



Members

Margo Cook '86, *Chair*

Michael D. Fascitelli '78

Charles Fogarty '80

Christine Heenan

Richard S. Humphrey

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

Cecilia Rouse

Thomas Ryan '75

Armand E. Sabitoni '73

**The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees
Academic Affairs, Research and Student Life Committee Meeting
Wednesday, September 2, 2020 • 1:00 p.m.**

**PURSUANT TO GOVERNOR RAIMONDO'S
EXECUTIVE ORDER 20-63, THIS MEETING WAS HELD VIRTUALLY
USING THE WEBEX PLATFORM (BOARD ONLY) AND FACEBOOK
LIVESTREAM (PUBLIC VIEWING)**

MINUTES

Chair Cecilia Rouse welcomed and thanked all members of the committee as well as University of Rhode Island liaisons in attendance. Michelle Curreri introduced members of the University of Rhode Island staff present at the meeting.

Ex Officio Members

Tim DelGiudice, *Chair*
*R.I. Council on Postsecondary
Education*

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

Mayrai Gindy
Faculty Representative

Christopher Bove '23
Student Representative

Chair Rouse took a formal roll call attendance and acknowledged that a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 1:02 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. Richard Humphrey (remote)
- Mr. Matthew D. Lenz (remote)

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

- Dr. Mayrai Gindy, Faculty Representative (remote)

The University of Rhode Island Staff:

- Michelle Curreri, Chief of Staff and Board Liaison (remote)
- Don DeHayes, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs (remote)
- Peter Snyder, Vice President, Research and Economic Development (remote)
- Kathy Collins, Vice President for Student Affairs (remote)
- Anne Marie Coleman, Assistant Vice President, Human Resource Admin. (remote)
- Thorr Bjorn, Director, Athletics (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 2, 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 2, 2020

VOTE: 5 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in
the negative

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

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

2. INTRODUCTION OF THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chair Rouse asked each Committee member to share a brief bio with professional background and any educational associations with URI. All members provided this information in turn to the Committee.

3. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. Discussion of the Academic Affairs, Research, and Student Life Committee Charter and overall role of the committee

Chair Rouse noted that Enclosure 3a contained the Committee charter and asked if all members reviewed and understood the charter. Chair Rouse noted that the overall charter was approved by the Board of Trustees in June 2020, but the Committee has the opportunity to make edits/revisit some parts of it.

Chair Rouse noted that they are the inaugural Board of Trustees and just set up the governance structure. As Chair Rouse and Chair of the Board, Margo Cook reviewed the

scope of this Committee it was recognized that at some point they may need to divide this Committee up as is quite common at other institutions; for now we are going to keep it together. She also noted that the Committee needed to be nimble and flexible because we need to be comprehensive as the work of this committee addresses the core mission of the institution.

Chair Rouse asked if other Committee members had reflections or comments.

There were no further reflections or comments from the Committee members on the charter.

b. Discussion of the Academic Affairs, Research and Student Life Committee Calendar

Chair Rouse noted that Enclosure 3b provided a proposed regular calendar for the Committee for the current academic year. The items on the calendar reflect issues and actions that are hard wired to each of the board meetings to ensure that: nothing is left behind; the critical work is paced out during the year; approval items are addressed in a timely fashion throughout the year; and to make sure the Committee takes care of statutory items.

Chair Rouse asked if everyone reviewed the calendar and asked for any discussion or concern about the calendar.

Chair Rouse stated that there will be opportunities to add items on an as-needed basis, such as reviewing policies and activities, recommending Board approval of creation or termination of majors, and other such items as they come up. Also, during these meetings, the Committee will be addressing and/or acting on issues, such as awarding of degrees and tenure, strategic plan of the University, etc.

Mr. Fogarty asked if the Committee's meeting would be scheduled as to not conflict with members' duties on other Committees. Chair Rouse noted that, yes, Committee meetings would be scheduled so as to not interfere with other meetings.

Provost DeHayes asked about the approval of new academic majors and programs. When a new academic major is proposed, it includes a comprehensive and rigorous review process involving several department, college, and faculty senate committees as well as a vote of the full faculty senate and the President. He also noted that 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. It will be important that the committee be 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 under review.

Chair Rouse asked what the typical length of time from dept. proposal to approval. Provost DeHayes stated it took approximately 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 so that they could have a preview before a program is presented as a *fait accompli* and have a head's up that something was in the works and the Committee would have a chance to understand the proposed certificate or program. Chair Rouse continued that the Committee should certainly not get in the 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 on this and bringing 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 the Faculty Senate.

Dr. Gindy stated that the Committee should distinguish what programs or credentials must receive Board approval and which ones fall below a certain threshold that they could be noticed to 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 and 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 such a standard or rubric. 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*.

Mr. Lenz asked if there were any best practices from other university governing boards to see how they handle that.

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 can 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, the Committee should be able 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 Provost 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 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. Provost 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 on the Faculty Senate level.

Dr. Snyder stated they have a similar process in place for the establishment and periodic vetting research centers and institutes that that these proposals could be shared with the committee, although the approvals of research centers and institutes should remain under the purview of the faculty and administration. They have a faculty senate committee that looks at applications for new centers and institutes. That committee would make recommendations to him for consideration and Dr. Snyder would in turn bring to the Provost, and if they both agree, then the center/institute is stood up for three years and undergoes a reapplication process. He added that the process hasn't been held to great rigor in the past, and they are looking to remedy that.

Chair Rouse asked if URI provided any seed money for the centers. Dr. Snyder replied that it does for some typically in the form of a return of the indirect costs that are received for centers and institutes that are either a launch or runway or are such high value trying to recruit topflight faculty that need resources.

Dr. Snyder gave an example of a newly-approved center in the College of Engineering (Center for Cyber Physical Security). It is launching with several millions of dollars of federal funding, and URI is extending that indirect return to them because it has very high growth potential and critical need for URI and the community.

Chair Rouse asked if the Committee needed to think about reviewing these academic majors, departments, etc. and if it is adequately represented on the draft calendar or should the language be changed in any way and should we add research centers to the

agenda. Provost DeHayes answered that relative to the new majors they would not be locked into any particular meeting and that when the Committee hit its stride there may be one or more in most meetings that will come up as some majors are done away with and new majors are developed. Dr. Snyder added that regarding institutes and centers there will be one or less in most years and that the university only approves of new centers or institutes if there is such a compelling need.

Chair Rouse asked if an item additional item be added to review the approval of a new research center as part of the as needed. Mr. Snyder replied, yes. (*Post-Meeting Note:* Dr. Snyder wishes to retract this response to the committee, as the approval of research centers should remain under the control of the faculty senate and administration. This could be a topic for discussion at a future meeting.)

Chair Rouse asked if there were any other ideas, reflections, or concerns regarding the calendar. Provost DeHayes noted that on the list is the presentation of the fall enrollment report captured on October 15 each year, which the Committee and the Board would want to be aware of and understand before it is released publicly. He noted that the current schedule is tight for that because the day for which fall enrollment must be reported is October 15, and it takes URI some time to gather and analyze the data. Seeing that the next meeting would be in January, the numbers would be given after the fact. The enrollment report will tell us not only how many students are enrolled at that point, but it breaks it out by race and ethnicity, international, undergraduate, graduate in-state, out-of-state, etc. Chair Rouse stated that they are given the information more for the discussion of enrollment trends and if it slips to January, it is not going to interfere with URI operations. Chair Rouse did concede that the January meeting is rather crowded. Chair Rouse asked Ms. Curreri if there was a tentative date for the October meeting. Ms. Curreri responded yes, the October 23rd date is for the Committees, October 24th is for the Board. Chair Rouse noted that was tight for data analysis. Provost DeHayes said that his team will work to have the information for the Committee at their October meeting. While the fall enrollment report does not require formal Board action, it does provide a clear statement of student numbers and enrollment trends over time and, because we are a tuition-dependent institution, it does inform many activities at the university, including the budget, and is also public information throughout the state of Rhode Island.

Chair Rouse asked how much flexibility the Committee has in the calendar in case we want to move something from January to October. Ms. Curreri stated that the Committee does have the power to do so.

Chair Rouse asked Provost DeHayes to check with his team about the data turnaround and if they can't make it, the Committee will revisit the calendar.

Chair Rouse asked if there were any final comments.

Mr. Lenz congratulated Dr. Collins on the COVID-19 tracker and tests and the under-one percent positivity rate and asked if she felt good about the 21 percent in isolation. Dr.

Collins replied that we do feel good about that and the majority of those who are currently in quarantine and isolation are coming from hotspots that are required to quarantine. She is looking for that number to drop drastically on September 8 as we move those students with shuttle buses, socially distanced, back to the university. Dr. Collins further stated that if there is anything else the Committee needs in regard to our restart and our students' return to campus to let her know.

4. ADJOURN

Chair Rouse thanked Committee members and called for a motion to adjourn the meeting of September 2, 2020.

On a motion duly made by Mr. Fogarty and seconded by Ms. Edmonds it was

VOTED: THAT The URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs, Research and Student Life Committee adjourn the meeting of September 2, 2020

VOTE: 5 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.

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

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

The meeting adjourned at 1:48 p.m.

The next meeting of The URI Board of Trustees Academic Affairs, Research and Student Life Committee is September 10, 2020 at 2:15 p.m.