

January 17, 2022

TO: URI Board of Trustees
FROM: Marc Parlange, President
RE: Revocation of Honorary Degrees from the University of Rhode Island

As requested by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, I asked the Honorary Degree Committee to meet to consider the possible revocation of previously awarded Honorary Degrees to Lieutenant General Michael Flynn (retired) and former Mayor Rudolph Giuliani. The University honored General Flynn during the 2014 commencement by conferring upon him the Doctor of Humane Letters *Honoris Causa*, and Mayor Giuliani was awarded the Doctor of Laws *Honoris Causa* in June 2003 in conjunction with a reception at the International Scholar Athlete Hall of Fame.

On December 10, 2021, the Honorary Degree Committee carefully conducted a fair and objective review of the available evidence. The task was approached with the seriousness that was warranted and respect for divergent views expressed.

I agree with the Committee's recommendation to revoke the degrees based on their findings that General Flynn and Mayor Giuliani no longer represent the highest level of our values and standards that were evident when we first bestowed the degree for the following reasons:

- General Flynn pleaded guilty twice to a felony count of "willfully and knowingly" lying to the FBI in exchange for a plea agreement.
- In June 2021, at a conference in Dallas, Texas, General Flynn appeared to suggest that a military coup was needed in the U.S., much like the one staged by the military in Myanmar in 2021.
- In November 2021, during a rally in San Antonio, Texas, General Flynn called for the establishment of "one religion" in the U.S. His behavior was widely condemned as violation of the doctrine of religious freedom enshrined in the first amendment of the U.S. Constitution
- Mayor Giuliani participated in the January 6, 2021, rally that incited the assault on the Capitol building in Washington, D.C. His words encouraged domestic terrorist behavior aimed at preventing Congress from certifying the outcome of the 2020 presidential election.
- Mayor Giuliani has been suspended from practicing law in both Washington, D.C., and the State of New York over his unfounded claims of rampant fraud during the 2020 presidential election. The courts have determined that there is evidence that Mayor Giuliani has made false and misleading statements in representing President Trump and the Trump campaign in connection with Trump's failed re-election efforts.

The URI Cornerstones, a set of values we hold dear, asks of all community members to:

- Pursue knowledge with honesty, integrity, and courage
- Respect the rights and dignity of each individual and group
- Reject prejudice and intolerance, and work to understand differences
- Accept personal responsibility for our actions and their consequences

As a civic institution, URI has the privilege and responsibility to sustain and preserve American democracy by inspiring and modeling good citizenship. Revoking these honorary degrees reinforces our values and allows us to lead with truth and integrity.

Thank you for your consideration.

IT IS RECOMMENDED:

That the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees approve the revocation of honorary degrees to General Michael Flynn (ret) and Mayor Rudolph Giuliani.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marc Parlange". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Marc B. Parlange, Ph.D., P.Eng.
President