

# THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND **FOUNDATION**

## URI STUDENT PHILANTHROPY COUNCIL

March 16, 2017

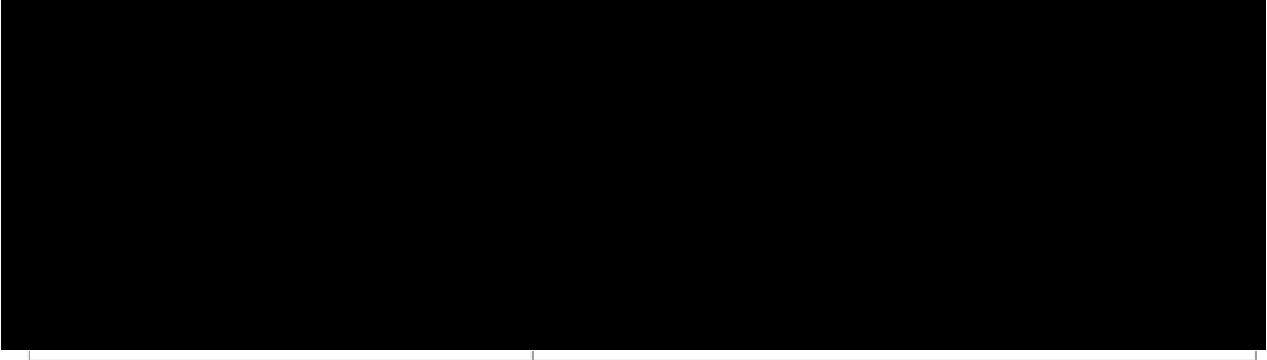
The Sillerman Center for the Advancement of Philanthropy  
The Heller School for Social Policy and Management  
Brandeis University  
415 South Street, MS-035  
Waltham, MA 02454-9110

Dear Members of the Generous U Application Committee:

Please accept this application on behalf of the University of Rhode Island (URI) Student Philanthropy Council (SPC) for the Sillerman Center Generous U prize. This application includes background information on the SPC, an executive summary, a link to our video, and confirmation of SPC's status as a URI student group.

### I. Background Information

- University name: University of Rhode Island
- Group, club or organization name: URI Student Philanthropy Council
- Group's mission or purpose: SPC's mission is to educate URI students about the impact of giving; to foster a spirit of philanthropy in students; and to promote student-to-student giving.
- Group's web site: [www.urifoundation.org/StudentPhilanthropy](http://www.urifoundation.org/StudentPhilanthropy)
- Contact person: Erin Regan, SPC Student Chairperson,  
[REDACTED]
- Staff advisor: Joanne Gemma, Associate Director, Annual Giving,  
[REDACTED]
- Name and contact information for university official to confirm status as formal group: Kathy Collins, PhD, Vice President for Student Affairs,  
[REDACTED]
- The SPC's operating budget for fiscal year 2017 is \$6,813, which covers booth and event supplies, and promotional materials for awareness and solicitation activities (please see budget template below for details).



## II. Executive Summary

The URI SPC has increased the practice and awareness of philanthropy on our campus by engaging students at events and booths, which open up the idea of philanthropy to our students. We host and participate in many events throughout the year, including National Philanthropy Month; “I Heart URI” Week, which is the SPC’s annual campaign to promote spirit, pride and giving-back to the campus community; and a campus-wide day of giving. At each of these events, we reach out to students in a unique way and educate them about student giving and encourage them to spread the word. We engage them not only through a variety of activities at our booths (for example, we offer Rhode Island favorites like Del’s Frozen Lemonade), but also by striking up conversations with students. Sometimes students are reluctant to donate because they feel “they already pay tuition,” but once they understand where their contributions are going and how they are helping fellow students, they are much more likely to donate.

The group of student volunteers who are members of the SPC are fully invested in making URI better through student giving. We strive for 100% participation from our members because we believe we should practice what we preach. The dedication our group shows during busy booth times speaks volumes. For example, during National Philanthropy Month, we had two booths a week, and every spot was staffed by an SPC member. (This was equal to over 48 booth slots and 24 hours of booth work!) To encourage student giving, we pass out very small giveaway items that promote the “I Heart URI” message and reinforce the value of philanthropy. However, SPC members want student donors to give because they feel the cause is worthwhile and not because we are giving away something. Our motto, “Students helping students,” best sums up the philosophy of our members. The amount of work they put into the group, as well as the ideas and creativity they bring, demonstrates that they are doing this because they want to see the SPC and fellow students succeed at URI.

Gifts we collect from students can be allocated to any University college, club, or sports team. However, we advocate for students to donate to the URI Students First Fund. This fund, set up through the URI Division of Student Affairs, is available for students going through an emergency situation in which they need financial assistance. The SPC helps with outreach to students by letting them know the fund exists. Through the fund, small grants are given on a case-by-case basis to help students through their time of need. This fund has helped URI students in many ways. It has helped students who have had fires in their off-campus apartments and needed temporary housing until they were back on their feet. The fund helped replace a student’s stolen book bag (with textbooks and course materials inside). The fund has also helped

pay for travel fare for students to visit terminally-ill relatives. It also helps provide food to URI students who would otherwise go hungry. These unexpected emergency situations can happen to any one of our students, which is why the URI Students First Fund is so extraordinary and necessary. Advocating to support the Students First Fund truly is setting up every student for success, and it helps them to be prepared if faced with a crisis.

This year we wanted to connect student giving to the greater campus, so we incorporated a “Battle of the Colleges.” With every donation, we allowed student donors to put a marble in the jar that represented their college. This excellent initiative showed the representation of our student donors across the campus and sparked a friendly competition that helped engage students. During our “I Heart URI” Week, we promoted themed events each day and invited students to share what they love about URI by writing on small hearts, which we displayed in the University’s Student Union. We also gave out blue ribbons for students to wear, showing their donor status and our appreciation. This spring semester, we are planning several outdoor events to reach larger numbers of students, and we will also play a role in the University’s campus-wide giving day to be held during URI’s 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, focusing our efforts on student donors.

Currently, we have approximately 25 members and use campus club fairs, “First Night” (an annual event for all incoming students), and our booths to promote our organization. We also hosted our first open house for SPC this year and recruited several new students as a result. As a way to recruit first-year students, we presented to URI 101 mentors on the SPC. These mentors are upperclassmen who mentor first-year students taking URI 101, a course that helps with the transition to college. In addition, the “I Heart URI” initiative was included for the first time in URI’s orientation skit, “Big Break, which is part of orientation weekend for students and parents. During booths and events, we often speak with students who show interest in joining, and we invite them to attend a meeting to hear about what we are planning. We encourage members to invite their friends so that each year we have a strong group of committed students and a good balance from each class year.

This year, as a newly recognized URI Student Senate group, we were proud to receive the CASE (Council for Advancement and Support of Education) Affiliated Student Advancement Programs (ASAP) Award for Outstanding Emerging Student Organization. This award recognized the SPC for developing membership with strong programs, and for effectively engaging with university constituents, philanthropic efforts, and outreach. In addition, this year’s SPC chair was recognized by CASE ASAP with its Award for Outstanding Student Leader, for significantly improving the organization by inspiring growth, cultivating collaboration, and developing meaningful relationships.

We were thrilled to have been selected as one of two winners of the Generous U runner-up prize in 2015 and 2016. If we are fortunate to win the Generous U grand prize, we would like to utilize the funding to help with planning and promoting more visible events on campus that will reach a larger number of students. We will also continue to utilize funding to support the purchase of promotional items to help engage and steward student donors. This will help us promote our “I Heart URI” efforts to keep the message recognizable to students and staff. We also hope to find a corporate partner who may be able to provide some financial or in-kind

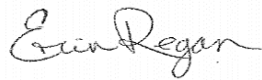
support to help sustain our efforts going forward. The Generous U Prize will help the SPC grow to become the organization we strive to be, and will support us as we increase awareness about the URI Students First Fund so that students know help is available in their time of need.

### III. Video

The Council's video can be viewed by clicking this link: <https://vimeo.com/207888042>

Thank you for your consideration of this application, and thank you for your past support of our program. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,



Erin Regan '18  
Elementary Education  
URI Student Philanthropy Council Chair



Joanne Gemma  
Associate Director, Annual Giving  
SPC Staff Advisor