

MINUTES

SPECIAL TELEPHONE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE FOR RESEARCH, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION

University of Connecticut Board of Trustees
June 29, 2021 @ 3pm EST

COMMITTEE TRUSTEES: Philip Rubin, Sandy Cloud, and Marilda Gandara
COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Rich Vogel, Tim Shannon, and Konstantine Drakonakis
UNIVERSITY SENATE REP: Janet Pritchard
UNIVERSITY STAFF: Nicole Barkley, Joanna Desjardin, Radenka Maric, David Nobel, Rachel Rubin, Dan Schwartz, and Jeffrey Shoulson

Committee Vice Chair Philip Rubin convened the meeting at 3:02pm by telephone and requested Nicole Barkley to perform a roll call of those committee members participating.

Roll call performed. Quorum reached and Vice Chair Rubin directed participants to the items on the agenda.

No public comment was volunteered on any of the agenda items.

Committee Vice Chair Rubin directed the committee to Agenda Item #2 and asked if there were any comments or changes on the minutes of the previous meeting. On a motion by Trustee Gandara, seconded by Rich Vogel, the minutes from the February 15, 2021, Special Meeting of the REI Committee were approved.

Vice Chair Rubin welcomed all attendees and restated the role and responsibility of the Committee to work towards the broader goals of the University and the State of Connecticut. Dr. Rubin then welcomed Radenka Maric, Vice President of Research to speak.

Dr. Radenka Maric offered a greeting. Noted pride for this committee to work with our entrepreneurs and students on these critical innovations regarding climate change and sustainability.

Vice Chair Rubin introduced Abhijit Banerjee, UConn Associate Vice President of Innovation & Entrepreneurship, and Stephen Plumlee, Vice Chairman and Managing Partner - R/GA Ventures.

Abhijit Banerjee and Stephen Plumlee present Climate Venture Studio accompanied by a presentation of 15 slides. If anyone would like a copy of this presentation, please contact Committee Vice-Chair Rubin or Nicole Barkley.

At the completion of slide presentation, Abhijit and Stephen offered a chance for Q&A to the committee and other guests.

Q:Tim Shannon, Committee member - Where would the entrepreneurs would come from? Who is going to run with these start-ups?

A: Stephen Plumlee – Work with UConn Stakeholders to define criteria. Then R/GA would use a combination of driving inbound applications based on this criteria; then utilizing their network for outbound searching.

Q: Radenka Maric, VP of Research – Wanted to add to why UConn & why CT?

A: This showcases UConn’s depth of knowledge in energy and sustainability as well as aligns with the goals of the Department of Energy and federal funding. The timing is right to do this.

Q: Konstantine Drakonakis – Virtual collaboration within the studio or a physical component?

A: Abhijit Banerjee - Two part answer. Specific ask for space at IPB is critical and will be the physical space. This is important in making Storrs a visible place for investment for companies. Stephen Plumlee details the hybrid model. Some of the program would be virtual, some would be in person. This offers a balance of flexibility and accessibility and has worked well in past programs even before the pandemic.

Q: Dr. Philip Rubin – What are the next steps. What should the committee be doing?

A: Abhijit Banerjee – We need approval that UConn would be behind this and would ask if the committee can offer their blessing and approval. Second step is for us to develop the program and determine who we should reach out to as partners.

Committee Vice Chair Philip Rubin noted that the Committee needs to bring this to the Board of Trustees, the President and Provost to make sure this aligns with future plans of UConn. Unless there is an objection, Dr. Rubin will bring up during his update on this committee in the Board of Trustees meeting scheduled the next day. This does not require a vote at this time. Will bring up to Board Chair Toscano as well.

Committee Vice Chair Rubin asks the Committee if there were any other objections and then moves on to the next item on the Agenda, Item #6. Request from Committee to remove Item #6 from the agenda as it is not ready for discussion. On a motion by Tim Shannon, seconded by Konstantine Drakonakis, the Committee voted unanimously to remove Agenda Item # 6.

Committee Vice Chair Rubin offered closing remarks. Thanks for the work and effort that went into the consideration of the Climate Venture Studio presentation.

No executive session was necessary.

There being no further business, on a motion by Trustee Gandara, seconded by Tim Shannon, the meeting was adjourned at 3:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nicole E. Barkley
Secretary to the Committee