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**University names associate vice president and chief diversity officer**

1 message

**University of Rhode Island** <uricomunity@ais.uri.edu>

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THE  
UNIVERSITY  
OF RHODE ISLANDTHINK BIG  WE DO<sup>SM</sup>*This message is sent on behalf of URI President David M. Dooley*

## University names associate vice president and chief diversity officer

*March 17, 2020*

Last week Mary Grace A. Almandrez was appointed the associate vice president (AVP) and chief diversity officer (CDO) for the University of Rhode Island, after an extensive national search. Given the rapidly evolving COVID-19 (coronavirus) situation the university focused all of its communications on informing and guiding our community on how best to prepare and respond to this situation. However, it is important to inform the URI community of this appointment so they know there are leaders that can support our community members during these difficult times.

Dr. Almandrez served in an interim capacity at the University since January 2019. She came to URI with a record of distinguished and extensive service at Brown University in student affairs, budgeting, academic advising, recruitment, student success and alumni relations. As AVP/CDO, she will continue to be an integral part of the President's Senior Leadership Team as it works with students, staff, faculty, alumni, and visitors to foster a welcoming, diverse, and inclusive community.

Dr. Almandrez has provided visionary and effective leadership for the University, including the creation of the University Diversity Council (UDC), laying the groundwork for URI's first campus climate survey, and serving as liaison for the community to the Senior Leadership Team of URI, in order to communicate

emergent issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion within the University itself, and both locally, and nationally. This has been challenging work that will have a transformative impact for the University in the years ahead.

As many of you are aware, in recent months the University has restructured the Office of Community, Equity, and Diversity and redefined the AVP/CDO position. However, there is more work to be done to build on the University's commitment to diversity and inclusion to ensure our community is welcoming to all and where everyone has the potential to succeed. The work of the University Diversity Council will be especially important in this regard.

The work of the UDC will provide inclusive mechanisms for faculty, staff, students, and affinity groups to provide input and guidance to the CDO and the University as a whole. In addition, there will be regular opportunities for members of the URI community to attend UDC meetings, or to interact with its members in other venues. Further, the UDC will help coordinate diversity and inclusion initiatives across the University, and among colleges and divisions of URI.

Dr. Almandrez is a proven leader who will engage our community in new ways to improve communications, encourage continuous feedback, and identify action-oriented opportunities that support our [cornerstone values](#), and our shared goals encompassing community, equity, diversity, and inclusion.

As President, I will task Dr. Almandrez and the UDC to oversee the completion of our first campus climate survey, evaluate and update as needed our CED strategic plan, and work with the Senior Leadership Team and the URI community to develop and implement specific steps to assist URI in achieving its goals.

Dr. Almandrez worked at Brown University for the past seven-and-half years, most recently as associate vice president and dean of students, where she served as an advocate for all students to thrive in their academic and co-curricular endeavors. She supervised Residential Life, Student and Employee Accessibility Services, Student Conduct & Community Standards and Student Support Services. She orchestrated several major reorganizations on the divisional and department levels. Dr. Almandrez also chaired Brown's Threat Assessment Team.

Dr. Almandrez also served as assistant vice president and dean of students; interim assistant vice president for campus life; associate and assistant dean of the College and director of the Brown Center for Students of Color. Prior to her work at Brown, she was the first assistant dean of students for multicultural student services at the University of San Francisco and before that, director of the Office of Mission & Diversity at Notre Dame de Namur University.

She earned her bachelor's degree in sociology from the University of San Diego,

her master's degree in human resources development from McDaniel College and her doctorate in education from the University of San Francisco. She holds a certificate from Harvard Graduate School of Education's Institute for Educational Management.



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