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Justice Robert Flanders to Chair Commission to Strengthen Research at URI

Governor Donald Carcieri Picks Former Rhode Island Supreme Court Justice to Lead Group Charged with Making Recommendations for Growing Research Capacity at the University of Rhode Island

(April 25, 2007)--Justice Robert G. Flanders, Jr. today was named Chair of a commission charged with making recommendations to state leadership on actions to enhance research activity at the University of Rhode Island.

The URI Commission for Innovation will propose actions to strengthen URI's position as a nationally competitive public research university and a key institution in Rhode Island's effort to grow an innovation economy.

Governor Donald L. Carcieri made the appointment at a meeting of the Rhode Island Science and Technology Council (STAC). The commission was created by legislative statute in 2006 after appearing as one of STAC's annual recommendations. STAC will provide staffing support for the commission and is responsible for reporting the commission's findings back to the Governor and the Rhode Island General Assembly no later than September of 2008.

"By establishing the URI Commission for Innovation, we will find ways to both strengthen the University's position as a nationally competitive public research institution and enhance the role it plays in our ongoing efforts to build an innovation economy," says Carcieri. "Today I am pleased to announce that I am appointing Justice Robert Flanders to serve as Chair of the URI Commission for Innovation. Justice Flanders is a person of great leadership and vision. With his unparalleled commitment to public service and with his breadth of knowledge, Justice Flanders will help us define a clear path to enable URI to reach new heights as a premier research institution in our nation. "

With Flanders at the helm as chair, the nine-member Commission will leverage the expertise of local and national experts to put forth a strategy for how URI can 1) improve an unusually low level of industry investment in academic R&D; 2) produce a stronger, more science and technology-oriented workforce; and 3) align its resources to more fully take advantage of existing opportunities in national funding opportunities, both federal and private.

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“It is a pleasure and honor to serve as chair of the URI Commission for Innovation,” said Flanders. “URI is one of Rhode Island’s most important resources. I am excited to work with other members of the commission, Governor Carcieri, the General Assembly, and leadership at the University of Rhode Island to develop ideas for how we can make the most the most of this valuable asset.”

Flanders served eight years as a former Associate Justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court before returning to the private practice of law in 2004. Today, he is a partner in the law firm of Hinckley, Allen & Snyder, LLP. He serves as an Adjunct Professor of Public Policy at Brown University, where he teaches Constitutional Law, and as an Adjunct Professor of Law at Roger Williams University, where he teaches courses on the Judicial Process. Judge Flanders is a graduate of Harvard Law School and Brown University.

According to legislative statute, the commission will be comprised of 9 members. The Governor will appoint two members and STAC will appoint three members. The RI Board of Governors, the President of the University of Rhode Island, the Speaker of the Rhode Island House of Representatives and the President of the Rhode Island Senate will each appoint one member.

Flanders serves as a member of various boards of directors and commissions, including the CARE New England Hospital system, Women & Infants Hospital (vice chair of the board), the Providence Performing Arts Center, the Veteran’s Memorial Auditorium, the Rhode Island Historical Society, Common Cause of Rhode Island, the Brown University Leadership Advisory Council, and the Greater Providence YMCA, where he served as Chairman of the Board for a three-year term that ended on May 29, 2003.

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