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Cummings Foundation pledges \$20 million to Roger Williams University

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Bristol, RI Roger Williams University (RWU) publicizes its \$20 million partnership with Cummings Foundation.

In recognition of this philanthropic partnership between RWU and Cummings Foundation – the largest in Roger Williams’ history – president Ioannis Miaoulis said that the School of Architecture, Art and Historic Preservation will be rededicated as the Cummings School of Architecture and Real Estate (Cummings School) to honor a real estate trailblazer who will inspire RWU students pursuing similar career trajectories.

This is one of the largest partnerships with Cummings Foundation outside of Mass., where the foundation is headquartered, and where Bill and Joyce Cummings have primarily focused their philanthropy. It also marks their first university partnership that recognizes Bill Cummings’ distinguished career as a real estate entrepreneur and founder of the North Shore’s leading firm, Cummings Properties. Cummings Foundation was established in 1986 primarily to enhance the Mass. communities where Cummings Properties operates commercial buildings. It has since grown

to become one of the three largest private foundations in New England.?

“Powered by this historic partnership, the Cummings School of Architecture and Real Estate will serve as a catalyst for the university’s continued and growing success in preparing our students to be leaders in all facets of sustainable and equitable design, preservation, and development at the intersection of the natural and built environments. Expanding our existing world-class architecture and preservation programs with new depth and breadth of real estate education aligns perfectly with Bill’s professional legacy and the entrepreneurial spirit of Bill and the entire Cummings Foundation,” said Miaoulis. “This is a first-in-the nation program to offer such a distinctive combination of architecture, real estate, preservation and planning bolstered by further integration with business, legal, construction and engineering expertise across the university.”

“RWU is dedicated to building a thriving workforce across all industries and providing real-world learning opportunities for its students to have community impact throughout their careers. That kind of entrepreneurial spirit is exactly what is needed to be successful in work and life, and it aligns so naturally with our mission at Cummings Foundation to promote and empower the social and economic inclusion of all,” said Bill Cummings. “President Miaoulis has a compelling and powerful vision for RWU and its students, and Cummings Foundation is excited to be a partner in this growth over the years ahead.”

This partnership comes as the School of Architecture celebrates its 35th anniversary with an expansion of programming. Planning is underway to launch integrated graduate real estate certificates in 2022 and undergraduate and graduate degree programs in 2023. RWU is among only 14 universities in the country – and one of three in the northeast – that can meet the challenges of multi-faceted design, preservation, real estate and related career paths, with a portfolio of academic programs in architecture, preservation, undergraduate business and MBA programs, a school of engineering and construction management, and a law school, preparing students with a deep knowledge of the natural and built environments, grounded in an innovative framework of social impact, sustainability, and community planning.

Along with the launch of new real estate degrees, minors and certificates, RWU’s Cummings School of Architecture and Real Estate will continue providing students with high-impact educational experiences and courses taught by the best educators and practitioners, outstanding study abroad opportunities, internships and career pathways with leading firms from Boston to New York City, and around the country, including several of the Top 50 firms recognized annually by Architect magazine. Additionally, 100% of architecture and preservation practices graduate students participate in the Career Investment Program, guaranteeing paid student internships off campus with firms, organizations and government agencies, and assistantships on campus with faculty.?

“The philanthropy and expertise of Cummings Foundation will continue to expand the reach and quality of our existing programs as well as add immediate distinction to our emerging real estate initiatives,” said Stephen White, dean of the Cummings School of Architecture and Real Estate. “Cummings Properties has been a valued collaborator with our architecture design studios, internships and career placements, and with several of our teaching firms in residence for years.

The Cummings School will add new significance and potential for our students, faculty, programs and partners – and for the quality of the environment overall.”

Working in industries that are major national economic drivers for the country, architecture, preservation, and real estate professionals face a host of challenges that range from public-private partnerships, to navigating tax credits, to zoning and regulatory matters, all while building sustainably with an eye to climate change and sea level rise and addressing socioeconomic and housing inequalities. Fueled by the power of this historic partnership, the Cummings School of Architecture and Real Estate will further accelerate the university’s success in preparing students to be leaders in sustainable and equitable design and development at the intersection of the natural and built environments.

In the weeks ahead, Roger Williams will announce details regarding a dedication and renaming celebration for our Cummings School of Architecture and Real Estate building.

With campuses in Bristol and Providence, Roger Williams University is a private university committed to strengthening society through engaged teaching and learning. At RWU, small classes, direct access to faculty and guaranteed opportunity for real-world projects ensure that its nearly 4,000 undergraduates – along with hundreds of law students, graduate students and adult learners – graduate with the ability to think critically along with the practical skills that today’s employers demand.

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