



Search for the Chief Information Officer
University of Rhode Island
Kingston, Rhode Island

THE SEARCH

The University of Rhode Island, the premier public research institute in the State of Rhode Island, seeks an experienced IT professional to serve as the next Chief Information Officer (CIO).

This is an outstanding opportunity to join a university that is an established academic leader in the State of Rhode Island. The University of Rhode Island (URI) is the state's flagship land- and sea-grant research institution, with a commitment to urban initiatives. A student-centered research institution, URI actively partners with other organizations globally, regionally and locally to advance knowledge and to develop informed residents and leaders. URI is committed to high-quality education, community engagement, and solving the world's most important challenges. Situated on the traditional land and territories of the Narragansett Nation and the Niantic People, URI strives to create a diverse and inclusive environment for researchers, teachers, learners, and community members. The CIO will be a sophisticated, visionary leader who will facilitate information technology in its many forms across the University, supporting its mission of excellence in teaching, research, public engagement, creativity, and economic development.

The CIO reports dually to the Provost and Vice President for Administration and Finance and serves as a member of the President's Stewardship Council. The CIO is responsible for information technology strategy, policies, and services that support teaching, learning, and research across the University of Rhode Island. The CIO heads Central IT, also known as ITS, a \$24.8 million central IT organization with a staff of 83. ITS is directly responsible for operating and supporting university networking and general computing services, learning management and research computing systems, in addition to some of the enterprise services for the campus. This position also works with faculty and staff to support interdisciplinary research initiatives and develop campus responses to rapid technology changes. The CIO will play a critical role in promoting the institution's success in achieving goals set by a recent campus-wide strategic planning process and by the recent IT strategic plan.

The University of Rhode Island has partnered with Isaacson, Miller, the national recruiting firm. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and referrals may be directed to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

The University of Rhode Island is a diverse and dynamic community whose members are connected by a common quest for knowledge. As a major research university defined by innovation and big thinking, URI offers its undergraduate, graduate, and professional students distinctive educational opportunities designed to meet the global challenges of today's world and the rapidly evolving needs of tomorrow.

Founded in 1888, URI has grown and evolved throughout its 150-year history, always seeking to serve the needs of the state and the students that it serves. Originally called Rhode Island College, the Rhode Island state legislature renamed the institution the University of Rhode Island in 1951.

Today, URI is the only public institution in Rhode Island that offers undergraduate, graduate, and professional students the distinctive educational opportunities of a major research university. The University has a committed and supportive faculty, with 86% of full-time faculty holding terminal degrees and with an overall student-to-faculty ratio of 16:1.

As a part of [URI's 2023-2033 Strategic Plan](#), President Parlange has made fostering an inclusive, people-centered culture a core priority. Indeed, URI is deeply committed to cultivating a diverse, inclusive, equitable, and accessible learning, living, and working environment. To do so, every member of the community must strive to ensure that the values of community, equity, and diversity are imbued in all that they do, from policies and programming to collaborations and conversations. Above all, URI's commitment centers actionable change to enhance and improve its vibrant intellectual community.

The University of Rhode Island currently enrolls over 17,600 students, including over 14,000 undergraduates, 2,700 graduate students, and 1,200 certificate or non-degree-seeking students. The University employs over 3,200 employees, including full and part-time faculty. Since 2007, the University has invested more than \$1 billion in campus capital projects and improvements across all its campuses. URI consists of four campuses, the historic 1,200 acre main campus in Kingston, RI; the 153-acre Narragansett Bay Campus overlooking the West passage of the Narragansett Bay, the Providence campus consisting of two locations, the 133,000 square foot Nursing Education Center; and the 2,300 acre W. Alton Jones Campus located in the western section of Rhode Island offers an ideal setting for important research projects and field work for classes in environmental sciences.

The University of Rhode Island is comprised of nine degree-granting schools and colleges: the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Business, the Feinstein College of Education, the College of Engineering, the College of Environmental and Life Sciences, the College of Health Sciences, the College of Nursing, the College of Pharmacy, and the Graduate School of Oceanography.

The University offers over 90 undergraduate degree programs and more than 100 graduate programs. The most popular of URI's undergraduate majors include psychology, kinesiology, nursing, communication studies, business, biological sciences, computer science, mechanical engineering, health studies, criminology and criminal justice, and human development and family studies. There has been an interest in and focus on expanding the offerings of the graduate programs and the

master's programs to make use of the university's online learning technology. For more information about academic programs, visit: <https://www.uri.edu/academics/>

Since its inception, URI has remained a learner-centric institution, and the University works to provide students with a distinctive educational experience designed to meet the challenges of an increasingly connected global community. The University's core values include:

- Freedom to learn, teach, create, and conduct research with integrity in the pursuit and dissemination of new knowledge aimed at contributing to the public good.
- An inclusive, accessible, equitable and diverse community whereby we respect the rights and dignity of all.
- Intellectual curiosity, lifelong learning, leadership, and scholarship in creating a thriving URI community in service to Rhode Island and the world.
- Sustainability and care of our environment conducive to the physical and mental health of our community. Self- and institutional reflection of our values in our work, scholarship and interactions, holding ourselves, each other, and the institution accountable to uphold them to a high standard.

Leadership

Barbara E. Wolfe became Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs in January 2023. Wolfe, an internationally recognized expert on psychiatric and mental health nursing and eating disorders, had previously served as dean of the URI College of Nursing since 2016. Before coming to URI, she served as associate dean for research and professor at Boston College's William F. Connell School of Nursing. In addition to her work at Boston College, she served as a psychiatry lecturer at Harvard Medical School and president of the American Psychiatric Nurses Association.

Abby Benson was named Vice President of Administration and Finance in March 2024 after serving as interim Vice President since May 2023. In this role, she oversees several key areas of the University including budget and finance, facilities and capital planning, risk management, human resources, public safety, information technology services, and procurement. Benson previously served as Senior Advisor and Chief of Staff to the President of URI. Benson has held several leadership roles in both public and private institutions, including the University of Colorado and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). She also served for nine years as an officer in the United States Coast Guard and as an earth scientist for Tetra Tech NUS and Arthur D. Little.

ABOUT INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Information Technology at URI consists of two cooperative groups of professionals: the central, shared organization commonly referred to as ITS and the professional partners reporting to other units within the University. 83 individuals serve in ITS and report up to the CIO, and 80 individuals serve in distributed units with reporting lines in the individual divisions. Combined, there are 163 IT staff across the University. A list of central and distributed groups can be found at <https://its.uri.edu/it-organization/>

In Spring 2023, IT launched a new strategic plan in support of the FOCUS URI strategic plan. In an increasingly digital world, IT support services have become both essential for daily operations as well as a major support for all four URI strategic priorities – broadening impact, enhancing student achievement, fostering an inclusive culture, and powering the university of the future. Information Technology is built on a strong foundation of core infrastructure and software services. On this foundation, two core pillars of service delivery and communication support the development, deployment, and delivery of innovative IT solutions which empower and enhance all of the strategic priorities of the University. This plan calls for sustained and systematic improvement in all five of these aspects and contains over 60 individual projects and activities. It is a holistic plan for both central and distributed IT and represents a new collaborative framework in support of the University.

The IT Strategic Governance Committee (ITGov) is intended to promote effective and efficient IT services that meet constituents' current and future needs. ITGov works within the frameworks of the President's transformational goals and the IT Strategic plan. ITGov is composed of members from each division of the University. Student representation is included with at least one undergraduate and one graduate student member. At least a third of non-student committee membership comes from the full-time Faculty.

The CIO's team supports academic technology broadly, both in the physical classroom but also in the development of distance education programs, in training programs for faculty and staff, and in the development and delivery of Web based courses.

ROLE OF THE CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

The Chief Information Officer at the University of Rhode Island is the leader for technology across the entire University, responsible for planning, coordination and leadership for the University's information technology services and support, including Management Information Services, Technical and Operational Services, Information and Instructional Technology Services, Research Computing Services, Networking and Telecommunication Services, and Library Services in support of the University's mission in instruction, research, academic outreach, and technology.

The CIO reports to and works closely with the Provost and the Vice President for Administration and Finance, and collaborates with other campus leaders, including the President's office, Stewardship Council, deans of the colleges, and department leaders. The CIO currently has 11 direct reports, including the Chief Information Security Officer; the Manager, IT Organizational Change; the Cloud Services Architect; the Directors of IT Teaching and Learning Services, IT Research Computing Services, CIT Infrastructure Services, IT Administrative Application Services; and the Associate Directors of IT Community Service, Network, IT Service Administration, IT Innovation Services.

Through collaboration with senior University colleagues, external partners, and ITGov, and in leading ITS, the CIO envisions, establishes, and advances university-wide IT strategies, policies, and standards. Navigating the complex federation of the University with a commitment to advancing URI's teaching, research, and service missions is the central charge of the CIO. The CIO must be an effective and

compelling leader within the broader campus community, establishing the strategic vision, opportunities, and costs to senior administration and sharing with the campus community the division's capabilities, recommendations, policies, and decisions.

The CIO is responsible for the \$24.8 million operational budget for ITS in addition to the annual budget for acquisition of hardware and software purchases/replacements. With an eye toward fiscal stewardship, the CIO will review and recommend all contracts for the purchase, lease, and maintenance of hardware and software, services and communications equipment to meet the computing needs of the University.

The CIO will also participate in state, regional, national, and international organizations and consortia.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The CIO will be expected and empowered to:

Develop a vision and unified direction for technology across URI

The CIO is stepping into URI during a pivotal moment in the University's trajectory. Research continues to grow across the University, student enrollments have steadily increased, and the University is poised for continued greatness. Technology at the University will be a key contributor to moving the University's strategic priorities forward. The CIO will develop a holistic vision for technology across campus, ensuring the proper mechanisms and supports are in place to empower the URI community to leverage technology as a driver in the work of the University.

Continue to foster the growth of research computing

As Rhode Island's land-grant and sea-grant institution, research at the University is diverse across fields and practitioners. URI has seen an immense growth in research computing, and there is significant opportunity for the CIO to act not only as a strategic partner but as a thought leader supporting research computing. Continuing to nurture the growth of research computing, in partnership with other research support units, will be key to URI's long-term leadership as a creator of new knowledge. The CIO coordinates research computing planning and policies and fosters collaboration across the University to share best practices and advance discovery.

Advocate for the role of IT across URI

The CIO will be an advocate for the role of technology at URI, playing a key role in the President's Stewardship Council. The CIO will underscore a culture of transparent communication with the URI community around the work of IT, and engage the community in feedback and vision building for IT. Building these relationships will ensure that IT strategies are aligned with divisional and university missions.

URI is endeavoring a transition from PeopleSoft to Workday HCM and Finance, in concert with the State of Rhode Island's ERP transition. This will be expansive project, and will require a CIO adept at communication, problem solving, change management, and collaboration.

Grow information security across the University

URI is keenly focused on maintaining a robust, effective information security program. With the threat landscape evolving and expanding every day, the next CIO will bring a proven track record of managing organizations to high security standards. At the same time, the CIO must understand the principles of privacy and rights to access. The CIO will work closely with the Chief Information Security Officer to ensure that university data and resources are secure, and that the URI community is aware of potential threats and their role in mitigating them.

Evaluate and engineer the IT structure

The CIO will evaluate the current organizational structure and working environment and enact a plan to support service orientation and coordination of campus IT resources across campus. There is opportunity to rethink the relationships between ITS and the decentralized IT staff to ensure continuous improvement at all levels of the organization.

The CIO will also consider reallocation of and effectively steward financial, human, and digital resources to support the ITS and University strategic plan.

Nurture the growth of IT staff

The CIO will join an organization of long tenured, committed IT professionals. The CIO will be a leader with a passion for fostering professional development pathways and opportunities for growth. The CIO will be a dedicated manager and partner to the IT staff, with a willingness to lead by example, a commitment to seeking resources for professional growth, and an eye for an organizational structure that utilizes the talent across IT at URI.

The IT staff are part of the URI Professional Staff Association, and it will be critical that the CIO has a close working relationship with the Union.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

This position requires a leader with broad technology knowledge. A service-oriented leader and listener, the CIO will have a record of building and leading high-performing teams, establishing and sustaining productive working relationships with a range of constituencies, and achieving results through collaboration and influence. The successful candidate will understand the importance of recruiting, developing, and leading a diverse and vibrant workforce.

The successful candidate will bring many of the following professional qualifications, skills, experience, and personal qualities:

- A deep understanding of trends in information technology and issues in higher education is essential, as is demonstrated effectiveness in planning and innovative leadership experience in the information technology field.
- The candidate should be a strong leader with a record that demonstrates an ability to lead and build partnerships, locally as well as nationally, including deep collaborations and resource development.
- Demonstrated successful experience in integrating information systems, resources, and services in support of academic and/or administrative functions.
- Demonstrated ability to further the goals of the computing, information, instructional and research technologies to support the teaching and research of the faculty and the learning outcomes of students.
- Demonstrated ability to increase resources through external sources, including partnerships, grants, and private giving.
- Experience in leading and managing an organization, with significant responsibility for program, budget and personnel.
- Strong administrative, interpersonal, collaborative, and team leadership skills are also required, as is a commitment to the highest ethical standards.
- A national reputation for information technology leadership and a record of success in collaborative partnerships with diverse stakeholders in a large and complex enterprise.
- Ten years of increasing and broad-based responsibility in IT or a related field.
- An advanced degree is preferred.

Compensation and Location

URI has applied Salary Grade 22 to this role.

The University of Rhode Island's main campus is in the historic village of Kingston, Rhode Island. Recognized on the National Register of Historic Places, the location is an idyllic place for students to thrive, located close to the ocean and 30 miles south of Providence. The main campus is 1,200 acres and is comprised of historically significant buildings and contemporary architecture. The Narragansett Bay Campus provides additional opportunities for academic exploration and houses the Graduate School of Oceanography.

University of Rhode Island Land Acknowledgment

The University of Rhode Island occupies the traditional stomping ground of the Narragansett Nation and the Niantic People. We honor and respect the enduring and continuing relationship between the Indigenous people and this land by teaching and learning more about their history and present-day communities, and by becoming stewards of the land we, too, inhabit.

Applications, Inquiries, and Nominations

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the

Isaacson, Miller website for the search: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/university-rhode-island/chief-information-officer>

Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

Daniel Rodas, Partner
Joanna Cook, Managing Associate
Isaacson, Miller

The University of Rhode Island is an equal-opportunity employer committed to the principles of affirmative action. It is the policy of the University of Rhode Island to provide reasonable accommodation when requested by a qualified applicant or employee with a disability.