

**RHODE ISLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**  
**MEETING OF THE SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**PUBLIC SESSION**

**September 30, 2009**

The Rhode Island Science & Technology Advisory Council (“STAC”) met on Wednesday, September 30, 2009 in Public Session at the offices of the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation, Providence, Rhode Island pursuant to notice of the meeting to all Members and public notice of meeting, a copy of which is attached hereto, as required by applicable Rhode Island Law.

The following Members were present and participated throughout the meeting as indicated: Clyde Briant (Co-Chair), David Farmer (Co-Chair), Peter Alfonso, Timothy Babineau, Kimball Hall and Donald Stanford. Members absent were Pierre Corriveau, David Hibbitt, Saul Kaplan, Margaret Leinen, Thomas Rockett, Thomas Ryan and Jeffrey Seemann.

Also present were Governor Cariceri, Lt. Governor Roberts, and RIEDC’s staff. Co-chairs Briant and Farmer presided over the meeting.

**Welcome**

Co-Chair Clyde Briant welcomed everyone and announced that the agenda would include a general update on activities and reports on three important initiatives, related in mission but distinct in purpose and each designed to improve Rhode Island’s statewide collaborative research platform.

**Update on Initiatives**

Co-Chair Bryant reviewed a list of projects STAC had worked on since the last meeting:

- Hosting a welcome reception for URI President David Dooley to introduce him to community partners he will need to work with as he seeks to increase URI’s research funding and technology transfer efforts.
- Continuing to assist URI Commission Chair Bob Flanders and the Commission’s Implementation Committee to advocate for adoption of that body’s remaining recommendations.
- Sponsorship of Providence Business News Innovation Awards. Recipients this year included Amgen, Collaborative Grant Awardee Jeff Morgan and Innovation Tax credit recipients Isis Biopolymer and Providence Health Solutions.
- Issuing a call for proposals for the fourth round of our collaborative grant awards and monitoring past awardees to measure success of their work.

- Joining with the EPSCoR and IDEA (COBRE and INBRE) networks to host the second annual statewide research symposium. The goal of the symposium is to bring focus to what is happening in RI in order to encourage collaboration and networking. Also, Dr. Ed Seidel of the National Science Foundation will present an address on cyberinfrastructure and nearly 70 student posters will be on display. There is no fee to attend – over 250 have already registered.
- Participation in the Innovation Providence Implementation Committee (IPIC) initiatives to grow a Knowledge Economy in RI.
- Participation in the Statewide Stakeholders Group for the IBM project outlined at our June meeting and a related statewide Energy and Environment group.
- Preliminary development of an educational initiative based on a recent publication in the United Kingdom by David MacKay to quantify RI's actual energy usage and communicate basic facts on sustainable energy and climate-change to a non-technical audience.

### **Adoption of Statewide S&T Plan**

Co-Chair Briant next called for discussion and adoption of the Statewide S&T Plan. A draft of the plan was distributed at the June 2009 meeting. Comments have been gathered over the summer and incorporated into the document along with additional data and research collected through interviews with over forty leaders of Rhode Island-based research institutions including universities, hospitals, public agencies, industry associations, military and defense industries.

The Plan identifies three interrelated areas of concentrated research activities: (1) life sciences, (2) marine sciences, and (3) energy and environmental sciences. It also identifies a key group of tools available to RI investigators: (1) information technology, (2) technology transfer and translational research, and (3) strategic thinking, including “design thinking” and scenario planning. Building on these assets and tools, the Plan puts forth a set of specific actions and outcomes designed to increase connectivity and communication, improve infrastructure, and streamline commercialization and translation. In the next five years, Rhode Island’s goals for the development of science and technology are to:

1. Bring together researchers across the state to encourage collaboration in marine science, life science, and energy and environmental science;
2. Improve existing infrastructure for collaborative research, including Rhode Island’s capacity for technology transfer within and across S&T sectors;
3. Facilitate business innovation by streamlining the pipeline between research ideas and new venture creation;
4. Communicate research findings and initiatives to public officers and the wider community.

Going forward, the Plan will be used as a framework to develop strategic initiatives. STAC supports the continuous evolution of this Plan and will continue to solicit

statewide input at all levels through focus groups to prioritize actions. The Council then agreed to endorse the plan and the Governor accepted the Plan. The Plan will be posted on the STAC website.

### **Status Report on EPSCoR Grant**

Co-Chair David Farmer then called on STAC member and EPSCoR PI Peter Alfonso to brief the Council on the current status of Rhode Island's EPSCoR activities. Peter Alfonso reported that in June the state completed the third and final year of a \$6.75 million grant from the National Science Foundation to help build our research infrastructure and to develop statewide programs for student training and outreach. The state is currently receiving bridge funding to prepare and submit a renewal grant for \$20 million over five years. The scientific topic for the grant currently being written is the response of marine organisms to global change. The proposal will show how to use the infrastructure built with funds from the first grant to advance science. It will also enhance diversity efforts and better integrate the Primarily Undergraduate Institutions (PUIs).

Co-Chair Briant thanked Peter Alfonso for his leadership and noted the important role EPSCoR plays in pulling the state together.

### **Statewide Assessment**

Co-Chair Farmer then asked Betsy Loucks of the RI Research Alliance to summarize the Research Capacity Assessment she recently conducted. The goal of the project is to assess what areas are ripe for collaborative, shared efforts and to determine from the community how STAC could be of greatest assistance in strengthening our collaborative research platform.

The Assessment found:

- Three major areas for research collaboration emerged: (1) life sciences, (2) information technology, and (3) climate change/energy. There may be greater potential for collaboration where these areas overlap, given the strengths of research institutions and industry within the state.
- Rhode Island may be well-positioned to enhance its capacity in clinical translational research and technology transfer. Developing this capacity would enhance the demand for research, and will facilitate the flow of ideas from bench to marketplace back to bench. Currently, there are gaps between the two ends of the pipeline, which threaten its course and efficiency.
- The state has a number of research assets that should be supported and leveraged, including but not limited to: the COBREs and the INBRE, the CTSA, the Center for Proteomics, and others.
- Rhode Island hosts world-class researchers in engineering and specific life-sciences research topics (i.e. Marine Science, Cardiology, Oncology, Orthopedics, Emergency Medicine, and Pharmacy).

The following roles have emerged for STAC and the Research Alliance (RIRA)

- Act as liaison between research institutions (RIRA)
- Act as liaison to public office (elected and civic) (STAC)
- Act as liaison to and strategic support for commercial product/service pipeline (STAC/RIRA)
- Develop, coordinate and publicize research funding opportunities (RIRA)

The next phase of the assessment will continue to gather data on core competencies in the research areas identified in order to get more detailed feedback.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business Co-Chair Farmer adjourned the meeting.

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Christine M.B. Smith  
Secretary