University of Rhode Island (URI) has been a UCAR member since 1985. URI programs in the areas related to atmospheric and oceanographic sciences are spread across multiple colleges and departments within the university, including Graduate School of Oceanography (GSO), College of Environment and Life Sciences (CELS) and Department of Ocean Engineering (OE). The greatest concentration and the largest research portfolio related to atmospheric and oceanographic sciences are in GSO. There are 35 faculty and 16 Marine Research Scientists in GSO. GSO offers Master's and PhD degrees in oceanography. There are currently 30 students in the master’s and 55 students in the PhD program. While there is no undergraduate major in GSO, there are joint BS degree programs in Chemistry and Chemical Oceanography, Geology and Geological Oceanography, and Physics and Physical Oceanography, with an aggregate enrollment of 41 students. A recent addition to the academic program is a joint master’s degree in Oceanography and Business Administration. Teaching and research in relevant areas in CELS are concentrated in the Departments of Biological Sciences, Environmental and Natural Resource Economics, Geosciences and Natural Resource Sciences; there are also important links in Departments of Fisheries, Animal and Veterinary Sciences, and Marine Affairs. There are over 200 students in the BS program in Marine Biology, 23 students in the BS track in Geosciences, and smaller number in Natural Resource Science and other areas. In the graduate program in CELS, there are 21 students in the MS and 33 students in the PhD program. In the OE Department, there are currently 115 undergraduates, 11 in the master’s and 9 in the PhD programs.

Funded by NSF, GSO in URI operates a mid-size research vessel, R/V Endeavor. GSO also manages the University National Oceanographic Laboratory System (UNOLS), which is a consortium of sixty-one institutions with interests in major shared-use facilities such as research vessels, submersibles, remotely operated vehicles, autonomous underwater vehicles, aircrafts, icebreakers, and associated major instrumentation. The OE Department and GSO have jointly formed a Center of Excellence in Undersea Technology. The center will perform both basic and applied research on the design, development, testing and implementation of a wide variety of undersea technologies.

URI has maintained a robust research program. The faculty and staff of GSO conduct research (many studies are multidisciplinary) in all four of the major oceanography-related disciplines: geological (including archaeological oceanography), biological, physical, and chemical oceanography (including atmospheric chemistry). The research addresses such issues as climate change, hurricanes, pollution, fisheries depletion, and the need for new technology for undersea research and exploration. GSO scientists receive externally funded awards for research from multiple federal and state agencies, totaling approximately $23M per year. They publish extensively in the peer reviewed literature, and provide articles and lectures for a lay audience to bring the benefits of their research to a broader audience. A compiled list of publications by GSO scientists, students, and technical staff typically comprises about 150 publications per year. In the past five years, GSO granted 40 master’s and 45 PhD degrees in the field of oceanography.
URI faculty and staff are active participants in UCAR governance and collaborative research, and are frequent users of NCAR facilities (C-130 and supercomputers). In particular, Dr. John Merrill has been extensively involved in UCAR activities by serving on several committees. Other projects of particular note include collaboration with UCAR scientists in developing the Hurricane Weather, Research and Forecast model and with UNIDATA in developing/implementing OpeNDAP software.

The UCAR Membership Committee concludes that the membership criteria are fulfilled, and recommends to the Members' Representatives that the membership of University of Rhode Island be continued as provided by the UCAR bylaws.