

**UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND
FACULTY SENATE**

COUNCIL FOR RESEARCH

REPORT ON THE URI TRANSPORTATION CENTER

On April 2, 2007, the Council for Research reviewed a proposal submitted by Professor Deborah Rosen to change the status of the University of Rhode Island Transportation Center from temporary status to continuing status.

The Council for Research voted to approve continuing status for the URI Transportation Center.

In accordance with University Manual legislation governing Centers, Institutes, Bureaus and Partnerships, Section 8.90.22, Continuing Authorization for Centers, the Council for Research recommends that the Faculty Senate approve continuing status for the URI Transportation Center.

Following is the proposal in the format required by the Board of Governors for Higher Education.

UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND TRANSPORTATION CENTER

TITLE: University of Rhode Island Transportation Center

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

- 1. Name of Institution:** University of Rhode Island
- 2. Administrative Unit:** University of Rhode Island
- 3. Title of Proposed Organizational Unit:** University of Rhode Island Transportation Center
- 4. Intended Date of Organizational Change:** ASAP
- 5. Intended Location of Organizational Unit:** Carlotti Hall, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI

6. Institutional Review and Approval Process:

DATE APPROVED

The URI Transportation Center is not affiliated with a University Department or College.

Council for Research

April 2, 2007

Faculty Senate

President of the University

7. Summary of the Proposed Organizational Change

The URI Transportation Center previously had temporary approval as a University center as late as 2003. No action was taken on the request for permanent status. The proposed organizational change would establish the Transportation Center as a permanent University center.

8. Signature of the President:

Robert L. Carothers, President

9. Name of Person(s) to contact during the review:

Name Deborah Rosen, Ph.D.

Title Executive Director, URI Transportation Center

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B. RATIONALE

The URI Transportation Center was established in 1999 under a grant from the US Department of Transportation. The Federal grant is to fund a University Transportation Center. Specifically, "each grantee is called a University Transportation Center...To advance U.S. technology and expertise in the many disciplines comprising transportation through...education, research and technology transfer." (Instructions for preparing A University Transportation

Center (UTC) Strategic Plan, U.S. Department of Transportation.) The University approved the URI Transportation Center on a temporary basis. This is to request approval for a permanent URI Transportation Center.

C. INSTITUTIONAL ROLE

Under the terms of the Federal grant to the University, the URI Transportation Center is charged with enhancing the capacity of the University to undertake transportation research, to expand programs to develop the next generation of transportation professionals, and to improve the understanding and practice of transportation through outreach and technology transfer programs.

Transportation is inherently multi-disciplinary, and thus the Transportation Center provides a vehicle for encouraging the interplay of ideas and efforts across departmental and college lines. It represents a major component in a region's economic development. The Transportation Center is also a vehicle for developing and maintaining the workforce needed for regional growth and development. The Transportation Center research grants also require that at least some, significant amount of match come from outside of the University. This leads to closer collaboration among faculty and the private and public sector generating a better understanding of the needs and capabilities of those outside of the University. Finally, several of the Center's research projects have led to or may lead to patents, with the objective of commercialization.

In each of the first six years, the URI Transportation Center (co-) sponsored research of approximately \$2 million (the required one to one match included). All research awards require URI faculty involvement as well as (co) PI and student participation. Faculty research applications and subsequent awards have reflected collaboration between many Colleges including the Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Business Administration, Engineering, Environment and Life Sciences, Graduate School of Oceanography, and Human Science and Services. On average, thirty faculty members have received research funding each year, and approximately fifty students each year participate and receive funding. Funding has been reduced with the new UTC award, but support for future research will adhere to a multi-disciplinary approach while funding projects that involve both students and faculty.

Curriculum changes must occur through the academic departments; however the URI Transportation Center does fund the start-up costs of developing new courses by way of a call for proposals for demonstration and education projects. Recently, support was given from the Transportation Center to a Landscape Architecture course which will explore design in relation to light rail. Transportation related programs were developed in the last academic year by the College of Business Administration on the graduate and undergraduate level. A Master Public Administration with a Transportation concentration was also

initiated. The URI Transportation Center was also instrumental in establishing new funding for four transportation positions on campus.

The outreach and technology transfer efforts of the URI Transportation Center extend to current practitioners. The Transportation Center sponsors seminars on current research and short courses relative to the Transportation industry. The URI Transportation Center has established a training partnership with the National Highway Institute to provide technical courses to the New England region. This partnership was the first of its kind and is being used as a model for eventual use in other regions. The Transportation Center also assumed responsibility for the Federal Highway Administration Local Technical Assistant Program.

At the K-12 level, the Transportation Center offers summer camps and supports after school science and math programs to foster an appreciation of transportation and the development of those math and science skills needed in many areas of transportation. Most of these efforts target Native American and minority populations, which are underrepresented in many transportation fields. This year, for example, the Transportation Center is supporting a project with the Feinstein School in Providence. This project is the result of a collaborative effort of faculty from the College of Business and the College of Arts and Sciences. The class introduces the students to transportation issues

D. INTERINSTITUTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

No other institution of higher education in Rhode Island has programs in transportation. Thus there is no duplication of efforts.

On the other hand, the URI Transportation Center programs are open to faculty at other Colleges and Universities; thus providing a way for all interested parties to become involved without the need to establish other centers.

E. RESOURCES

Please see APPENDIX at http://www.uri.edu/facsen/APPENDIX_URITC.htm

F. EVALUATION

The URI Transportation Center provides a mid-year and annual report of the Center's activities. The US Department of Transportation, the URI Transportation Center Executive Board, and the Center's stakeholders use these to assess the performance of the Center. In addition, the US Department of Transportation has periodic site visits, the last in February 2002, and in 2003 funded an independent assessment of the total program by an outside contractor. Both assessments were very positive.

Internal evaluations are provided by the URI Transportation Center Executive Board, which includes the University's senior administrative officers, four College deans, and representatives of major Rhode Island departments having an interest in transportation.

Further information on the University of Rhode Island Transportation Center is available at: <http://www.uritc.uri.edu/>.