



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations  
RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner  
80 Washington Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-3400

**Barbara Cottam**  
Chair

**Council on Elementary and  
Secondary Education**

Amy Beretta, Esq.

Colleen A. Callahan, Ed.D.

Karin Forbes

Jo Eva Gaines

Marta V. Martinez

Lawrence Purtill

Lt. Col. (Ret.) Mathies J. Santos

Joyce L. Stevos, Ph.D.

**Council on Postsecondary  
Education**

**Michael Bernstein**  
Chair

Antonio Barajas, M.D.

Dennis Duffy, Esq.

The Honorable Thomas Izzo

Judy Ouellette

Kerry I. Rafanelli, Esq.

John J. Smith, Jr.

Dr. Jeffery A. Williams

To: Council on Postsecondary Education

From: Commissioner Jim Purcell, Ed.D.

Date: April 30, 2015

Subject: Approval of the Mission, Role, and Scope of the Public  
College and University.

Enclosure 9f.  
May 6, 2015

Overview

At the April 1, 2015 Council on Postsecondary Education meeting, mission, role, and scope statements for the Rhode Island public postsecondary institutions was introduced. The powers given to the Council on Postsecondary Education under Article 20, section 16-59-4.11.i and iii include approving the mission, role and scope statements of the public higher education institutions:

1. To approve the role and scope of programs at public institutions of higher learning with the assistance of the commissioner of postsecondary education which shall include but not be limited to populations to be served, type and level of programs, and academic fields offered.
2. To approve a clear and definitive mission for each public institution of higher learning with the assistance of the commissioner of postsecondary education that is consistent with the role and scope of programs at the public institutions.

The Council on Postsecondary Education, as required by Article 20, is now being asked to approve the mission, role and scope statements for the institutions. While this is a requirement imposed by the General Assembly, it is also an opportunity to help the public institutions of higher education in Rhode Island to coalesce into a stronger and more productive system. Once approved by the Council on Postsecondary Education, the following outcomes are expected:

- Clear and updated statements of role and scope provide guidance to the institutions for the appropriate development of

new programs and services while allowing them latitude to develop new programs more quickly and in response to verified needs.

- With less oversight of new programs developed within the purview of the institutions, the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner may focus on overarching policy development, institutional effectiveness, academic quality, and duplication and gaps in programs or service needs.

The approach used in developing the role and scope statements reflects the work at the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS). NCHEMS has consulted in Rhode Island on governance and coordination issues and in several states on developing statements of the system's mission, role and scope.

The role and scope statements now being presented to the Council were developed with reference to previous Board of Governors' documents and input from the public postsecondary institutions. Draft versions of the mission, role, and scope document were sent out to the institutions for review and their comments were incorporated into the version presented to the Council.

The mission, role, and scope documents were presented to the Council on Postsecondary Education for discussion at the April 1 Council on Postsecondary Education meeting. These documents are now being presented for further discussion and approval of the documents as noted in the motion below.

Therefore I recommend,

***THAT The Council on Postsecondary Education approve the mission, role and scope statements for the Community College of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College, and the University of Rhode Island that were developed in accordance with the Council's powers as enumerated in Article 20 as amended.***

# Rhode Island Public Institutions of Higher Education: Mission, Role, Scope

## I. Background

### Past practice

*The Coordination Plan for Academic Programs in Rhode Island Public Higher Education* (1998) reflects the current and past thinking on the coordination of the Rhode Island system of public higher education. The introduction to the section on Role and Mission Statements noted:

*“Every public institution of higher education has a unique history and role to play in the state. Individually and collectively, they are to provide higher education programs and services – most categorized as instruction, research, and public service.”*

*“To clarify the role of the three public institutions of higher education, role statements were adopted for each institution in 1981. In general, role statements are both permissive and restrictive; they are used in this document to delineate the scope of the institutions so that the system of higher education remains in balance.”*

The Rhode Island public higher education institutions have revised their mission statements: CCRI in 2006, RIC in 2013, and URI in 2006. Included in the *Coordination Plan* are mission and role statements for CCRI (1981, 1987), RIC (1981, 1988), and URI (1981, 1996). In addition, in 2009 URI engaged in a robust campus-wide engagement that led to its current academic strategic plan, entitled *Charting Our Path to the Future*, which outlines the institutional vision, goals, strategies, and actions for 2010 to 2015.

### Article 20 is the catalyst for change

1. The powers given to the Council on Postsecondary Education under Article 20, section 16-59-4.11.i and iii include approving the mission, role and scope statements of the public higher education institutions: To approve the role and scope of programs at public institutions of higher learning with the assistance of the commissioner of postsecondary education which shall include but not be limited to populations to be served, type and level of programs, and academic fields offered.

2. To approve a clear and definitive mission for each public institution of higher learning with the assistance of the commissioner of postsecondary education that is consistent with the role and scope of programs at the public institutions.
3. To promote maximum efficiency, economy, and cooperation in the delivery of public higher educational services in the state and cooperation with independent institutions of higher education.

### **A rationale for setting role, scope and mission**

The Council on Postsecondary Education, as required by Article 20, will approve the mission, role and scope statements for the institutions. While this is a requirement imposed by the General Assembly, it is also an opportunity to help the public institutions of higher education in Rhode Island to coalesce into a stronger and more productive system. Once approved by the Council on Postsecondary Education, the following outcomes are expected:

- Clear and updated statements of role and scope provide guidance to the institutions for the appropriate development of new programs and services while allowing them latitude to develop new programs more quickly and in response to verified needs.
- With less oversight of new programs developed within the purview of the institutions, the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner may focus on overarching policy development, institutional effectiveness, academic quality, and duplication and gaps in programs or service needs.

### Considerations for changes to role and scope

- Any further changes to the role and scope should be consistent with the appropriate evolution of the institution and be accompanied by concurrent changes in the institution's capacity to support the new direction.
- Institutions seeking a substantive change must submit a proposal for a change in role and scope prior to submitting the program proposal. The proposal will be reviewed by the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner and dependent on circumstances, may require the review by an external evaluator.
- Substantive change may require approval from regional and or professional accrediting agencies or other entities.
- In considering changes to the role and scope, the long range impact on the role and scope of the other state institutions and the needs of the system will be a determining factor. It should not be expected that changes to role and scope would be approved

that would result in a wholesale reallocation of resources that would impact upon the other institutions.

- In instances where changes to the role and scope become necessary due to the actions of an accrediting or licensure organization, approval may be granted with the stipulation that the approval does not expand the role and scope to any other fields where the change has not been demonstrated to be mandatory. In other words, an institution's role and scope will not be expanded by back door changes.

### Developing updated role, scope and system mission statements: terminology and approach

The approach used in developing the role and scope statements reflects the work developed at the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS). NCHEMS has consulted in Rhode Island on governance and coordination issues and in several states on developing statements of the system's mission, role and scope. The operational definitions used by NCHEMS are:

- Mission – A broad statement of the fundamental purpose of the institution
- Role – A statement of audiences served, programs/services provided, and unique characteristics
- Scope – The boundaries or limitations placed on the role

In developing the updated statements, the characteristics below are considered (adapted from NCHEMS).

#### 1. Audiences

- Geography – What is the geographic area the institution is expected to serve?
- Academic preparation: What is the level of student academic preparation expected? Does the institution only accept students with a high level of academic preparation or does it serve any student regardless of prior academic preparation?
- Age and enrollment status: Does the institution serve traditionally-aged students primarily, or does it have a special role in serving adults and part-time students?
- Race/ethnicity: Does the institution have a special role in serving under-represented populations?

- Employers: Is there an expectation that the institution will serve employers in a geographic area or particular industries?
- Communities: How are communities' needs served or what other benefits result?

## 2. Array of programs and services

- Level of programs: Is the institution authorized to offer doctoral, master's, baccalaureate and/or associate degree programs?
- Academic fields: Specifically, which professional programs are the institution authorized to offer (including applied programs such as business, education, engineering, pharmacy, social work and nursing)? Has the institution been considered for professional programs of law, medicine, dentistry, etc.? Is it expected that the institution will offer vocational/technical certificates and or degrees?

## 3. Special programs and unique features

The factors in this category may include:

- Research emphasis: Is the institution expected to be primarily a research institution and is there an expectation of research in specific fields?
- Special status: Has the institution been accorded special status such as a land-, sea- or space-grant institution? Are there statewide programs offered? What are the particular areas of excellence?
- Special delivery capacity: Is the institution charged with providing (or managing for the system) specialized delivery formats such as online courses or degrees?

The role and scope statements are preceded by a "system" mission statement which is the role of the institution within the Rhode Island system of higher education.

### [Process for updating role, scope and system mission statements](#)

A process described below is being undertaken by the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner to develop and present updated role and scope designations. The role and scope statements presented to the Council were developed with input from the institutions.

- Reviewed the current mission statements available online.
- Reviewed role and scope statements found in the Board of Governors *Coordination Plan for Academic Programs in Rhode Island Public Higher Education*, (October 1, 1998).

- Prepared draft statements of system mission/role/scope for each public institution in Rhode Island.
- Reviewed draft material with institutions.
- Presented draft materials to the Council on Postsecondary Education at a meeting for review and commentary.
- Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner (OPC) staff and others submit a final set of suggested statements to the Council on Postsecondary Education for approval.

## II. Mission, Role and Scope statements for the Rhode Island public higher education institutions

The institutions' mission statements were prepared by the colleges or university and approved by the Board; the "system" mission statements, prepared by the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner, precede the role and scope statements.

### University of Rhode Island

#### Mission

The University of Rhode Island (URI) is the state's public learner-centered research university. We are a community joined in a common quest for knowledge. The University is committed to enriching the lives of its students through its land, sea, and urban-grant traditions. URI is the only public institution in Rhode Island offering undergraduate, graduate, and professional students the distinctive educational opportunities of a major research university. Our undergraduate, graduate, and professional education, research, and outreach serve Rhode Island and beyond. Students, faculty, staff, and alumni are united in one common purpose: to learn and lead together. Embracing Rhode Island's heritage of independent thought, we value:

- Creativity and Scholarship
- Diversity, Fairness, and Respect
- Engaged Learning and Civic Involvement
- Intellectual and Ethical Leadership

*Endorsed by the URI Faculty Senate October 20, 2005; Approved by the President November 1, 2005; Approved by the Board of Governors for Higher Education January 23, 2006*

#### Vision

The University of Rhode Island will be the institution of first choice for students and faculty with a passion for inquiry. Our emphasis on innovation and interdisciplinary learning and discovery connects us with the world, and is built upon a contemporary foundation of liberal learning and scholarship that celebrates diversity and complexity, and instills empowerment and social responsibility. Our emphases and expertise in the broadly defined realms of health, environment, and science and technology translate into learning and discovery that matters

deeply in the world. We contribute directly to global prosperity through collaborative innovation and productive partnerships.

(From URI Academic Plan, 2010-2015, -- *Charting our Path to the Future – Toward a Renewed Culture of Achievement* – endorsed by URI Faculty Senate October 22, 2009 and presented to RIBGHE.

### **System mission**

The University of Rhode Island (URI) is the state's land- and sea-grant, flagship, comprehensive doctoral and research university offering a broad range of baccalaureate, master's and doctoral programs appropriate to a competitive research university. Admission to URI's degree programs are selective, based on academic preparation and indications of likelihood of success. The university has a state-wide mission and has responsibility to serve the state, nation, and global community.

#### **1. Audiences**

- Individuals throughout Rhode Island, the United States, and the world who have excelled in high school studies and who are seeking to complete baccalaureate degrees.
- Transfer students from 2 and 4-year colleges, and particularly, from CCRI.
- Individuals from Rhode Island, the United States, and the world who are seeking graduate and professional degrees and/or post-baccalaureate certification in specific areas.
- Individuals from underserved and economically disadvantaged communities who have strong academic potential are uniquely served through URI's Talent Development Program.
- Adult students are served through distinctive and accessible programs at the URI Providence campus offered through the College of Continuing Education.
- Returning students with accumulated academic credit from URI or other institutions who "stopped out" of college are uniquely served through URI's Finish What You Started Program.
- Employers seeking well-educated employees.
- Entrepreneurs who are driving economic development throughout the state.
- Individuals, corporations, public, private, and non-profit organizations, and communities who are seeking new knowledge and approaches to addressing economic, environmental, societal and global challenges.

- Senior citizens from throughout RI who are engaged through programs offered by the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute affiliated with the Gerontology Program.
- Individuals and area communities interested in a broad range of academic, athletic, cultural, public affairs, and arts programs and events.
- National and international community of researchers, scholars, and artists engaged and interacting in fundamental and applied fields of academic scholarship and outreach.

## **2. Array of Programs and Services**

- Offers an array of undergraduate, master's and doctoral programs with special strengths and emphases in liberal learning and scholarship, health, environment, and science and technology, such as aquaculture, plant and natural resource sciences, landscape architecture, accounting, business, communications, computer science, education, engineering, nursing, pharmacy, kinesiology, physical therapy, humanities, foreign languages, oceanography and marine science, information sciences, social sciences, life and physical sciences, and visual and performing arts.
- Conducts basic and applied disciplinary and interdisciplinary research and creative work with national prominence in multiple fields.
- Provides services designed to meet the needs of statewide economic development, such as professional continuing education, technical and professional services, and support of business, engineering, and entrepreneurship.
- Offers professional degrees in health and healthcare, such as audiology, physical therapy, pharmacy, and nursing.

## **3. Special Programs and Features**

- Nationally and internationally recognized for International Engineering and International Business programs and very strong foundational foreign language programs, dual language and professional degrees.
- URI is one of twelve universities nationally to host a Chinese flagship program, and one of eight nationally to offer an Ocean Engineering degree.

- **Nationally recognized oceanography and marine science academic programs and research centers, including underwater archeology, Coastal Resources Center, the Coastal Institute, the Metcalfe Institute, and programming for K-12 students.**
- **Nationally recognized for expertise and excellence in cybersecurity, digital forensics, and explosives detection, mitigation, and response.**
- **Flagship research institution that serves as hosts for federal/state-funded land-grant and sea-grant programs that offer applied research, outreach, and extension programs that contribute directly to quality of life and economic development in Rhode Island.**
- **Serve as administrative leaders and hosts for state-wide National Science Foundation-funded EPSCoR program and National Institutes of Health-funded INBRE program to build scientific and health capacity and infrastructure in Rhode Island.**
- **Nationally recognized health programs, including pharmacy programs, the Cancer Prevention Research Center, and the George and Ann Ryan Institute for Neurosciences with state, national, and global impact through research and outreach.**
- **State Crime Laboratory housed at the University; the forensic science program sought out nationally for expertise in explosives.**
- **College of Nursing has prepared many of the state's nurse practitioners, nurse educators, and provides continuing education for RN's through an RN to BS Nursing program.**
- **Business programs hold very competitive (among 15% of all programs) AACSB accreditation and accounting accreditation and have established professional relations with business, industry, and media through educational, research and technical services.**
- **Support of local business through Business Engagement Center and Small Business Development Center.**
- **Oldest turf grass research center in the U.S.**

## Rhode Island College

### Mission

As a leading regional public college, Rhode Island College personalizes higher education of the finest quality for undergraduate and graduate students. We offer vibrant programs in arts and sciences, business and professional disciplines within a supportive, respectful and diverse community. Dedicated faculty engage students in learning, research, and career attainment, and our innovative curricula and co-curricula foster intellectual curiosity and prepare an educated citizenry for responsible leadership.

### Vision

Rhode Island College will be recognized as an outstanding institution of higher education that is valued for high-impact programs and educational practices that prepare Rhode Island's diverse population; for meaningful learning experiences that foster student retention and completion and support professional development; and for its partnerships that strengthen undergraduate, graduate and co-curricular programs. The college will be known for the expertise and leadership of its faculty, students and alumni; for its adaptability to the changing social and economic environment; and for its collective impact on Rhode Island's economy and culture.  
*Approved on April 11, 2014 by the RIC Council and by the Board of Education on May 12, 2014.*

### System Mission

Rhode Island College (RIC) is a regional comprehensive college with a statewide mission to educate students in a variety of undergraduate and graduate arts and sciences and professional programs, and conduct research in these fields. Admission to RIC is selective, and uses a traditional admission process based on courses completed in high school, academic performance, and standardized test scores. The college has a special mission in teaching undergraduates and in serving underserved populations, especially, first generation college students seeking access to a baccalaureate education.

#### 1. Audiences

- Focuses on residents from throughout Rhode Island and residents living within the fifty-mile radius of Providence in nearby Massachusetts and Connecticut who seek a baccalaureate or graduate degree or professional development.
- Transfer students from 2 and 4-year colleges, and particularly, from CCRI.
- Employers, public and private, including school districts, health care providers, local governments, private businesses, and community agencies seeking technical assistance and applied research.
- Economic development interests and entrepreneurs throughout the state.

- Academic disciplines and research community.
- The community and the region, by providing a broad range of academic and cultural activities and public events.

## **2. Array of Programs and Services**

- A broad range of baccalaureate and master's-level core arts and sciences programs appropriate to a comprehensive, teaching institution with a predominantly undergraduate student body.
- Baccalaureate and graduate degrees in the professional fields of communication, computer science, criminal justice, education, media studies, counseling, education, social work, nursing, allied health, and a comprehensive slate of business programs.
- Joint doctoral program in education with the University of Rhode Island.
- Support for area schools and businesses by providing college and professional development programs for dual enrollment, off-campus graduate programming, and business leaders.
- Educational services and training programs specifically designed to meet the economic development needs of the state by preparing a highly-qualified workforce to compete in the labor market.

## **3. Special Programs and Unique Features**

- Rhode Island's first public institution of higher education (established in 1854).
- Only public college offering undergraduate social work degree and only college in the state offering the Master of Social Work.
- Only college in the state offering bachelor's degrees in Medical Imaging, Food Safety, and Youth Development.
- Comprehensive nursing programs preparing baccalaureate and advanced-practice nurses. Other than Yale University, the only accredited nursing simulation lab in New England. The only college in the state offering a nurse anesthetist program.
- Outreach to the business, professional, and educational communities through the Child Welfare Institute, the Center for Addiction and Behavioral Health Studies, the Sherlock Center on Disabilities, the Institute for Portuguese and

**Lusophone World Studies, the Rhode Island STEM Center, the Central Falls/RIC Innovation Lab, the Chief Executives Club, and various outreach programs.**

- **Henry Barnard School (Pre-K through 5 lab school celebrating its 117<sup>th</sup> year).**
- **Award winning visual and performing arts programming.**
- **Public community events and unique cultural programming.**
- **Design and Advanced Manufacturing Center.**

## Community College of Rhode Island

### **Mission**

The Community College of Rhode Island is the state's only public comprehensive associate degree-granting institution. We provide affordable open access to higher education at locations throughout the state. Our primary mission is to offer recent high school graduates and returning adults the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for intellectual, professional and personal growth through an array of academic, career and lifelong learning programs. We meet the wide-ranging educational needs of our diverse student population, building on our rich tradition of excellence in teaching and our dedication to all students with the ability and motivation to succeed. We set high academic standards necessary for transfer and career success, champion diversity, respond to community needs, and contribute to our state's economic development and the region's workforce.

*Approved by CCRI and the Board of Governors for Higher Education August 21, 2006*

### System mission

The Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) is a comprehensive community college responsible for providing the full range of community college services to the state. The college provides an array of associate degrees for career entry and transfer, certificates in career and technical skills areas, and workplace training. As Rhode Island's only community college, CCRI has a statewide mission. As a community college, CCRI uses a traditional open admission process.

#### **1. Audiences**

- Residents of Rhode Island and nearby MA and CT who are seeking preparation for transfer to four-year institutions; career or technical education; upgraded skills; or acquisition of basic academic skills required for success in pursuit of either academic, career or vocational programs.
- Employers seeking employees who have workplace and technical skills or employers seeking to upgrade skills of current employees.
- Economic development interests in the state.
- Rhode Island communities and civic groups.
- State K-12 schools looking for college courses for students, career and technical programs, professional development and cultural services.

## **2. Array of Programs and Services**

- Associate degrees and certificates in an array of college transfer, career and professional fields.
- Developmental education.
- Career and technical education in administrative services, applied technologies, education and child care, nursing and allied health professions, computing and information systems and business.
- Courses, certificates and degrees in humanities, math and sciences, social sciences and business and technology.
- Hosts and facilitates Adult Basic Education (ABE) and (GED) programs.
- Business and industry training to meet needs of current employers and economic development interests.
- Shared use of facilities (auditoria, field houses, etc.) and other types of institutional assets.
- Academic and cultural events made available to the citizens of the state.

## **3. Special Programs/Features**

- Largest community college in New England. College consists of four main campuses and two satellite campuses geographically spaced around the state.
- The Center for Workforce and Community Education offers customized workplace training and education and non-credit courses for personal enrichment and professional continuing education. The Center is the coordinating mechanism for credit bearing courses offered at off campus locations through the Division of Academic Affairs.
- Largest provider of health professionals in the state. Graduates of nursing, allied and rehabilitative health programs are found in many hospitals and healthcare facilities throughout Rhode Island.
- Award-winning performing and visual arts programs.
- Engineering technology programs developed with manufacturing industry.

- Testing Center is recognized as a National Certified Testing Center; some of the exams facilitated are: Accuplacer placement testing, Miller Analogies, Test Of English as a Foreign Language, College Level Examination Program, Law School Admission Test, and DANTES Subject Standardized Tests.
- Site of a CISCO Networking Academy.

## APPENDIX A

### Overview of studies of Rhode Island Public Higher Education

Over the years, there have been several studies of higher education in Rhode Island. Pertinent to this review are the observations and recommendations related to the promotion of a coordinated system of higher education.

- *The Rhode Island Commission to Study Higher Education, 1959*: The methodology used and the content of the report were significant in envisioning a systems approach to higher education in RI.
- *The Stoke Report, 1966*: The report called for the cooperation and coordination among the Rhode Island public institutions of higher education. This report took the next step in creating a Rhode Island higher education system by examining how the institutions could be interrelated.
- *Rhode Island Special Commission to Study the Entire Field of Education, 1968*: This report called for the consolidating of public education k-12 and higher education, under one board.
- *Blue Ribbon Commission to Study the Funding of Public Higher Education in Rhode Island including Compensation of Faculty, 1987*: This report made recommendation to strengthen the Rhode Island system of public higher education. One of the goals was to have expanded mission statements that included specific reference to economic development, transfer policies and system-wide goals. The report recommended periodic monitoring to avoid needlessly duplicative programs... As a result of the Blue Ribbon Commission's recommendations, legislation was enacted establishing a separate Board of Governors for Higher Education. Actions by the new Board of Governors included the approval of expanded mission statements and the authorization of a study of the structure of Rhode Island public higher education.
- *Education Commission of the States Team, 1988*: This team was charged to recommend cost-effective and appropriate relations between URI and RIC and between RIC and CCRI. The team was directed to make recommendations on merging programs, developing joint programs and defining differences in duplicative programs. The ECS team recommended that the Board give more emphasis to the distinctiveness of each institution in terms of students served, should affirm and clarify the institutions' missions so that the differences were known and understood and should require that more emphasis should be given to the relationship of the institutions with the state system.

- ***Board of Governors Strategic Planning Process, 1994-1996:*** developed master plan for guiding important decisions made by Board and direction to the institutions. As part of the strategic planning process, a publication was developed, *Are the Right Questions Being Asked*, which identified six priority areas and asked for public feedback. One priority areas was the need for an overall system mission and revised institutional mission statements. The public was asked whether the institutional mission statements gave sufficiently guidance to the Board in its decision-making and policy-making capacity.
- ***Coordination Plan for Academic Programs in Rhode Island Public Higher Education, 1998:*** This report assembled information on the coordination of academic programs across the Rhode Island system in one place including background on various consultants' reports. The report includes descriptions of the legislation and priorities of the Board which guide coordination of the higher education system. The report concludes with statements of roles and missions of the three public higher education institutions and information on the coordination on Providence-based programs.
- ***A Comparative Perspective on Higher Education Functions of the Rhode Island Board of Education, NCHEMS 2013:*** The report notes that the BOE's responsibilities encompass full range of policy leadership, coordination, regulation and institutional governance.