

POLICY ON NAMING OPPORTUNITIES  
FOR RECOGNITION OF INDIVIDUALS OR ENTITIES

Board of Governors for Higher Education  
State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

Adopted: 11/21/96 (BG)  
(Incorporated 1969 Policy)

Legal Citation: 22-7.4

Amended:

PREMISE

Naming opportunities provide the Board of Governors for Higher Education and the institutions with an occasion to recognize exceptional contributions to public higher education in Rhode Island. Such contributions, whether they are financial or in the form of meritorious service, enrich and strengthen Rhode Island's system of public higher education while at the same time providing the opportunity to honor those who have made the enhancements possible. In addition to delineating Board of Governors policy on naming opportunities, this policy is intended to provide the institutions with sufficient guidance and flexibility to respond to naming opportunities in ways that are beneficial to the institutions, to the system, and to prospective donors.

AUTHORITY TO NAME

The Board of Governors retains the prerogative to approve certain naming opportunities for several reasons. In the case of buildings and other physical properties, it is the Board of Governors that holds actual title to those properties. In the case of major organizational units at the institutions, Board of Governors *Regulations Governing Instructional Program and Organizational Changes in Rhode Island Public Institutions of Higher Education* require Board approval. Finally, the Board of Governors (and its predecessors) has maintained a policy on the naming of buildings since 1969; this policy incorporates that original policy, with minor modifications.

Therefore, authority to name is allocated as follows --

1. The Board of Governors retains the authority to approve proposals for the naming of --

New Buildings, Bridges, Edifices and Other State Constructions<sup>1</sup>  
Existing Buildings and Wings, Thoroughfares, Portions of a Campus

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<sup>1</sup>As a matter of practice and policy, the Board of Governors submits names of buildings to the Permanent Joint Committee on Naming All New Buildings, Bridges, Edifices and Other State Constructions (Rhode Island General Laws '22-7.4).

Departments, Divisions, Schools, Colleges, Agencies, Institutes, Centers, and  
Other Major Organizational Units

2. The institutions can name without prior Board of Governors approval --  
Academic Programs  
Chairs, Professorships, Lectureships, Faculty Awards  
Fellowships, Assistantships, Scholarships  
Library Collections
3. The following may be named by the institutions, unless conditions attached to the naming opportunity contain provisions for significant signage, in which case, the naming must be approved by the Board --  
  
Athletic Fields, Pools, Walkways, Gardens and Other Exterior Spaces  
Rooms, Galleries, Auditoriums, Laboratories and Other Interior Spaces

#### PRINCIPLES

1. The institutions shall have policies in place for naming opportunities and these must conform with Board of Governors policy. Institutional policies on naming opportunities shall be reviewed by the Office of Higher Education for appropriate consistency with this policy.
2. For proposals requiring Board of Governors approval, no commitment for naming shall be made prior to granting of said approval(s).
3. Each proposal for naming will be considered on its merits and must reflect favorably on and bring honor to the institution and Rhode Island's system of public higher education.
4. Named items must be of a sufficient magnitude so as not to trivialize either the institution, system or individual being honored.
5. Any conditions attached to a naming opportunity must be consistent with institutional and Board of Governors mission statements and policies, as well as to state and federal law. In particular,
  - a. Naming opportunities should advance, not detract from, institutional and Board of Governors mission statements.
  - b. Any conditions attached to a naming opportunity must conform to all institutional and Board of Governors finance, academic, student and personnel policies, including those pertaining to hiring and affirmative action.
  - c. Reasonable control over signage and promotional activities related to the naming opportunity shall be retained by the institution or Board of Governors, as appropriate.
6. In the case of proposals for naming for a donor or for a person whose name is proposed by a donor in recognition of a gift, consideration will be given to --

- a. The significance of the proposed gift as it relates to the realization or success of a project or program or to the enhancement of the project's or program's usefulness to the institution or to the system.
  - b. The urgency of need for the project or program or for support funds for the project or program.
  - c. The eminence of the individual whose name is proposed.
  - d. The individual's relationship to the institution or to the system.
7. In the case of proposals for naming opportunities in honor of an individual, with no gift involved --
- a. The proposed honoree shall have achieved distinction in one or more of the following ways --
    - 1) While serving the institution or the system in an academic capacity with such high scholarly distinction as to have earned a national or international reputation in the field of specialization, or while serving the institution or the system in an administrative capacity and rendering such distinguished service as to warrant recognition for exceptional contributions to the welfare of the institution or the system, or
    - 2) Contributed in truly exceptional ways to the welfare of the institution or the system or achieved such unique distinction as to warrant recognition.
  - b. Absent extraordinary circumstances, if the individual has served the institution or the system in an academic or administrative capacity, a proposal shall not be made for naming in honor if the individual is still involved with the institution or system in a decision-making capacity.

## PROCEDURES

1. Naming opportunities requiring Board of Governors approval should normally be presented in an Executive Session of the Board, at least one month prior to the date when action by the Board is to be requested in a format specified by the Office of Higher Education and to include, where appropriate, the amount of the gift discounted to present value.
2. Naming opportunities not requiring Board of Governors approval should be presented to the Board as informational items as part of the presidents' reports.