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RWU President Donald J. Farish to Retire in June 2019, Concluding Transformational 8-Year Tenure

Board of Trustees plans to spend coming year celebrating Farish's accomplishments, searching for new president



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BRISTOL, R.I. – Roger Williams University President Donald J. Farish is planning to retire when his current contract expires in June 2019, concluding an extraordinary eight-year tenure as RWU's president.

The RWU Board of Trustees on Monday announced plans to spend the coming year celebrating Farish's transformational work at RWU and conducting a national search for a new president.

Since his arrival in 2011, President Farish has set RWU on a course to "build the university the world needs now," resulting in groundbreaking progress in the crucial areas of community engagement, college affordability and equity. While his retirement will conclude an impressive 51-year career in academia, he will continue to serve as a thought leader in higher education, striving to provide the educated workforce needed to bolster the nation's economy.

This summer, the Board of Trustees and the Cabinet will work together to hire a search firm and lay the foundation for the full RWU community to undertake a presidential search over the coming academic year. The Trustees will ensure that the process includes input from faculty, staff, students and other RWU stakeholders.

"As president, Don Farish has done nothing less than redefine Roger Williams University, ushering in a new era of relevance, forging key partnerships with underserved populations and providing students with the real-world experience needed to make them not only good employees but valuable members of their communities," RWU Board of Trustees Chairman Richard L. Bready said. "At the same time, he has taken bold steps to provide quality education to a new generation and charted a promising course for the University's future. We look forward to a year of celebrating his achievements and envisioning how we can build on his accomplishments."

"President Farish has not only been a visionary, he's been an effective visionary – someone who can both see the future and find a successful strategy to make the University's vision a reality," Board of Trustees Vice Chairwoman Marcia Morris said. "He has been brilliant at helping to define the University's goals and a mission that will stand the

test of time. Now, the board is planning to undertake a search for the next RWU president, and we look forward to input from all who have a stake in Roger Williams University.”

“I have deeply appreciated the opportunity to serve Roger Williams University as its president, and I am grateful to all who work day in and day out embodying the University’s stated purpose – ‘To strengthen society through engaged teaching and learning,’ ” President Farish said. “Through the Community Partnerships Center and the Affordable Excellence program, the opening of our new Providence campus and the hiring of our first-ever Chief Diversity Officer, we have made enormous strides and built a strong team of Cabinet members, faculty and staff. In the year ahead, the University will embark on a master planning process, and this provides a good opportunity to transition to a new president who can lead RWU into a promising future.”





Among the many accomplishments during President Farish’s tenure:

- In fall 2014, the RWU community launched [The Vision Project](#), with more than 20 committees of faculty, staff, students and trustees working together over six months to articulate a bold, new core purpose: “To strengthen society through engaged teaching and learning.” They also established a set of core values and a visionary goal: “To build the university the world needs now.”
- Working with RWU faculty and local organizations, the [Community Partnerships Center](#) has involved 2,811 students in a total of 259 community-engaged projects over the last seven years. These programs provide lasting benefits to our community partners and are aligned with academic programs to provide experiential learning opportunities for students.
- Since 2012, each incoming undergraduate class has received a tuition guarantee for the duration of their 4-year full-time studies as part of the [Affordable Excellence](#) program, providing peace of mind for students and parents who know exactly what their tuition will be and can plan accordingly. In 2014, RWU expanded the tuition guarantee and lowered the tuition rate to the School of Law.
- One year ago, RWU hired its first-ever Chief Diversity Officer, Dr. Ame O. Lambert, and we are expanding our efforts on one of our core values – to welcome and value all expressions of diversity and identity. In January 2018, more than 300 RWU students, faculty, staff and community members gathered for “[Thriving RWU 2030: A Summit on Diversity and Inclusion](#),” and we are beginning to act on the valuable insights and proposals the summit produced.
- In 2016, RWU doubled the size of its presence in downtown Providence, and the new campus at One Empire Plaza quickly became a hub of innovation and new initiatives. The RWU School of Continuing Studies is partnering with the first Gateway to College National Network program in Rhode Island, offering students who have left high school before graduation a chance to earn a high school diploma and college credit. And groups such as the Latino Policy Institute at RWU and HousingWorksRI are making a difference on important policy matters.
- President Farish has emerged as a national voice for reform in higher education, launching a blog called “[Higher Ed in Crisis: A President’s Take](#).” His essays have appeared in The Chronicle of Higher Education, Inside Higher Ed and The Hechinger Report. And just this year, he wrote an eight-part blog series titled “Can Higher Education Solve America’s Economic Crisis?”

In recognition of all these achievements, the Board of Trustees has decided to honor President Farish with the title of President Emeritus upon his retirement.

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