



Deborah A. Gist
Commissioner

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Shepard Building
255 Westminster Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-3400

Enclosure 4d
January 5, 2015

January 12, 2015

TO: Members of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education

FROM: Deborah A. Gist, Commissioner 

RE: **Approval of Nominee to the Central Falls School District Board of Trustees**

It is with great pleasure that I recommend the following nominee to fill a current vacancy on the Central Falls School District Board of Trustees:

- Ronald E. Pitt, Ph.D.

RECOMMENDATION: THAT, the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the appointment of Ronald E. Pitt, as a new member of the Central Falls School District Board of Trustees, as presented.

Candidates for Boards of Trustees at State-Operated Schools

Responses by Ronald Pitt

12/30/2014

1. *Background:*

What led you to be interested in serving on the Board of Trustees?

In December of 2012, Superintendent Gallo of the Central Falls School District met with me and the then-dean of the Rhode Island College School of Education to present a major idea: that the school district and the college collaborate on a comprehensive partnership involving the entire school district and the entire college. Subsequently, our two communities engaged in a planning process through spring 2013 that culminated in the signing of a partnership agreement. In the last year and a half, we have formed about 20 different collaborative projects, written and presented papers and reports on the partnership, signed a new agreement for the second year, held a community-wide one-year "birthday party," sought and obtained external funding, and filmed a documentary about the partnership. As Vice President for Academic Affairs at RIC, I have been personally involved in this partnership and have come to know, appreciate, respect, and admire the work going on in CFSD and the challenges and successes of the community of children, families, faculty, and administrators. To serve now on the Board of Trustees would be an incredible honor and a recognition that this partnership will be sustained and strengthened over time.

2. *Qualifications:*

What qualities and strengths from your background and experience will you bring to the Board if you are chosen to serve?

I have been the academic vice president for six and a half years, and I have 15 years of experience as a full-time academic administrator. I believe and hope that my experience in all facets of my employment can be of value to the Board: innovation in teaching, academic program development, on-campus and off-campus partnerships, student recruitment and retention, learning assistance and advising, collective bargaining, external grants, and faculty development. Our partnership between CFSD and RIC has shown that, although elementary/secondary education and higher education operate and function quite differently, some of the barriers to student transition from high school to college can be lessened or mitigated. My academic training and faculty experience in engineering have given me a very strong interest in

and commitment to seeing all students gain access to the opportunities afforded by STEM fields, and I believe I have a good sense of how students can be better prepared to take advantage of these opportunities.

3. *Goals:*

Is there any particular area or initiative that you would like to focus on as a new member of the Board of Trustees?

I would have much to learn as a member of the Board, and I would want to take time to listen and absorb everything I can from observing the operation of the Board and working with the other members. In particular, this position would be a tremendous opportunity to learn from the Board chair Anna Cano Morales, who originally approached me. In November of 2014 I spent one day shadowing the principal of the Veterans Memorial Elementary School, Ann Lynch, which was a great learning experience and something I would like to do again. So my first goal would be to learn as much as possible.

Coming from Rhode Island College, I would certainly be interested in working to deepen and institutionalize the partnership between CFSD and RIC. That partnership consists of equal, co-learning by both communities and a lessening of the differences that divide K-12 and higher education. I hope that my experience in higher education can ultimately help more students from Central Falls go to college and succeed. That might include more opportunities for students to gain experience and earn college credits through dual enrollment or AP credit, learn to love mathematics, and see a path forward early in life.

I also bring significant experience with federal and state grant writing, and to the extent I can assist or support the grant efforts of CFSD, I would be very interested in doing so.

Beyond that, I would be willing to work in any facet of need at the Board and do everything possible to be a contributing, effective Board member who supports the incredibly hard and inspiring work of CFSD.

RONALD E. PITT

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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Vice President for Academic Affairs	Rhode Island College	2008-present
Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs	Bridgewater State University	2003-2008
Director of Faculty Development	Bryant University	1999-2003
Professor	Cornell University	1992-99
Associate Professor (tenured 1985)	Cornell University	1985-92
Assistant Professor	Cornell University	1980-85
Lecturer	Cornell University	1979-80
Graduate Research/Teaching Assistant	Cornell University	1976-79
Research Assistant	University of Wisconsin-Madison	1974-76

EDUCATION

Ph.D., 1980
Cornell University, Mechanical Engineering
Minors: Applied Probability, Theoretical and Applied Mechanics

M.S., 1977
University of Wisconsin-Madison, Agricultural Engineering

B.S., 1974 with Senior High Honors
University of Wisconsin-Madison, Agricultural Engineering

Sabbatic Leaves

Department of Animal Science, Cornell University, March-August 1993.

Cryobiology Laboratory, Cornell University, January-April 1987.
Scottish Centre of Agricultural Engineering, April-June 1987.

VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Rhode Island College, Providence, RI
2008-present

Responsible for 90 academic undergraduate and graduate programs; the schools of Arts and Sciences, Nursing, Education, Social Work, and Management; Adams Library; 325 full-time faculty and 425 part-time faculty; five outreach centers and institutes; the Office of Research and Grants Administration; enrollment management offices that include Admissions, Records, Financial Aid, the academic advising and learning assistance center, and Disability Services; college-wide programs in honors, study abroad, the Institutional Review Board (IRB), the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC); and the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning. Lead academic for collective bargaining negotiations and issues. Responsibilities have included:

- Development of the college's strategic plan for 2010-2015, *Vision 2015*, and current development of the new plan for 2015-2020.
- Development of new bachelor's degrees in Medical Imaging, Health Care Administration, Community Health and Wellness, Health Sciences, and Youth Development; new graduate programs in Elementary Mathematics Specialist, Nurse Practitioner, and Nurse Anesthetist; three new undergraduate certificate programs; and 11 new graduate certificate programs.
- Development and implementation of the college's first new general-education program in 20 years.
- Reestablishment of the position of Dean of Graduate Studies, creation of a Coordinator of Academic Advising, and service as
- The college's 10-year NEASC self-study and site visit in 2011. College obtained full reaccreditation with no citations or interim reports required until the fifth-year report due in 2016. NEASC cited the college's report as exemplary.
- Successful accreditation reviews by the Council on Social Work Education and the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education.
- Co-PI on a \$1.2 million College Access Challenge Grant entitled *Learning for Life*.
- Co-PI on two Davis Educational Foundation grants, one for \$187,826 to establish a Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning (2009), and the other for \$192,706 to establish a Center for Research and Creative Activity (2014).

ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Bridgewater State University (formerly College), Bridgewater, MA
2003-2008

Administrative oversight of the Center for the Advancement of Research and Teaching (CART), the Office of Grants and Sponsored Projects, and the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. Administrative liaison to the Honors and Undergraduate Research Programs. Led or supported initiatives and programs for new-faculty orientation and mentoring, sabbatical leaves, and professional development funds. Activities included:

- Development of strategic plan for CART.
- Oversight and coordination of new-faculty orientation program.
- Chair of search for Dean of School of Management and Aviation Science.

- Presentation of three papers on accreditation, general education revision, and program assessment.

DIRECTOR OF FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

Bryant University (formerly College), Smithfield, RI
1999-2003

Development of programs to strengthen the academic qualifications of the faculty, with a particular focus on the integration of technology in teaching. Activities included:

- Discussion forums and research groups in human-subjects research, grant proposal development, SPSS, and mathematical finance.
- PI on a three-year, \$250,000 grant from the Davis Educational Foundation for faculty development in instructional technology.
- Vice Coordinator of the institution's ten-year AACSB reaccreditation.
- Managing editor, *Bryant Literary Review*, and development of new peer-reviewed journal, *Global Perspectives on Accounting Education*.
- Proposal for, implementation of, and training on Blackboard course management system.
- Delivery of a six-week training course on distance learning for executive MBA program tailored to the Naval Undersea Warfare Center.
- Teacher of CIS 361, Digital Multimedia System Design (seven semesters). Co-author of peer-reviewed journal article regarding this course.
- Chair and discussant of session at the Northeast Political Science Association meeting, fall 2002.

PROFESSOR OF BIOLOGICAL ENGINEERING

Cornell University, Ithaca, NY
Department of Biological and Environmental Engineering
Colleges of Engineering, and Agriculture and Life Sciences
1979-1999 (instructor, 1979-1980)

Research, teaching, advising, program administration, and industry outreach in the application of engineering to living systems. Research interests included mathematical modeling of microbial and enzymatic processes, low-temperature biology and cryopreservation, and micromechanics of cellular materials. Activities included:

- Recipient of six college- or university-wide teaching awards, including the 1995 Professor of Merit Award given to one faculty member per year by the graduating class of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.
- Recipient of six national research awards, including the 1992 ASABE Young Researcher Award.
- Establishment of interdisciplinary research collaborations with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, College of Veterinary Medicine, sustainable agriculture, and the New York City Water Supply Protection Project.

- PI or Co-PI on 18 external grants; recipient of total funding of approximately \$800,000.
- Undergraduate director for Agricultural and Biological Engineering, including curriculum development, advising, student recruitment and retention, liaison to central university administration, coordination of services with two colleges, and leader of successful 1998 ABET engineering accreditation review for department.
- Director of *Explorations in Engineering 1998*, an intensive, six-week program for 85 international high school seniors.
- Service on four ad hoc tenure and promotion review committees, four faculty search committees, and college committees on academic achievement and petitions. Volunteer in the Office of Counseling and Advising, fall 1997. Pre-med interviewer for Health Careers Evaluation Committee (16 students interviewed).
- Developer and teacher of Physiological Engineering, one of three core biomedical engineering courses at Cornell. Also developed and taught Engineering Applications in Biological Systems, a required sophomore course for department majors, a career seminar, and other courses in mechanical design and food engineering.
- Major advisor for seven Ph.D. students and seven master's students; minor advisor for 20 other graduate students.
- Supervisor or co-supervisor for about 10 undergraduate researchers.
- Author or co-author of 84 peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters, including papers in *Nature*, *Medical and Biological Engineering and Computing*, *Cryobiology*, *Applied Spectroscopy*, *International Journal of Fracture*, and *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London Series A*.