

**MEETING OF
THE URI COMMISSION ON RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
PUBLIC SESSION**

April 11, 2008

The University of Rhode Island Commission on Research and Innovation (the Commission) met on Friday, April 11, 2008 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: Peter Alfonso, James Coleman, Robert Flanders (Chair), Carol Grant, David Hibbitt, Constance Howes, Saul Kaplan and Margaret Leinen. Lord Alec Broers participated by telephone for a portion of the meeting.

Also present were Commission consultant Christine Heenan of Clarendon Group, members of the general public and Clarendon Group and RIEDC staff. Robert Flanders presided over the meeting.

Welcome

Justice Flanders called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m. He indicated that during the meeting Clarendon Group would report on additional information gathered through meetings they have held with stakeholders and would discuss a list of six themes that have emerged from this work. Justice Flanders reminded the group that the report is due by September of this year.

After presenting the findings, Christine Heenan will facilitate discussion so that the group could narrow these themes into a handful of bold and actionable recommendations.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes for the September 2007 and January 2008 Commission meetings were presented for comment and discussion. Citing no changes, upon a motion duly made by Ms. Grant and seconded by Ms. Howes, the minutes were accepted. Justice Flanders then turned the program to Christine Heenan of Clarendon Group.

Report on Requested Research and URI Stakeholder Meetings

As a follow-up to the January meeting, Commissioners were presented with the additional research they requested regarding Carnegie Classifications as a source of R&D expenditures

per capita. Clarendon also provided requested information on peer aspirants and findings on how other universities handle intellectual property.

Clarendon also reported that they had conducted additional outreach to senior administrative figures at university and held very well attended town hall meetings with faculty and students. Clarendon received thoughtful comments and information at these meetings all of which greatly assisted in the generation of the six recommendation themes.

Presentation on Recommended Themes

Using the myriad of research conducted since the inception of the project, Clarendon identified six major themes for recommendations with related sub-focus areas:

- Prioritize Research and Economic Development with URI Leadership (Research funding streams, outreach to funding partners, research as a priority, incentives for faculty)
- Investing in Research Capacity at URI (faculty research capacity, graduate students, campus facilities, university support structures)
- Research-friendly University Operational and Financing Model (State funds flow, state regulatory barriers, union barriers, procurement process, financial information flow)
- Encouraging and Rewarding Collaboration (Barriers to collaboration at URI, tech transfer support, encouragement of partnerships, collaboration with other institutions)
- Building on Established and Emerging Excellence (Prioritizing research areas in which excellence is established or emerging)
- Building a More Science and Technology Oriented Workforce (Undergrad involvement in research, internships, continuing ed, alignment with RI economic opportunities)

Regarding technology transfer and IP, Commissioners commented that while this is not a “revenue raiser” adequate incentives and programs are necessary to create the appropriate culture that nurtures transformative research. Also, from an economic development and workforce perspective, it is important to keep the companies that are formed from research generated IP in Rhode Island. Assisting in new company creation is a related but separate function from technology transfer.

Commissioners also discussed the importance of finding innovative funding sources and streams (i.e philanthropy, federal appropriations), creating an infrastructure that enables faculty and attracts top graduate students and engaging the state leaders as strategic partners in order to achieve the goals associated with the recommendations.

These recommendations must chart a course for URI to reach the level of its peer aspirants. Commissioners determined recommendations should be presented in a format that documents why this is a critical project by detailing the realities of where URI stands now in comparison to national and international competitors, presents a vision identified by positive

end points, includes short and long term goals (roadmap) incorporating the fundamental changes required in the key topic areas.

Wrap-up and Next Steps

It was agreed that Clarendon Group would spend the next few months drafting a skeleton report based on the themes and Commissioner dialogue. This draft would be circulated in advance of the next meeting.

Adjournment

There being no further business in Public Session, the meeting was adjourned at 2:05 p.m. Next meeting will be scheduled for mid-June.

Christine M.B. Smith
Secretary