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Roger Williams University School of Law

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February 8, 2022

Law School News

National Housing Advocate Named to Lead RWU's New Real Estate Initiatives

The University selects Richard Godfrey, national leader in real estate finance, community development and affordable housing, to launch interdisciplinary real estate programs.

February 8, 2022



Richard Godfrey

Roger Williams University has announced the launch of a new interdisciplinary Real Estate Program that integrates architecture, business, construction management, engineering, historic preservation, and law. The program will be led by nationally renowned housing advocate, real estate expert and finance leader Richard Godfrey as its inaugural executive director.

With a School of Architecture, Art and Historic Preservation, a School of Business, a School of Engineering, Computing and Construction Management, and a School of Law, Roger Williams is among only 14 universities in the country – and one of just three in the Northeast – that is equipped to develop a powerful multidisciplinary approach in its undergraduate and graduate programs, in order to prepare graduates to meet the challenges of the myriad real estate-related professions.

“When I talk to lawyers about University plans for this program, they get very excited,” said RWU Law Dean Gregory W. Bowman. “Property is one of the oldest areas of law. It touches on so many legal subjects: construction, real estate management, community development and revitalization, zoning, affordability of housing, coastal resiliency. The list goes on and on.”

Which is precisely what makes RWU such an ideal home for the program.

“Roger Williams University is uniquely positioned to create a nationally recognized center of excellence in real estate,” said RWU President Ioannis Miaoulis. “We can harness the strengths and expertise across our schools to build the multifaceted experiential education one needs to have a thriving real estate career that encompasses development and management, construction and design, insurance, financing and legal policy. Under Richard Godfrey’s leadership, RWU will play a vital role in our region and our country in developing a real estate approach guided by smart design and sustainable growth, prepared to address the most pressing issues of climate change and affordable housing.”

As one of the first initiatives to launch from RWU’s [2021 Strategic Action Plan](#), the interdisciplinary Real Estate Program will prepare Roger Williams students with the broad and sophisticated learning needed to address complex issues, and work on teams encompassing a range of perspectives and skill sets, all the while developing expertise in the many associated fields that work within and alongside real estate.

Godfrey will join RWU on Feb. 22, directing the University’s strategic alignment of academic programming with industry needs, with community resilience and environmental sustainability at the forefront.

“I believe Roger Williams University can be a model for how to sustainably integrate the built and natural environments to create better communities for everyone,” Godfrey said. “As a national housing advocate, it has been my passion and goal in life to create resilient communities with great homes. I’m thrilled to join RWU and to contribute to this exciting work.”

For 21 years, Godfrey was executive director at Rhode Island Housing. He is past president of the National Council of State Housing Agencies, has worked as a partner in Wall Street law firms focusing on real estate development and public finance, and served both as executive director for the New Jersey Department of Treasury, and as a municipal advisor. He holds a Juris Doctor from Seton Hall University Law School, a B.A. in Architecture and Urban Planning from Princeton University, and attended the Maxwell School of Public Administration at Syracuse University.

“Richard Godfrey’s depth of experience, deep commitment to improving communities, and his ability to convene experts from across the real estate sector make him the ideal inaugural executive director,” said RWU Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Margaret Everett. We are so excited to have him join us in building this Center of Excellence for RWU.”

Working closely with the deans and faculty, Godfrey will spearhead the development of innovative undergraduate and graduate programming, executive educational programming, as well as symposiums and seminars aimed at addressing the most urgent problems facing the real estate industry and communities, such as sea level rise and adaptive reuse. RWU plans to launch a graduate certificate program in the next academic year.

With campuses in Bristol and Providence, Roger Williams is well positioned to tackle the challenges confronting such diverse places as coastal communities, rural towns and densely populated urban neighborhoods still contending with the effects of their history as manufacturing centers. Problems of this scope require a range of knowledge and diversity of perspectives to design solutions. RWU is leading the way by creating interdisciplinary initiatives that span across schools, programs, faculty expertise and student opportunities to prepare graduates for successful real estate careers and to be leaders in this complex industry.