



Saul Kaplan, RIEDC's Director of Business Development, looks on as Governor Donald L. Carcieri signs the executive order authorizing Rhode Island's Science and Technology Advisory Council.

Governor Announces Formation of Science and Technology Advisory Council

Council to Advise State Leaders on Science and Technology Priorities

Providence - Governor Donald L. Carcieri today signed an [Executive Order](#) creating a Science and Technology Advisory Council (STAC) that will advise the Governor and General Assembly in prioritizing Rhode Island's investment in science and technology and address issues that impact the State's ability to support and grow an innovation economy.

"Rhode Island's economic success depends on our ability to build an innovation economy that can turn new ideas into better products, services, and solutions to societal problems," said Governor Carcieri. "In sharing their unique expertise and vision, members of this Council will play a vital role in creating a science and technology agenda that establishes Rhode Island as a leader in basic research and its commercial applications."

By bringing together leaders from both the public and private sector, the Council will help Rhode Island's leadership address issues and opportunities that cut across disciplines, technologies, and institutional boundaries to create a comprehensive State-wide strategy for science and technology development—a critical step in remaining nationally and globally competitive.

"In the United States science and technology have been very significant drivers of our knowledge economy and vital parts of our military security. We used to be leaders in these areas. However, our lead is slipping and other nations are starting to out-invest and out-invent us," said STAC co-chair and Brown University Vice President for Research Andries van Dam.

"If we don't aggressively invest in education, research, and training our workforce, we as a country and as a state will be left behind," van Dam continued. "The Science and Technology Advisory Council will examine what our State can do to take advantage of our strengths, buttress our weaknesses, and position ourselves to compete nationally and internationally."

For its first assignment, the Council will be charged with assessing the State's current capacity for innovation in science and technology and report back to the Governor and General Assembly recommendations that strengthen Rhode Island's capabilities in these areas. In addition, the Council will support Rhode Island's pursuit of basic research funding through federal-state partnerships such as the National Science Foundation's Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR).

Creating an Innovation Economy in Rhode Island

Recent reports from the National Science Foundation and the American Association for the Advancement of Science contend that to remain competitive, the U.S. must create new avenues to drive innovation—avenues that transition away from disciplinary "stovepipes" in education and research to a multi-disciplinary model that fosters collaboration among government, industry, and academic institutions.

"We cannot afford to ignore the tremendous benefits of bringing our government, academic research institutions, and industry leaders together to collectively strengthen the pipeline that move ideas from basic research into application and commercial development," said STAC co-chair and Dean of the College of Environment and Life Sciences at the University of Rhode Island Jeffrey R. Seemann. "In a world where prosperity is so closely tied to our ability to innovate, failure simply isn't an option."

In selecting co-chairs from Brown and URI, the Council has forged an important alliance between two of the State's most powerful science and technology development engines, marking an important step forward in creating unified support for Rhode Island's basic research enterprise.

Similarly, the Council's commercial and industry expertise will bring focus to issues that cut across institutional boundaries to impact the State's overall ability to grow the science and technology sector and support an innovation economy that turns new ideas into better products, services, and solutions to societal problems.

"In a state as small as Rhode Island, we need to be especially strategic in how we deploy our resources," said Saul Kaplan, Director of Business Development for the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation. "Although we may not be able to make the same magnitude of investment as some larger states, we are uniquely positioned to turn the close connectivity of our legislative, academic and industry networks into a real competitive advantage. Our hope is that this Council will help Rhode Island create an environment where innovation is commonplace."

Appointments to the Science and Technology Advisory Council include:

- **Co-Chair**, Jeffrey R. Seemann, Dean of the College of the Environment and Life Sciences, University of Rhode Island
- **Co-Chair**, Andries van Dam, Vice President for Research, Brown University
- David Bengston, V.P. and General Manager, Rhode Island Operations, Amgen
- Paul Choquette, Chairman/CEO, Gilbane Construction Company
- Saul Kaplan, Director of Business Development, Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation
- Margaret Leinen, Assistant Director for Geosciences, National Science Foundation
- Richard Nadolink, former Chief of Technology, Naval Underseas Warfare Center
- Thomas Rockett, Governor for Higher Education and Vice Provost, Emeritus, University of Rhode Island
- Thomas Ryan, Chairman/CEO, CVS, Inc.
- Cheryl W. Snead, President and CEO of Banneker Industries
- Donald Stanford, President, Stanford Scientific

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