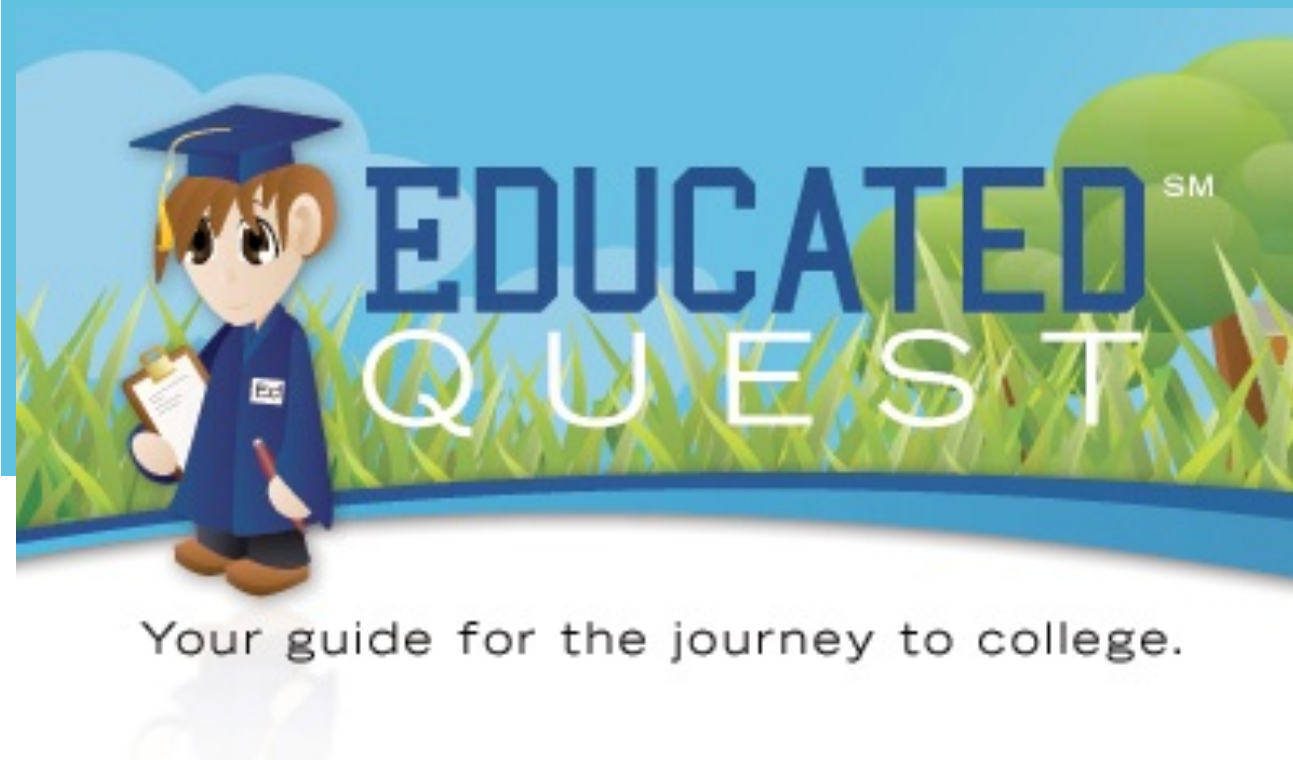
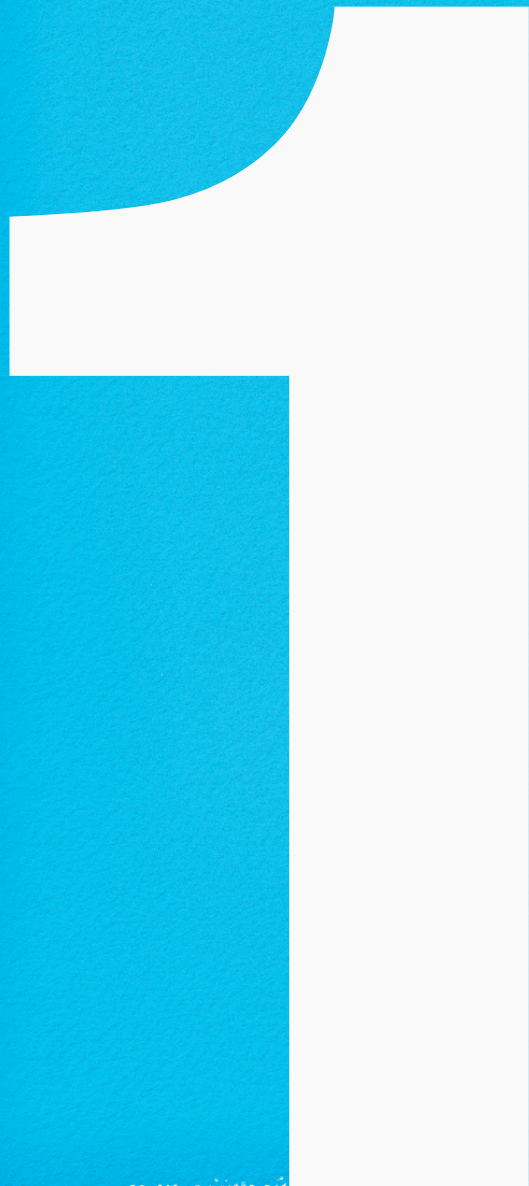


Profile: University of Rhode Island



Background

Introduction to URI



Background

Fast Facts

- 1. The University of Rhode Island (URI) is the Ocean State's Land, Sea and Urban Grant public research institution.**
- 2. Studies of the sea, nursing, pharmacy and joint degrees in foreign language and either business or engineering are among URI's signature programs.**
- 3. URI's location offers special advantages to students who live on campus as well as Rhode Island residents who commute.**

About the University of Rhode Island

The University of Rhode Island (URI), the state's Land, Sea and Urban Grant public research institution was chartered in 1888 as the Ocean State's Agricultural Experiment Station and agricultural school. According to [the university's history](#), as reported on its web site, the 140-acre Oliver Watson Farm was purchased as a site for the experiment station and school for a total of \$5,000. The old farmhouse, now restored and listed as an historic landmark, still stands on the campus. In 1892, the founding year on the university's seal, the name of the State Agricultural School was changed to the Rhode Island College of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts (RICA&M). By 1932, this school, renamed Rhode Island State College, was reorganized into three schools: the School of Engineering, the School of Science and Business, and the School of Agriculture and Home Economics. In 1951, the school became the University of Rhode Island by an act of the state's General Assembly.

Since 1896, URI has been connected to studies of the sea, including marine science, oceanography and ocean engineering. Nursing education began on campus in 1945 while the College of Pharmacy opened in 1957. These continue to be among the signature programs of the university along with joint degrees in foreign language (French, German, Spanish or Chinese) with either busi-

ness or engineering, as well as programs in textile design and marketing, communications and environmentally-related studies.

URI has approximately 13,200 undergraduates and 3,100 graduate students; it is among the smallest flagship state universities in the country. About half of each freshman class comes from other states, mainly the Northeast. However, Rhode Island residents make up slightly more than 60 percent of the total undergraduate student body, thanks in part to an articulation agreement with the Community College of Rhode Island which sends many transfer students on to URI to continue their education.

According to the 2012 Almanac of the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, the Ocean State is expected to produce only 8,750 public high school graduates in 2012-13. The same source reports that less than two-thirds will attend college in Rhode Island. The total of high school graduates in Rhode Island is expected to decline, as it is in all other Northeastern states. This means that out-of-state students will be more heavily sought through the admissions process. It also means that in-state students will not face much difficulty gaining admission to URI, unless they are interested in the university's most competitive academic programs.. To date, approximately half of the Rhode Island residents who get accepted decide to come to URI, a high yield for a state university.

In addition to its staples, URI has other special advantages. Rhode Island is a small state in land mass as well as population. Interstate 95, the major highway, covers only 47 miles north to

south. Providence, the Ocean State's capital and the third-largest city in New England, is only 30 miles away. Other business centers, notably Newport, one of America's leading summer resort communities, are even closer to campus. While URI allows all students to have cars, [the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority \(aka "RIPTA"\) offers UPASS](#) to allow students to ride busses throughout the state on half-fare; a \$2 charge pays for a ride into Providence. Beaches are less than twenty minutes from campus. URI's location makes it easier for students to find internship opportunities than they might find at other public universities. It also allows upper-class students a chance to live on the beach, particularly along Bonnett Shores or Eastward Look for reasonable rents during shoulder seasons (March through May and Labor Day through November 1st).

In addition, URI is more attractive to a commuter population than most flagship schools. While around 90 percent of the freshmen live on campus, and more than 60 percent of them continue to live in university housing for another year, much of the transfer population is likely to be commuters. They have the advantage of obtaining a quality education at less cost than if they had to live on campus. The downside is that, since URI is not noted as a "sports school" and Kingston has a small retail mix for a college town, that there is less of a weekend community than students might find at public or private schools in more isolated places. Campuses have less of a social life when they are very easy places to leave.

Competition



**What does it take to get in?
Who decides to go?
What other schools do
applicants consider?**

Competition

Fast Facts

- 1. During the 2010-11 admissions cycle an estimated 20,000 students applied for approximately 3,200 spots in URI's freshman class.**
- 2. Seventy six percent of all applicants were accepted though some programs, notably athletic training, kinesiology, nursing, pharmacy, engineering were more competitive.**
- 3. Students who apply to URI typically come from Rhode Island and the other New England states, as well as New Jersey and New York, though the university has attracted more interest from students in California, Florida, Pennsylvania and Virginia.**

What It Takes to Get In

During the 2010-11 admissions cycle an estimated 20,000 students applied for approximately 3,200 spots in URI's freshman class according to the university's [most recent Common Data Set](#). Seventy six percent of all applicants were accepted though some programs, notably Athletic Training, Kinesiology, Nursing, Pharmacy and Engineering were more competitive. Students who applied to these programs were also asked to list a second-choice program within another college of the university. Nearly 1,400 applicants were wait-listed. Only 28 were offered admission. Eighty percent of all applicants came from out-of-state, the rest from Rhode Island. Among the students who entered in 2012, 53 percent came from outside Rhode Island.

The middle fifty percent of the SAT range for the students who entered URI in 2011 was broad, between 990 and 1200. About a fifth of the admitted students score over 600 on the Critical Reading section of the SAT; just over 30 percent scored that high on the Math. However, accepted Pharmacy students averaged over 1300 on both sections. Engineering students should present high math scores as well. URI takes the highest score from each section of the exam.

URI admits economically disadvantaged Rhode Island residents through a [Talent Development Program](#). Students admitted through this program begin their education during the summer, receiving six credits if they complete coursework with a 2.0 or better GPA. Those who successfully complete their summer courses receive financial

aid as well as specialized academic support through their time as students.

Students who apply to URI typically come from Rhode Island and the other New England states, as well as New Jersey and New York, though the university has attracted more interest from students in California, Florida, Pennsylvania and Virginia. Applicants also consider the other public universities in New England (the University of Connecticut, University of Maine, University of Massachusetts, University of New Hampshire and the University of Vermont. Other public universities applicants considered were the University of Delaware, Rutgers-New Brunswick and Binghamton University (NY). The private universities considered most often included Northeastern University in Boston, Quinnipiac University (CT) and Boston University. Pharmacy applicants were most likely to consider the University of Connecticut, the only other publicly-supported pharmacy school in New England.

Students who chose URI did so because they felt safe and welcome on campus and were also pleased with the quality of education says Cynthia Bonn, the university's Director of Admissions. They also liked the university's proximity to cities as well as the ocean as well as its student body size. Those who chose another school did so primarily because of cost (primarily out-of-state students who chose to attend the state university in their home state) or because they did not get into their first-choice academic program. This may be one reason why URI's yield rate, 21 percent, is low, even for a state university. Bonn adds that the university will become more strict with students who apply only to one of the more competitive programs

such as nursing or pharmacy without indicating a second major of interest that is offered at another school within the university (for example, a prospective Pharmacy major might indicate Chemistry as a second choice within the College of Arts and Sciences.) This is a sensible decision. It places the decision to try for a second choice in the hands of the applicants. Admissions offices at other schools voluntarily offer second-choice options without prompting from the students.

Students who are seriously interested in URI, especially in the more competitive programs, should apply by December 1st for early action. This puts them in the best position to qualify for merit-based scholarships. This is especially important at a school where three of the signature programs (Pharmacy, International Business or International Engineering) and other joint bachelors-masters degree programs will take more than four years to complete. Admissions decisions are made by February 3rd for those who apply early action. They are made on a rolling basis for all other applicants.

Like all other New England state universities and its private competition, URI uses the Common Application. Only one letter of recommendation is required, though Pharmacy applicants must submit a second one from a math or science teacher. All students write a personal essay, though Pharmacy students must write an additional paragraph explaining their interest in the major.

Completion

3

Freshman Retention Rate
Graduation Rates

Completion

Fast Facts

1. **URI's freshman retention rate is at 82 percent.**
2. **Median SAT scores among entering freshmen have risen from 1040 (Critical Reading and Math) to 1100 over the past three years.**
3. **In addition to welcoming approximately 3,000 freshmen, URI offers admission to between 750 and 900 transfer students each year.**

The Path to Graduation

URI's freshman retention rate is at 82 percent, lower than any New England state university, excluding the University of Maine, as shown in the table below. The information gathered comes from the 2011-12 Common Data sets for each school.

School Name	Freshman Retention Rate 2011	4-Year Graduation Rate-Class Entering in 2005	6-Year Graduation Rate-Class Entering in 2005
University of Rhode Island	82%	41%	63%
University of Connecticut	92%	68%	83%
University of Maine-Orono	78%	36%	60%
University of Massachusetts-Amherst	89%	52%	67%
University of New Hampshire	87%	64%	77%
University of Vermont	85%	58%	72%

However, URI's freshman retention rate has improved over previous years. According to the university's Office of Institutional

Research, [freshmen retention rates for the classes that entered in 2008 and 2009 were below 80 percent, on the low end for a flagship school.](#) The average SAT Critical Reading and Math scores had declined to around 1040 during these two years. They rose by 20 points for the class that entered in 2010. [According to the Admissions office web site, these scores went past 1100 for the class that entered in the Fall of 2012.](#) It is quite likely that since the university has attracted better students, the retention rates will rise. But the same will be true for the other state universities in the region. As shown in the table below, these other schools, excluding the University of Maine, have attracted a greater share of students with higher grades and stronger academic standing.

School Name	% of First-Year Students in 1st 10th of High School Class	% of First-Year Students in First Quarter of High School Class	% of First-Year Students with High School GPA of 3.5 or Higher
University of Rhode Island	18%	49%	34%
University of Connecticut	28%	68%	Not Reported
University of Maine-Orono	21%	51%	32%
University of Massachusetts-Amherst	26%	67%	66%
University of New Hampshire	20%	58%	Not Reported
University of Vermont	28%	66%	Not Reported

However, these numbers consider an entire first-year class, as opposed to the students who are enrolled in the individual schools or academic programs within the university. The more competitive programs such as Nursing and Pharmacy, where students must commit earlier to degree requirements, retain a higher share of their first-year class. Retention among the first-year Pharmacy students, for example, is at around 90 percent according to Dean Libutti, the university's Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Services. Libutti adds that these students do not count in freshmen retention statistics because they are admitted on a six-year track to a PharmD, a graduate program that takes six years to complete. URI also offers other programs such as International Business, International Engineering and joint Bachelors-Masters degree programs in various programs that will take more than four years to finish.

In addition to welcoming approximately 3,000 freshmen, URI offers admission to between 750 and 900 transfer students each year. Most come from in-state through an articulation agreement with the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI). CCRI students are informed in advance about credit equivalencies, so that they can transfer over as many, if not all, of the credits they earned during their attendance at the community college.

Costs

4

Tuition and Fees
Scholarships
Net Prices
Debt

Costs

Fast Facts

- 1. URI charges just over \$14,000 in tuition and fees to in-state students. Out-of-state students face a sticker price of \$29,700. These sticker prices are high compared to other flagship state schools, especially those in the Northeast.**
- 2. URI competes closely with the University of Maine and the University of New Hampshire (UNH) in terms of offering merit-based aid to the very good, as well as the excellent student while serving a high percentage of out-of-state students.**
- 3. In 2011 URI students graduated with, on average, with \$8,000 less in student loan debt than UNH students.**

Paying for School

URI charges just over \$14,000 in tuition and fees to in-state students, high for a state university. Out-of-state students face a sticker price of \$29,700, high compared to other flagship state schools, especially those in the Northeast. Room and board charges, on average, exceed \$11,000, also high for a state school.

Very good-to-excellent students may qualify for merit-based Centennial Scholarships to help reduce the sticker price. Students who rank in the top quarter of their class with a GPA of 3.4 or higher (3.4 is the average for students admitted to URI in 2011) and a 1200 or higher on the Critical Reading and Math sections of the SAT. These scholarships, targeted at students who might be in the middle of the applicant pool at the University of Connecticut can reduce out-of-state tuition and fees to around \$21,000, lower than most state universities charge out-of-state students. This amount is also approximately half of the tuition and fees charged by Boston University and Northeastern University, two of the the larger New England private schools considered by the students in URI's applicant pool.

However, as shown in the table on the facing page, two other New England public universities also offer merit scholarship opportunities to a very similar student. This means that a student's

Name of School	Out of State Tuition and Fees, 2012-13	Out of State Tuition and Fees, 2012-13 less Merit Award (1200 Critical Reading and Math SAT/3.4+ GPA)
University of Rhode Island	\$29,692	\$20,692
University of Maine-Orono	\$27,454	\$19,454
University of New Hampshire	\$28,882	\$22,882

decision, when comparing these schools, may come down to something other than cost such as academics, campus life or the school's location. In addition, the students with superior credentials (typically a combined SAT Critical Reading and Math score of 1350 or higher with a GPA of 3.5 or better in a rigorous college-prep program will qualify for larger merit-based scholarships from public and private schools.

Students who are admitted to specific majors through the [New England Regional Program](#) may attend URI at around 150 percent of the in-state rate (currently around \$22,300) before scholarships are taken into account. This is a very attractive option for students who live in a New England state where the home state university does not have the desired major. For example, the states of Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont do not have a publicly-supported pharmacy school, which URI does. However, students who change their major to one that is not covered by the program will be asked to pay out-of-state tuition.

Even without a merit scholarship the very good-to-excellent student from Rhode Island would pay far less to stay home than to attend the state university in another state. However, as shown before, very good-to-excellent students from out-of-state who wish to attend a New England university have choices where the tuition and fees are nearly similar. Bu their families might need to make up the difference.

One source of funding is Parents PLUS loans. Made available through the Federal government, these loans are granted to parents as a "last resort" when their students so not qualify for the loan programs, such as Stafford loans, that are targeted to them. These loans carry an interest rate of 7.9 percent for up to the full costs of attendance (tuition, fees, room and board, incidentals such as transportation home and books). The interest is not subsidized while the student is in school. Parents are on the hook for the loan, which cannot be discharged in the event of bankruptcy.

The next table shows the average Parents PLUS loans taken by parents of students at URI and the University of New Hampshire (UNH) for the 2010-11 school year. The University of Maine was not used in this comparison because it draws less than 20 percent of its students come from out-of-state. A direct comparison between URI and UNH is more relevant because both flagship schools have about the same number of undergraduate students and they also draw around half of their students from outside their state. It can be seen that the average Parents PLUS taken out by

a URI parent was over \$3,000 more than the average taken out by a UNH parent. This appears to show that, aside from merit-based aid, UNH is in a better position to aid students than URI.

Name of School	Average Parents PLUS Loan 2010-11 School Year
University of Rhode Island	\$16,607
University of New Hampshire	\$13,535

College Results Online, a database operated by the Education Trust, a non-partisan, non-profit education policy organization based in Washington DC confirmed that during this period that the difference in the average institutional grant-in-aid, scholarships provided through the university's resources, was just under \$8,600 at UNH versus approximately \$5,800 at URI. In addition, the market value of URI's endowment in 2011, according to the National Association of College and University Business Officers, was approximately \$98 million, low for a flagship state university. UNH had an endowment with a market value of over \$360 million. This is important to note because both restricted and non-restricted funds in the endowment are used to fund scholarships. However, The Project on Student Debt reported that, in 2011, URI students graduated with an average of approximately \$26,000 in debt. But by comparison UNH graduates owed over \$8,000 more.

In addition, parents of students who attended the three private schools most often considered by prospective URI students: Boston University, Northeastern University and Quinnipiac University,

and participated in Parents PLUS borrowed at least \$19,900. As is the case with the public schools, this loan was in addition to any loans approved for the student borrower. URI will be the lower-cost option.

URI may be competitively priced for the in-state student as well as the out-of-state who qualifies for merit-based aid or the New England Exchange. It does not appear to be as attractive a value for the out-of-state student who does not qualify for such assistance, unless you are cross-shopping against the private schools. But it is also important to add that some of the programs available at URI, such as agriculture, studies of the sea or the International Engineering or International Business programs are not offered by the private schools. And the international programs and Pharmacy education are not offered at UNH.

Comforts

5

On-Campus Housing
Local Housing Market

Comforts

Fast Facts

- 1. URI houses 6,000 or 46 percent of its 13,000 undergraduates on campus, a high percentage for a state university.**
- 2. Ninety four percent of the freshmen opt to live in the residence halls, high considering that Rhode Island is a small state and that many in-state students would have the ability to commute.**
- 3. Living Learning Communities (LLCs) at URI are organized around academic intentions. By the Fall of 2013, each college within URI, as well as undeclared majors, within URI will have a LLC.**
- 4. The most attractive living options for upper-class students, aside from living on campus, are to live by the Narragansett beaches.**

Settling In

URI houses 6,000 or 46 percent of its 13,000 undergraduates on campus, a high percentage for a state university.

Ninety-four percent of the freshmen opt to live in the residence halls, high considering that Rhode Island is a small state and that many in-state students would have the ability to commute. All residence halls are WiFi enabled. There are two styles of resident bathroom configurations in the Freshman Village. Traditional hallway community-style bathrooms feature hallway bathrooms (male and female specific) that are maintained by URI custodial staff. The alternative style offers semi-private bathrooms – these suite-style bathrooms are shared by a pair of adjoined rooms and maintained by the residents who share the bathroom.

Incoming freshmen are assigned housing by their academic intentions and placed into Living-Learning Communities (LLCs). While most schools organize LLCs around student-defined special interests, URI organizes them by the student's intended academic program. Each LLC has its own programming as well as resident mentors, students who major and have excelled in one of the academic programs covered under the college within the LLC. Engineering students, for example, live with other engineering students. Tutoring and study sessions planned around the first-year courses are given in the residence hall. In addition, undeclared students who have not chosen a major are placed into a LLC with other undeclared students. By the Fall of 2013, each college, as well as undeclared majors, within URI will have a LLC, says Jeff Plouffe, Interim

Director of Housing and Residence Life. In addition to the LLCs, students in the university's Honors program may live in Honors housing.

Fourteen residence halls are reserved for freshmen with Hillside, the newest, opening this fall, housing Pharmacy students. Incoming freshmen also have the option of placing their roommate selection over the opportunity to live within a LLC. First-year students may choose their roommates on their own and place their request over all others, meaning that they may voluntarily opt out of being in a LLC. Or they may allow the university to make the match.

In prior years all freshmen living on campus lived in double rooms, and approximately 70 percent moved off campus for their sophomore year. Today, half of the first-year students want to remain in the residence halls for at least one additional year. [This led the university to construct three upper-class residence halls: Eddy, Wiley and Gerrahy, all of which opened in 2007.](#) It also led the school to turn double rooms in other residence halls into [built-up triple rooms](#). The university's Office of Residence Life does inform students and families of this through the campus tour (a triple room is the model room) and grants student discounts off the double room rate for the time that they have lived in a triple room. Students who are concerned about living in triple rooms might want to take more initiative to seek compatible roommates. It is better for them to match themselves with two possible friends than to take a chance on a match with one or two persons they do not know.

While URI does not guarantee housing beyond the first year, it has not failed over the past ten years to provide housing to any continuing student who was in good academic standing and turned in their paperwork on time (March 31st), says Jeff Plouffe. He adds that continuing students may choose not only the hall, but also the actual room online. Among [the](#)

[upperclass halls](#), Eddy is the most popular because it offers suite-style living; either five or 10 single bedrooms are organized around a common bathroom and lounge. Among the halls dedicated to upper-class students, nine offer suite-style living. The university also operates its own apartment complex, the Gateway Apartments; the Office of Residence Life even conducts cooking classes for apartment dwellers! In addition, the Rainbow Diversity House, Women's Leadership House, and the International Engineering Program houses are available on-campus residence halls.

The university also maintains an Off-Campus Property database for students who wish to move off-campus. Apartments close to campus are not a good value for the money. Rents can easily exceed \$600 per month for a two-bedroom apartment, plus utilities. The more attractive option is to share summer homes off the beaches in Narragansett. These homes, in places such as Bonnett Shores and Eastward Look, rent for less per-person than the off-campus apartments and carry only nine-month leases. [Knowing this is a popular option, the university launched a partnership with the town to maintain a "community of mutual respect" and produced an off-campus living guide specifically for students who want to live in the area.](#) In addition, student tenants have an obligation to help protect their landlord's investment. The monies the landlord earn from summer rentals easily exceed what they are for the nine-month school year.

Community



Campus
Environs
School Spirit

Community

Fast Facts

- 1. URI's 1,200 acre main campus is well-maintained and quite walkable.**
- 2. Overall, 50 buildings on campus have been updated over the past 12 years in addition to new construction.**
- 3. Since URI allows students to have cars and is accessible by buses and Amtrak trains, it is easy to leave campus for Providence, Boston or nearby beaches.**

Life On and Off Campus

URI's 1,200 acre main campus is well-maintained and quite walkable. The main academic quad features late 19th and early 20th century light gray granite-faced buildings, many named after former presidents of the university, one named after former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. The student center, built originally in 1965, has large functional spaces, although the interior is showing its age compared with similar facilities at state universities. Kearney Gym, outdated by today's expectations for student recreational facilities, is being replaced by a new physical education center. However, Hope Commons, one of the nicer dining halls on a college campus, opened in 2007. Overall, 50 buildings on campus have been updated over the past 12 years in addition to new construction. Opportunities for serenity are very good because of the campus' rural location and access to the beaches and other recreational opportunities.

URI allows all students to have cars and is accessible by buses and Amtrak trains, making it easy to leave campus for Providence, Boston or nearby beaches. Providence, the third-largest city in New England, is a thriving college town. Students from Brown University, Johnson and Wales University, Providence College, Rhode Island College and Rhode Island School of Design live in the city. Roger Williams College in Bristol is also not far away. Historic Newport, one of the nation's most affluent resort communities, as well as the host site for national music festivals is less than a 20 minute drive from campus. Parking, however is expensive. Students who live in campus pay \$250 for a parking permit. Commuters pay \$175.

Kingston itself is not really a college town. Aside from the Emporium, a collection of convenience stores, eating and drinking places within walking distance of campus, there is little in the town for students to do. Unless a student is interested in the Greek system, the university is the main source for entertainment in the community. URI hosts several on-campus events throughout the year, the largest being Diversity Week which takes place during the first week in October.

While URI is not a “sports school” like the University of Connecticut, the university has modern indoor sports facilities. The Thomas Ryan Center, which seats 7,500 for basketball and over 5,500 for concerts, opened in 2002. It plays as important a role in the Providence metro area entertainment market as the Dunkin Donut Center does in downtown Providence. Meade Stadium, where URI plays football, was renovated in 2006 when additional stands were built against the luxury box wall of the Ryan Center. This also meant the university could sell the luxury boxes during football season as well as during basketball season; seating can be arranged to face either venue. URI competes in 16 sports. Football is the only sport in which the Rams do not compete at the highest level. Students are not charged to attend athletic events.

URI’s greatest sports successes came in the late 1990’s when the men’s basketball team reached the NCAA tournament. The Rams reached the Elite Eight round during the 1998-99 season. Three players from those teams: Lamar Odom, Cuttino Mobley and Tyson Wheeler were drafted by NBA teams. Odom is still active as a pro with the Los Angeles Clippers while Mobley had an 11-year career in the league. The Rams have not played in the NCAA tournament since then. However, [The men's basketball program at URI has won close to 70 percent of its home games since the Ryan Center opened for the 2002-03 season.](#) [However, al-](#)

[though the Ryan Center is a modern and attractive facility, URI did not rank in the top 100 schools in men’s basketball attendance according to the NCAA, Cross-state rival Providence did, averaging more than 7,800 fans per game at the downtown Dunkin Donuts Center.](#)

Aside from drug and liquor law violations there have been few incidents of crime on campus. However, there are some concerns. According to the university’s [most recent Clery Report](#), the number of reported burglaries on campus increased from 20 in 2005 to 45 in 2011; most of these happened in the residence halls. In addition, the number of reported forcible sexual offenses rose 14 to 17. And while there have been relatively few arrests related to drug and liquor law violations, the numbers of disciplinary referrals have been constant. From 2009 through 2011, there have been an average of 606 disciplinary referrals related to alcohol, the vast majority taking place in the residence halls. The number of drug-related disciplinary referrals rose from 125 to 151. While the Clery data do not separate first offenses from repeat offenses, the numbers of alcohol-related violations appear high for a school that has 6,000 students living on campus.

While there are enough students living on campus to make up a formidable community, URI is too easy a place to leave for a weekend. There is more than enough to do within a drive or bus or train ride away when its time to take a break from the academics.

Curriculum

Academics

Honors Programs

Experiential Learning

Curriculum

Fast Facts

- 1. While URI students are asked to indicate a first-choice as well as a second-choice major on their application, they begin their college education as students in University College.**
- 2. This year the university has added [Grand Challenge courses](#), small seminar courses taught by faculty members and offered exclusively to first-year students.**
- 3. URI has standout programs in several areas as well as innovative instruction in several fields. It can be considered a national leader among schools that combine the study of foreign language with other fields.**

Academic Opportunities and Options

While URI students are asked to indicate a first-choice as well as a second-choice major on their application, they begin their college education as students in University College. They remain enrolled in University College until they have been formally admitted to their degree-granting college as well as their major. While enrolled in University College, students take URI 101, a small (20-25 student) credit-bearing seminar class taught by a faculty member in their likely college and/or major department that provides an introduction as well as “hands-on” experience with URI’s resources. Study skills, lifestyle issues, time management, libraries on campus are among the areas covered. URI 101 instructors and student peer mentors work together using MAPWorks, a Web-based diagnostic and tracking tool to advise first-year students as well as monitor their academic progress. URI 101 courses also include discussions around a common book that all first-year students must read before coming to campus. This year’s book is *Mountains Beyond Mountains* by Tracy Kidder. The University College Early Alert Services work with students who are having academic difficulties or need counseling to help them adjust to being in college. University College also hosts major and minor fairs to help undeclared students choose a major and/or possible minors. Each URI 101 course also includes a civic engagement project for all students in the class. These projects come under the issue areas of health, education, advocacy, human services and the environment. Students may also mentor pre-school children under a program called Jumpstart URI.

This year the university has added [Grand Challenge courses](#), small seminar courses taught by faculty members and offered exclusively to first-year students. These courses are focused around current events and global issues across four areas: Fine Art and Literature, Letters, Natural Science and Social Science. Each course also has a companion course in the instructor's academic department that can be taken as a follow-up to help fulfill personal interest as well as General Education requirements.

While enrolled in University College, students select and complete General Education courses that support entrance into their intended major. General education requirements of all students, according to the university's web site include:

English Communication. Six credits in English communication, at least three of which must be in a course designed specifically to improve written communication skills.

Fine Arts and Literature. Six credits in courses on artistic and literary expression and interpretation.

Foreign Language/Cross-cultural Competence. Six credits or the equivalent in course work related to communicating across cultures.

Letters. Six credits in courses that address the wisdom and traditions of the past and present in a global setting.

Mathematical and Quantitative Reasoning. Three credits in a course on mathematical or quantitative skills and their application.

Natural Sciences. Six credits in courses on the interrelationships of the natural world.

Social Sciences. Six credits in courses related to the study of human behavior in social, economic, cultural, and political contexts.

These requirements, including URI 101 and the Grand Challenge courses, are comparable to those offered at other flagship state schools. They are not terribly cumbersome as long as students plan wisely. They will be revised within the next two years.

Nursing, Psychology, Communications Studies, Kinesiology, Human Development and Family Studies, Biological Sciences, Accounting, Textile Marketing and Design and English are among the most popular majors at URI; each enrolled over 350 students as of the Fall of 2011, according to the University's Office of Institutional Research.

While foreign language study has become less popular at other flagship schools, the majors in Spanish, French and German each enrolled more than 120 students. Unique to URI are well-structured programs in International Business and International Engineering. These programs offer two Bachelor's degrees, one in the chosen language (Spanish, French, German or Chinese), the other in the major within the College of Business or the College of Engineering. Each student in these programs does a semester abroad using their chosen language as well as a six-month paid assignment with an employer overseas. Students have worked for companies such as Bayer AG, Hasbro, Motorola and Volkswagen. URI also makes it easy to combine foreign language instruction with other majors. URI is also one of only nine universities in the nation that is a Chinese Language Flagship partner school. Funded by The Language Flagship, an initiative of the National Security Education Program, under the auspices of the U.S Department of Defense, Flagship Scholars go through an intensive Mandarin Chinese language immersion program that may combined with any academic major. Flagship Scholars spend one or mul-

multiple summers in China, enrolling at Nanjing University for a full semester of study. They also complete a six-month professional internship with a company or NGO.

Examples of other areas where URI stands out include:

- Nursing. Students begin their clinical placements in their sophomore year; these take place during the junior year at most other universities.
- Pharmaceutical Sciences. A Bachelor's degree program designed for students who want to work in research, sales or marketing positions in the pharmaceutical or health and beauty industries, but do not want to become registered pharmacists.
- An Honors program that not only includes honors-level coursework, but also a year-long colloquium. The year's colloquium focuses around affordable health care.
- Communication and Media. URI recently reorganized the Communications Studies, Film Media, Journalism, Library and Information Studies, Public Relations and Writing and Rhetoric under the umbrella of the Harrington School of Communication and Media. This is backed with [\\$5 million in seed funding from URI alumnus and former Thomson-Reuters chairman Richard Harrington](#). Digital media will become a larger part of instruction in the curriculum.
- Leadership Studies minor. Instruction in mentoring and the group dynamics of leadership open to students in any academic program.

Depending on their major, URI students can literally use the state as their campus. The university operates a campus in downtown Providence. Students who work in internships or part-time jobs in the city can

take courses there as well as at the main campus in Kingston. Other campuses are on Narragansett Bay, which houses the Graduate School of Oceanography and provides facilities and research opportunities for undergraduates in majors around studies of the sea (for example, Marine Science, Ocean Engineering) and the W. Alton Jones campus in West Greenwich, which is the university's environmental education center.

URI's student-faculty ratio is 15 to 1, lower than most state universities. This is calculated by counting all of the full-time faculty and one-third of those who teach part time. The university has an average class size of 29 students, which is about average for a flagship school. In addition, URI advertises that 95 percent of all courses enroll less than 100 students. The university has awarded mini-grants to faculty members who have been actively involved in course development, including the "gatekeeper" courses, introductory classes in subjects such as biological sciences, chemistry, economics, physics and psychology that are required across several majors.

URI students gave their faculty a rating of 3.71 out of a possible five points on RateMyProfessors.com. This is about the same as Boston University (3.70) and Quinnipiac University (3.71) students rated their faculty, but also higher than Northeastern University students rated their's (3.55). URI students rated their faculty about the same as the students at the University of Massachusetts (3.69), University of Connecticut (3.66), University of New Hampshire (3.68), University of Maine (3.69) and the University of Vermont (3.66).

Connections

Alumni Relations
Career Services



Connections

Fast Facts

- 1. URI has approximately 109,000 living alumni.**
- 2. Among the younger alumni, nearly half (49 percent) live in Rhode Island while another 35 percent live in Massachusetts, New York, Connecticut and New Jersey.**
- 3. The university has used a marketing theme around “a small beautiful place with some of the big thinkers in the world.”**
- 4. URI makes extensive use of experiential learning to build connections for students and also hosts more job fairs than most universities of its size.**

Building a Network

URI has approximately 109,000 living alumni. Among the younger alumni, nearly half (49 percent) live in Rhode Island while another 35 percent live in Massachusetts, New York, Connecticut and New Jersey. But while about half of the younger alumni live in the Ocean State, only a fifth work there. The university’s alumni association has 58 chapters, more than half are tied to a former student’s past affiliations with the university such as sports or clubs. Others are tied to geography, where alumni live and/or work.

The university has used the marketing theme: “A Small Beautiful Place with Some of the Biggest Thinkers in the World”. “Big Thinkers” extend to networking events. Working with the president’s office, the alumni association has run Big Thinkers events in Providence, Boston, New York City, Chicago and Los Angeles. Each event features co-appearances by the university president with a “big thinker,” an intellectual, community or business leader who is also a URI alum. There is also a Student-Alumni Association to help build ties between current and former students. The association has also taken advantage of the university’s location to run events such as Alumni On the Bounty, a reception on the HMS Bounty, the set of the 1962 movie *Mutiny On the Bounty* starring Marlon Brando, and the “Big Chill” weekend which takes alumni to numerous programs on and off campus.

The alumni association has approximately 5,100 members in its LinkedIn network. The athletic programs have around 11,900 “likes” on Facebook. The university also has around 6,900 Twitter followers.

URI engages students in career services earlier than most state schools. RhodyNet, the school’s jobs and internship database gets heavy use early because it doubles as the primary resource for on-campus work-study, off-campus and summer jobs for students who have not decided on a major.

Students who have accumulated 60 credits or more may also apply for credit-bearing internships through the Office of Internships and Experiential Education. More than 3,000 internships were listed on RhodyNet during the previous academic year, says Kim Washor, URI's Director of Experiential Learning. Another 20,000 internships can be accessed through Internships.com, Washor adds, while alumni also return to campus for panel presentations. "We often have more internship opportunities than we have students to fill them," she says. Students may earn between 6 and 15 credits through internships, taking the academic component online if the internship is far from campus. Pharmacy students will complete 36 credits in various experiential learning opportunities over the course of their six years in their degree program. The Office of Internships and Experiential Education also vets learning contracts between students, faculty and intern employers through the university's legal counsel and helps to arrange housing for interns who are working in New York City.

Students first learn about internship opportunities in URI 101. Dr. Washor's team works with faculty to deliver internship-related presentations to each of the 135 sections of the 20-25 student course as well as through the Majors-Minors Fair. Through these initial efforts, as well as capstone courses in the major programs, approximately 4,200 undergraduates, nearly one-third of the student body take on some form of practical work-related experience while pursuing their degrees. In addition to Pharmacy and Nursing students, who have clinical rotations, almost 90 percent of all Business students engage in one or more internships for credit. All Engineering students engage in project-based capstone courses during their senior year. Students in the College of Environmental and Life Sciences are also eligible to apply for coastal and environmental fellowships; they can do research with faculty in the summer or fall.

Dr. David Dooley, the university's President has set a goal that 100 percent of URI undergraduates will complete at least one internship or research op-

portunity. Employers expect entry-level candidates to show at least one, possibly more, experiential learning experience on their resumes, whether it be through a paid position or academic coursework.

URI also hosts [more on-campus career events](#) than most schools. Two unique events address Work-Life Balance as well as Green Careers. The university has also participated in the Rhode Island Career Educators conference, a teacher fair conducted in partnership with six other Ocean State schools, including Providence and Brown. URI is also one of 10 Rhode Island schools that participate in a Government career fair. Textile students participate in job-related events that take place at Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City. Approximately 150 new positions are posted every week through RhodyNet. URI is also a target school for accounting/consulting giants PwC and Ernst and Young.

At the conclusion of the 2009-10 academic year, the last year data is available, 78 percent of graduated students who completed [an exit survey](#) had found employment within three months after graduation, with 47 percent working full time. Seventy percent found work related to their academic area at the university. Sixty one percent had completed at least one internship, more than a quarter had completed three or more.

Conclusions

Summing up



Conclusions

URI puts more effort into a student's academic engagement than most flagship state schools. Experiential learning runs throughout every student's education beginning in the freshman year. No doubt the earlier exposure to these opportunities, first through community service and then through study abroad, research and employment has helped to improve graduation and retention rates. URI is well invested in environmentally-related programs, international programs, nursing, pharmacy and studies of the sea. It has made commitments to expand upon its health-related offerings as well as communications and media. Foreign language instruction is well integrated within the academic offerings.

Students can learn and make good friends at URI, though the university does not have a campus community bound by sports or other traditions. The surrounding areas have more enticing attractions when there is little activity on campus. In addition, the experience, whether your academic program is four years, five or six, can be more expensive than most other flagship state schools for an out-of-state student.

But a very good-to-excellent student who can qualify for a merit scholarship and take advantage of the university's special offerings should put URI on their list. Unless your student finds the University of Maine or UNH campus and their academics more to their liking s/he will be hard-pressed to find a better value in New England than URI.

Ed's Report Card: University of Rhode Island

Freshman Retention	4-Year/6-Year Graduation Rates	Costs	Comforts	Community	Curriculum	Connections
B	C+	B/B+ with merit scholarship	B+	B+	A	B+

Notes

Strengths	Weaknesses
First and second-year academic preparation	High sticker price for in-state and out-of-state students
Opportunities for experiential learning	Room and board charges on the high side for a state university
International Business and Engineering programs	Little to do in Kingston, which is not really a college town
Nursing puts students into clinical rotations in second year	With so much to do off-campus within a small state there is not the weekend campus community one might find at other flagship state schools.
Generous merit scholarships for very good and excellent out-of-state students	Not much of a sports tradition
Access to Providence, Boston, beaches	Rental market near campus is very expensive
Attractive, easily walkable campus	
Integration of foreign language and study abroad in many academic programs	
Alumni association is not dues based	
Modern athletic facilities with new student recreation center under construction	
Investment in health-related degree programs, agriculture/environmental studies, studies of the sea, communications	
Upperclass students can live by the beach for reasonable rents	

The End

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