

THE
UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND

THINK BIG  WE DO™



TRANSFORMATIONAL GOALS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

THE PRESIDENT'S
21ST CENTURY FUND FOR EXCELLENCE



THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

The University of Rhode Island is a community that thinks big and wants to share its big ideas with partners who can help bring them to life. The more innovative we become, and the more we contribute to solving the challenges of the 21st century, the stronger the pride of our students and alumni, and the greater the impact we will have on the State of Rhode Island, the country, and the world.

One of our essential roles as the state's flagship university is to work with the public and private sectors to create a vibrant and sustainable Rhode Island economy. We are uniquely positioned to increase the knowledge base through research, to convert new intellectual property into economic development, to establish jobs and small businesses, to produce business and industry leaders, and to provide critical expertise and innovative solutions to businesses, governments, and others who seek our assistance.

Substantial challenges face public higher education everywhere, many related to issues of access, affordability, and quality. Even more importantly, the magnitude and difficulty of the global challenges of the 21st century are, in several ways, unprecedented. These realities compel the University to assess and transform our approaches to teaching, research, and service so that we can prepare students for a rapidly changing world and, in so doing, help our state, our nation, and our world to thrive. To succeed, we must constantly ask how we can do more and do it better; and we must engage the world and its diverse cultures, viewpoints, and lifestyles.

Transformation requires private and public support for research and state-of-the-art facilities, technology, and equipment, as well as a corresponding willingness throughout the entire University community to build a culture of continuous innovation. Financial support, coupled with an invigorated academic commitment, will enable us to think even bigger, and to leap to the forefront of our competition, fully realizing the University of Rhode Island's great potential.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "David M. Dooley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "David" being the most prominent.

President David M. Dooley

PRESIDENT DAVID DOOLEY'S TRANSFORMATIONAL GOALS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

President Dooley has said, “When I envision the University five years from now, I see students and faculty engaged in cutting-edge research and scholarship, solving problems to benefit our communities and our society, and contributing to economic growth; I see a campus where undergraduates study abroad or work as interns throughout the region and across the world, while others use state-of-the-art technology to learn at any time, day or night; I see students who are intensely engaged with faculty across all fields of study, and who are working in interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary environments; I see a community of students, faculty, and scholars drawn from afar to a University that values them for who they are.”

While much is already in place at URI to make this transformational journey, President Dooley has identified four goals that will dramatically accelerate the pace:

1. Create a 21st Century 24/7 Learning Environment. It is time to recognize that learning outside the classroom is as important as learning inside the classroom. Students must have more meaningful opportunities for experiential learning through research, creative work, and scholarship, and more chances to learn and work across academic disciplines and fields of knowledge. “Hands-on” learning in research laboratories, fieldwork, and internships is essential, not only to discovery and innovation, but also to giving students the strongest possible advantages for competing in the workplace. Our faculty must assume expanded and redefined roles as partners and educators. To graduate the best-prepared students imaginable, URI must take full advantage of the most advanced educational tools, technologies, and practices. An emerging flexibility, improved advising, and innovative curricula will ensure that undergraduates complete their studies in the traditional four years while allowing the ambitious among them to reach the finish line more quickly.

2. Increase the Magnitude, Prominence, and Impact of Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work. URI must emphasize and be clear about our core mission of research, scholarship, and creative work if we are to help build a new Rhode Island economy and provide knowledge, understanding, and insights to the marketplace of ideas. A significantly larger pool of outstanding graduate students (a key component of any preeminent research enterprise) will facilitate the work of our talented faculty. This will, in turn, energize the University's research engine and spark increased funding and discovery. Additional research dollars will lead to tangible business development opportunities, job growth, and an expanded tax base. Research and creative work need to become integral components of the undergraduate experience, whether students are majoring in the sciences or the humanities. Fostering a collective and individual propensity for inquiry among undergraduates will build a population of citizens, future graduate students and research scholars whose curiosity and success will serve Rhode Island, the nation, and the world.

3. Internationalize and Globalize the University of Rhode Island. Our world is shrinking as technology breaks down borders and time zones, allowing businesses and communities, large and small, to develop new relationships on the other side of the globe. Our students must be prepared to live and work in an increasingly globalized economy. By expanding the scope of our international research and education partnerships, increasing the number of graduates fluent in languages other than English, encouraging more URI students to study abroad, and tripling our population of international undergraduate and graduate students, we break down our own borders, strengthen everyone's knowledge of the cultures, politics, and history of other peoples, and enable our students to prosper in this expanding global marketplace.

4. Build a Community at the University of Rhode Island that Values and Embraces Equity and Diversity. If our graduates are to succeed and lead in the 21st century world, with its wide diversity of cultures, lifestyles, beliefs, religions, political systems, and philosophies, we must help them develop the ability to communicate,

understand, and engage productively with people very different from themselves. The most influential university will be the one that is unified in its acknowledgement and valuing of these differences as essential to a more enriched community and a more relevant education. Here, every member must feel welcomed, supported, and valued as part of the larger campus community. As our reputation grows as a safe and inviting place with a breadth and depth of cultures, ethnicities, lifestyles, and values, we will attract an even broader diversity of students, furthering our successes in producing graduates capable of working across cultures, languages, and traditions.

HOW WILL THE UNIVERSITY BE TRANSFORMED BY THESE GOALS?

Moving in the direction of these closely related goals will change all facets of university life, from the classroom to the residence hall, from the research lab to the student union, from the faces around campus to the voices heard, from the way we view ourselves to the way the world views us.

The University of Rhode Island's reputation as a distinctive world-class university will be substantially enhanced and globally recognized. We will be known nationally and internationally as a university that adapts swiftly to the changing needs of its students. Individually paced courses, web-based and modular classroom experiences, and other pioneering 24/7 learning practices will place URI in the vanguard of higher education. We will recruit and attract the highest caliber faculty and staff, while attracting students with ability and promise. Faculty members and research scholars, new and existing, will drive innovation and discovery, positioning themselves and their University as world-wide experts in important and relevant areas of work. Expanding resources will support a campus-wide digital culture in which students have the most up-to-the-minute technology, equipment, and laboratory experiences expected by today's employers.

The University will be a place where students are expected to pursue meaningful internship and experiential learning opportunities linked to research, creative enterprises, global partners, and the expressed needs of businesses and community organizations. Together with our faculty members, students will stimulate the economic renewal of Rhode Island through the generation of technology and knowledge that become products and services, creating jobs, partnerships, and sustainable income for our employees, businesses, and state. The work we do in Rhode Island, in turn, will improve the economy and lives of people across the nation and the world. The volume of research dollars coming into URI will continue to grow, placing it among the leading universities of its size in the United States.

As URI's reputation in undergraduate education and scholarship grows, financial support from foundations, business partners, government sources, alumni, and benefactors also will escalate. The upward spiral will result in more capital for construction and technology and more scholarships and financial aid for undergraduates and graduate students. Opportunities will abound for new business enterprises to commercialize our discoveries, inventions, and patents, adding to the state's knowledge-based economy, to public health, to the marine industry, and in many other unpredictable ways. Pride in the state's public university will mushroom as URI's ability to deliver big results becomes increasingly apparent. Alumni, friends, and taxpayers will respond generously.

More talented graduate students, drawn from a larger national and international scope, will join the URI community. These graduate students, along with our research faculty, will stimulate higher levels of research, scholarly work, and financial support associated with a world-class university. More undergraduates from a larger pool will also enroll, contributing to the local economy and giving Rhode Island students the benefit of a global experience right here in the Ocean State. As a diverse group of students from across the nation and the world share a common mission of developing solutions to local, national, and world problems, successful models for fostering respect, celebrating differences, and preserving unique perspectives will emerge.

WHY WE NEED YOU TO INVEST IN THE PRESIDENT'S TRANSFORMATIONAL GOALS

Transformation requires new, flexible, and ongoing infusions of revenue that can be invested quickly as promising “big ideas” surface. The President’s 21st Century Fund for Excellence has been established to allow these venture funds to be readily and appropriately deployed in support of innovation and scholarly activity that moves the University toward its four goals and long-term growth. It could be used as “bridge” funding for new faculty in high-priority areas, to enable advances in research and education, to launch an interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary center, or to support student participation in a new initiative.

Your investment will drive achievement, reward, and further investment. Once fueled with increased resources, the University will thrive on a sustained cycle of excellence and innovation. Higher numbers of graduate students increase our research capabilities, which in turn garner more grant funding, which produces more discovery and innovation, which attract more private donations for better labs and equipment and endowments, which in turn attract even more of the best and brightest students and researchers.

There may never be a better time to invest in and capitalize on the University, with its potential to make substantive, long-lasting contributions to the state’s economic health. Rhode Island, hit early and hit hard by the national recession, needs now, more than ever, to reinvent its struggling economy, creating new jobs and establishing new industries. Higher education, too, is facing a paradigm shift amid ever-changing local and global needs, a phenomenon that has sparked waves of incremental adjustments at most universities. The University of Rhode Island could cruise alongside our peers, or we can be at the head of the fleet, leading the way, strengthening our reputation and value. The University will stand apart by replacing piecemeal change with an “all in” approach to transformation.

We ask you to join us in making URI a premiere, world-class institution. We are seeking to boldly define ourselves in this document—and in our minds, and in our daily discussions and work—as a community of people who constantly “think big” and who want to see those big ideas come to life. Join us in making transformation a reality. ❖