students and faculty to hear what their experiences are and what the Board can do to help the university.

Dr. Snyder asked if there were any particular areas the Board was interested in. He continued that Research and Economic Development would be able to help in all aspects of providing necessary information. Chair Rouse stated that it would be important to look at the big picture of individual schools and departments to gain an overview of the university. Dr. DeHayes added that the Deans would appreciate having the opportunity to give an overview of their colleges to members of the Committee or full Board.

Dr. Gindy suggested that in order to bring some focus to the curriculum and academic program, the Committee should meet with the Faculty Senate executive leadership.

Dr. Collins suggested that engagement with the Student Senate would give students an opportunity to hear the Committee members' lived experiences and the Committee members to hear the voices, stories and lived experiences of the students.

Mr. Bove added that it is important for the Committee and the Board to hear from students. Ms. Edmonds concurred and encouraged the Committee to welcome the Student Senate.

Dr. Gindy added that if the Committee liked the idea of inviting a specific college to a meeting, they could invite their diversity coordinator or officer to hear about that particular component and invite representative student chapters.

Chair Rouse stated that she would like to confer with Chair Cook to strike the proper balance between the full Board and this Committee.

Dr. Almandrez suggested including graduate students because grad students have particular needs that the Committee should be made aware of.

Mr. Lenz asked if the Committee could be updated on major happenings at the university, such as research, student activities, etc. that the Committee could promote in their respective circles.

Chair Rouse asked for further ideas before adjournment. Chair Cook responded that the Committee should prepare the process for the Board meeting on September 11, 2020 to help set precedent going forward.

3. ADJOURN

Chair Rouse thanked Committee members and called for a motion to adjourn the meeting of September 10, 2020.

On a motion duly made by Charles Fogarty 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 September 10, 2020
	VOTE:	4 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.
	YEAS:	Karina Montilla Edmonds, Charles Fogarty Matthew Lenz, Cecilia Rouse
	NAYS:	0
	ABSTAINS:	0

The meeting adjourned at 3:02 p.m.

The next meeting of The URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs, Research and Student Life Committee is October 23, 2020.