

Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University
Board of Trustees



Strategic Planning and Performance Measures Committee Minutes
Trustee Lawson, Chair
Wednesday, February 12, 2025

The Strategic Planning and Performance Measures Committee met on Wednesday, February 12, 2025. The meeting was attended by Chair Lawson, Vice Chair Harper, Trustee Brown, Trustee Crossman and Trustee Washington. A quorum was present.

Action Items:

Approval of Minutes from December 4, 2024, 2024 meeting.

The committee approved the minutes from the December 4, 2024 meeting.

Information Item:

Overview of the SUS 2030 Strategic Plan:

Chair Lawson introduced an overview of the SUS 2030 Strategic Plan, highlighting its evolution, impact, and FAMU's alignment with the goals. He announced the meeting today is to discuss our strategy for advancing the University's mission while ensuring high-quality education, accessibility, and affordability. He mentioned that some in the audience had attended a meeting in Jacksonville last week and had a chance to hear more about the SUS strategic plan. He went on to explain how the SUS strategic plan was put together by a diverse group of people which included Presidents, people from Advancement, government relations and research. Chair Lawson stated he had the good fortune to serve on the committee as well. He noted our system is the #1 system in the country and is the most affordable for students to attend.

Dr. Jones presented a PowerPoint on the SUS 2030 Strategic Plan, covering:

2030 Strategic Timeline-Dr. Jones shared how the Florida Board of Governors under the leadership of Chair Lamb initiated the development of the 2030 strategic plan. In the Summer of 2024, a steering committee chaired by Governor Jones played a pivotal role in shaping the plan. During the Fall of 2024, the Board refined the plan with input from stakeholders focusing on updating the system's mission and vision while establishing core values, goals, and metrics to guide both the system and the state. He added that the State university system is a constitutional body led by 17 members, Board members and Board of Governors members. He said the system has 12 universities and more than 430,000 students, making it the second largest public

university system in the nation. He further added, Florida has held the top spot in US News and World Report for higher education since its inception in 2017. Those responsibilities include defining the distinctive mission of each institution in managing systems, coordination, and operation.

Revised Mission- “To serve the needs of our state and society by providing high-quality higher education, innovative research and public service through a coordinated system of institutions, each with distinct missions, collectively advancing civic principles, fostering world-class talent and propelling Florida’s economic prosperity.”

2030 Values Impact-The SUS 30 values emphasize integrity, innovation, and a commitment to excellence reflecting a shared dedication and ethical leadership, knowledge, advancement, and inclusive collaboration. Its acronym (IMPACT) stands for Integrity, Modeling Excellence, Pursuing Knowledge, Access & Affordability, Collaboration and Transformative Innovation. This format reinforces its mission and demonstrates a strong commitment to accountability, accessibility, and transformative progress.

Strategic Priorities-FAMU remains committed to aligning our university strategic initiatives to advance our mission and drive excellence. The plan underscores the Board of Governors' dedication to advancing excellence in teaching, research and public service across Florida universities-benefitting our citizens, community, and economy. It also aligns our goals with Florida’s critical economic workforce and research priorities. Our Boldly Striking Strategic Plan at FAMU mirrors this commitment by proactively ensuring alignment and transparency. Through targeted initiatives, we will elevate our academic programs, increase access and affordability, and leverage our areas of expertise to position our university as a leader in higher education. Working with Provost Watson and Academic Affairs, we have looked at and have aligned each strategic priority and we will continue to take a deep dive into that.

One SUS-SUS 30 is dedicated to enhancing its reputation, fostering collaboration, and evaluating each university’s strength. The system will prioritize measurable outcomes, leveraging high quality reputation rankings and economic impact data to demonstrate its value to key stakeholders, identifying world-class areas of expertise, attracting top talent students, and fostering centers of distinction is an on-going emphasis for SUS. To enhance its national recognition and further support Florida’s economy and workforce development.

National Rankings-Dr. Jones shared how the One SUS national rankings is a framework that established a comprehensive plan and outlines key metrics that refers to baseline data and targeted goals for 2025 along with ambitious goals for 2030. It details the 2030 goals across multiple categories, including rankings for the top public HBCU and top public Liberal Arts college. A critical priority of the system is elevating graduation rates, ensuring that transfer students receive the support needed to successfully complete their degrees and produce graduates who are not only prepared for high-level/high-quality careers, but also equipped to excel as entrepreneurs.

Collaboration and Efficiency Within the SUS:

Vice Chair Harper emphasized the importance of collaboration and efficiency within the State University System (SUS). She highlighted how the system's collective strength, with all 12 universities working together, drives better outcomes, especially when advocating for funding and state support.

She noted that while each university has its own distinct characteristics, the success of the entire system impacts the return on investment for state funding. The collaboration between the universities ensures that resources are leveraged effectively across the state.

Vice Chair Harper encouraged the Board to reflect on FAMU's unique mission and vision as they move forward with implementing the new strategic plan. She stressed that while the system-wide metrics and goals are important, it is crucial to ensure that FAMU's distinct value proposition is maintained and integrated into these metrics. She encouraged the Board to consider how FAMU's role within the SUS system aligns with its specific mission, particularly as it seeks to achieve the system-wide objectives and contribute to the collective success of the 12 universities.

Vice Chair Harper also raised the need to align the metrics, strategic plan, and accountability measures in a way that reflects FAMU's unique contributions and challenges. She suggested these considerations should be part of the Accountability Plan that will be presented to the Board of Governors (BOG).

She urged the Board to think about how FAMU's distinct role within the system is reflected in the plan and how additional metrics, tailored to the university's mission and needs, might be incorporated into the final Accountability Plan.

Aggressive Goals and Competition:

Chair Lawson acknowledged that setting a goal for eight of the 12 universities to be in the top 100 is aggressive, especially when considering the challenges around graduation rates, retention, and student debt. The system faces competition from other highly refined state systems such as Massachusetts, Michigan, California, and New York, which have more established programs. Florida's aim is to remain number one, which will require significant resources and careful planning.

Key Take-A-Ways from State-Level Discussion:

Chair Lawson said there were two key take-a-ways from the system level discussion:

1. There is a strong focus on not raising tuition at the state level while securing an aggressive share of funding from the state to maintain affordability. The aim is to make the system both academically excellent and one of the most affordable in the country.
2. Another significant point raised was the collaboration around research. The discussion centered on how research dollars are allocated and their impact on the Florida economy, which ranks 7th in the world. There is a push to enhance research collaboration to foster greater economic outcomes and make Florida the state of choice for employment.

Investment in Resources for Achieving 2030 Goals:

Trustee Reed suggested that as the system plans for 2030, investments that align with the university's unique mission should be prioritized. Significant investments have been made in institutions to allow them to achieve their current positions. To reach the necessary goals, FAMU should ensure it is asking for its fair share of investment that supports its specific needs.

Balancing Access and Academic Excellence:

Dr. Beard emphasized the need to balance FAMU's historic mission of providing access with the goal of increasing the university's academic profile. It is essential to invest in pre-collegiate programs, like FAMU DRS, and grow the institution strategically by attracting the right student population. The university must continue its efforts to ensure students from diverse backgrounds, including Pell Grant recipients, have access to higher education.

Chair Lawson noted the pressure from the state to enroll more Pell Grant students to increase diversity within the student body. However, this comes with the challenge of balancing this push with maintaining high graduation rates. FAMU must carefully assess how to grow and achieve diversity while keeping a focus on the university's long-term goals.

There was a key focus from other SUS presidents on ensuring institutions are producing graduates who meet the demands of employers. This includes evaluating curriculum effectiveness, research contributions, and preparing students for the workforce.

The role of placement centers was discussed, with suggestions that students should be required to engage with these services to ensure they are prepared for employment after graduation.

Work Plan and Strategic Alignment:

Chair Lawson reminded the group that the one-year work plan, tied to the broader strategic plan, must realistically assess where FAMU stands and avoid setting unattainable targets. The work plan should reflect the institution's goals, ensuring that the targets set are aligned with realistic expectations and the university's unique needs.

Student Workforce Integration:

Discussion focused on providing students to the marketplace, specifically looking at areas of tremendous growth such as high-tech, Fintech, and AI industries.

Concerns raised about attracting the right industries to Florida and preparing students for relevant jobs.

Consideration of fostering relationships with companies like Northrop Grumman, which offers opportunities for engineering students.

Industry Engagement:

A suggestion was made to connect with the Palm Beach County Business Development Board to promote the quality of FAMU graduates.

Potential collaboration with Kelly Smallridge to increase visibility and engagement with local industries.

Student Success and Metrics:

Dr. Jones presented metrics related to student success, showing year-over-year improvement at FAMU. This improvement is expected to positively impact PBF scores and excellence points. Dr. Lawson highlighted a new metric on undergraduate internships and experiential learning, with a target of 40-60% participation by 2030. Collaboration with student affairs and academic affairs is underway to track progress.

- **Key Metrics:**
- **Undergraduates Without Loans:** FAMU is currently at 49%, aiming for the SUS goal of 85%.
- **Graduation Rates:** Bachelor's graduation rate remains steady at 54%, with a transfer student 3-year graduation rate of 59%, and a goal of 72% by 2030.
- **PELL Student Outcomes:** New metric focused on 4-year graduation rate for PELL students, with a goal of 70%. FAMU is currently at 40%, with an 8-point improvement year-over-year.
- **Excess Credit Hours:** A new focus on FTIC students, with a 2030 goal of 35%. FAMU is currently at 19%, with no significant change year-over-year.

Discussion emphasized the importance of setting clear benchmarks and identifying actionable metrics to improve student success and institutional goals, particularly related to industry engagement and student outcomes.

Professional Licensure and Certification:

Dr. Jones was asked for clarification on the "one of four" professional licensure and certification programs. Dr. Jones clarified that the Nursing program met the benchmarks for its national exam, but the other three programs did not meet their goals.

There was discussion on the challenges faculty face due to competing outcomes and licensure expectations, particularly compared to institutions with more funding and resources. Examples included advanced mannequins and laptop programs at other schools.

Student Success Metrics:

Student Participation in Internships and Experiential Learning: There is a new metric tracking undergraduate participation in internships and experiential learning. The goal for 2030 is 40-60%. Work is being done with Student Affairs and Academic Affairs to establish baseline data for this metric, including adding it to exit surveys.

Undergraduates Without Loans: FAMU is currently at 49%, while the SUS goal is 85%. However, there has been a year-over-year increase of 2%.

Graduation Rates: There were no changes in graduation rates year-over-year, with the bachelor's rate at 54% and graduate rate at 52%.

Transfer Student 3-Year Graduation Rate: The goal for 2030 is 72%, while FAMU is currently at 59%, experiencing a slight dip of 1% year-over-year.

Challenges and Faculty Concerns:

- Faculty noted challenges due to resource limitations when competing with other institutions, particularly in meeting licensure and certification expectations.
- The need for collaboration between administration, faculty, staff, and industry to set clear metrics and goals for student success and accountability was emphasized.

Collaboration and Accountability:

- The importance of collaboration with DSOs, industry clusters, and organizations that recruit FAMU students was highlighted. This partnership is necessary for driving student success and ensuring aligned goals.
- The discussion stressed the need for establishing metrics that can be tracked to hold the institution accountable, ensuring all parties are aligned on the vision for success.

Return on Investment (ROI):

A focus on the ROI of investing in FAMU highlighted the positive long-term returns for students and the institution. Trends showed that FAMU's investment yields a strong return, which was acknowledged as an important factor in future planning.

Balancing Mission, Impact, and Access:

There was emphasis on the importance of balancing the impact, outcomes, mission, and access at FAMU. The institution's unique mission, both within Florida and globally, was acknowledged as critical.

The need to balance innovative programming with access to higher education was highlighted. It was also stressed that FAMU must ensure the right profile of students is admitted while maintaining access, especially for underrepresented groups.

Strengthening the Student Pipeline:

Discussion included innovative opportunities to strengthen the K-12 pipeline to prepare students for success at FAMU. The aim is to ensure that students are ready to meet institutional metrics and achieve success at the university.

Partnerships and Industry Engagement:

The importance of partnerships with DSOs (Direct Support Organizations) and industry clusters was discussed, particularly for metrics like student participation in internships and experiential learning.

The percentage of students participating in internships or experiential learning was addressed. It was noted that FAMU currently has 94 programs offering such opportunities, with 20% of those being mandatory. The goal is to reach a higher participation rate, with the current figure being about 6% short of the target.

Financial Accessibility for Students:

FAMU's role in leading the state in Pell-eligible students was emphasized, with between 50-60% of students qualifying for Pell grants. This is an important factor in ensuring access to higher education for economically disadvantaged students.

The need for the Board to collaborate with President Beard and his team to set appropriate goals was highlighted to maintain FAMU's mission, impact, and access.

Internship and Job Readiness:

Discussion emphasized the importance of getting students into internships earlier, ideally starting in their freshman and sophomore years, to enhance job security and earnings potential.

The need for students to understand the financial benefits of securing a job, especially as they transition into adulthood and their financial responsibilities grow, was raised.

Suggestions were made to ensure that students gain the right on-the-job training and exposure to industry standards, which would make their educational experiences more meaningful.

Skills Development for Employability:

There was a proposal that basic skills like Microsoft Office Suite, particularly Excel, should be mandatory for all freshman students. This could improve employability and be useful across various industries.

Strong writing skills were also highlighted as important for student success both on campus and in their careers.

Student Awareness of Metrics and Funding:

The discussion emphasized the importance of informing students about how their graduation timelines and other metrics directly impact funding for the university. There was a suggestion to have better communication and transparency with students about the consequences of not meeting graduation expectations, such as the impact on institutional funding.

A proposal was made for clearer messaging during the application process, highlighting that students are expected to graduate within four years and outlining the possible ramifications if they do not meet these targets.

Accountability for Graduation Rates by Program:

It was noted that graduation rates are typically assessed at a high-level, but there is a need to drill down to specific programs for better accountability. If a program's graduation rate is low, the leadership of that program must be held accountable to improve it.

There was a discussion about creating greater levels of accountability for program leaders, with a focus on making metrics more granular and manageable at the program level.

Interactive Dashboard for Data Transparency:

An interactive dashboard was discussed as a tool to improve transparency and help monitor progress. This would include detailed data at the college and school levels, mirroring institutional scorecards.

The goal is to make these metrics easily accessible and visible to faculty, staff, and administrators, ensuring everyone is aligned with the university's goals.

Communication with Faculty:

A question was raised about how these metrics and expectations are being communicated to professors. It was noted that Provost Watson and her team have made efforts to keep faculty informed about the strategic plan and graduation goals.

A suggestion was made for faculty to be more aware of the university's metrics, by displaying them prominently in their workspaces. The importance of having all stakeholders, including faculty, administrators, and students, understand the goals and metrics was stressed.

Faculty and Administration Accountability:

The importance of faculty and administration taking ownership of the university's goals was emphasized. The conversation highlighted an "accountability tour" to engage faculty in understanding and owning the metrics, and how their individual programs and performance contribute to the university's success. Faculty are being encouraged to evaluate their programs based on specific performance metrics such as student retention, GPA, and licensure pass rates, and adjust curricula accordingly to improve outcomes.

Impact of Professional Programs on Graduation Rates:

A question was raised about whether professional programs directly impact the 4-year and 6-year graduation rates. It was clarified that professional programs are considered separately in some metrics, and there is an understanding that these programs may influence graduation rates differently.

The importance of tracking the relationship between licensure pass rates and employment was also highlighted. Students who do not pass licensure exams may face significant career setbacks, such as losing job offers or residency placements. This connection underscores the importance of aligning academic outcomes with industry requirements.

Licensure Pass Rates and Employment:

The conversation touched on the challenges faced by students in professional programs, particularly those with licensure requirements. The disconnect between licensure success and job placement was discussed, noting that failing licensure exams could directly affect students' employment prospects and future careers.

Professional Licensure Programs and Job Placement:

The discussion highlighted the need for a deeper look into how professional licensure programs are affecting job placement. While the university tracks licensure success, the actual job placement for students' post-graduation might not be fully reflected in the current metrics. It was noted that licensure pass rates and job placement rates should be closely aligned, especially for students whose job opportunities depend on passing specific licensure exams.

Program Length Considerations (Engineering Example):

It was mentioned that some programs, like engineering, inherently require longer durations to complete due to the intensity and number of required courses. Despite efforts to cut back on course load, certain courses remain essential for the program's effectiveness. This means the standard 120-hour requirement might not be feasible for all programs, and such considerations are considered when evaluating graduation rates.

System-Wide Goals and the Path to Staying Number One:

The conversation emphasized that the university is part of a larger, system-wide plan designed to maintain its position as number one through 2030. The goals are aggressive and are intended to push the university toward greater achievements in key areas like graduation rates, job placement, and return on investment for stakeholders, such as the legislature.

There is an aspiration to minimize student debt and to encourage students to graduate in four years, with a focus on making these goals a reality.

Accountability for Graduation Rates:

Accountability was stressed for both students and faculty regarding graduation rates. There was an acknowledgment that leadership and faculty need to take responsibility for meeting these targets, and that if graduation rates do not improve, there should be a clear mechanism to hold both parties accountable.

A collaborative effort from both sides is required to ensure continued progress, with an emphasis on creating a culture of accountability across the institution.

Request for Data Breakdown by School and College:

A request was made for data to be gathered and presented by school and college to provide a more granular view of performance on key metrics. A suggestion was made to present this data in a one-page format to provide easy access for the board.

The importance of having this detailed data for ongoing evaluation and decision-making was emphasized.

Pell Grant Graduation Rates:

A concern was raised regarding the graduation rates for Pell Grant students, as the university's performance in this area is below expectations. Given that a significant portion of the student body is Pell-eligible, there is a pressing need to improve their graduation rates.

A challenge was issued to the university to identify what needs to change for Pell students to graduate at rates like those of other students. This includes addressing any barriers or disparities that might affect Pell students' academic success.

• Follow-Up Actions:

- As a follow-up, there was a request for a more detailed, easy-to-understand breakdown of metrics by school and college. This would help the board and other stakeholders track progress more effectively.
- The board also asked for clarity on the strategies that will be put in place to improve Pell Grant students' graduation rates, with an emphasis on ensuring that these students have the same opportunities to succeed as their peers.

Focus on Pell Grant Students:

The discussion emphasized the dual challenges related to Pell Grant students: ensuring access to higher education and improving the 4-year graduation rate.

There was agreement on the importance of creating an investment model that helps fund wraparound services and interventions to support these students throughout their academic journey. This is particularly vital as many Pell Grant recipients are more likely to take out loans. It was noted that while achieving system goals is important, it should not overshadow the university's mission to serve its specific student population. Investment in support services and programs aimed at helping students succeed is crucial.

Investment in Services and Early Intervention:

Trustee Reid suggested that a key factor in achieving success is the investment in services, such as wraparound services, to ensure Pell students and others can navigate the challenges they face in completing their degrees.

The focus should be on ensuring the university has the resources to support its student body, specifically through strategies that help students graduate within four years and with minimal debt.

Academic Competitiveness and Early Engagement:

It was stressed that the university must invest in academic competitiveness and engage students early in the K-12 pipeline to ensure that they are prepared for higher education. The importance of recruiting students early and providing them with the necessary support was emphasized to help the university meet its goals.

Student Awareness and Engagement in Strategic Planning:

Trustee Lawson highlighted that the Student Government Association (SGA) and students are aware of the performance-based funding metrics. Students actively participate in discussions about the strategic plan, and leadership training and first-year experience courses have been instrumental in keeping students informed.

There is ongoing work to align the SGA's strategic plan with the university's broader strategic plan, ensuring that students have a clear understanding of the university's goals and their role in achieving them.

Discussion of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Accountability:

There was recognition that understanding the specific Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) tied to the university's goals is essential for achieving success. The conversation emphasized the importance of transparency around how these metrics are used to measure progress.

The alignment of academic and student affairs with the KPIs is key to driving the institution forward. The strategic planning process has been designed to clarify how the university will achieve its goals, and all stakeholders, including students, faculty, and administrators, must be involved in this effort.

Trustee Participation and Acknowledgement:

The board recognized Trustee Lawson for his participation in the committee, noting that he was the only trustee across the system to serve on the committee. His contributions in representing Florida A&M University were appreciated, and it was acknowledged that he helped ensure the unique needs of the institution were heard.

The discussion also highlighted the importance of engaging all stakeholders, including faculty, students, and parents, in the shared responsibility of meeting these goals.

The committee expressed appreciation for the comprehensive data and discussions shared during the meeting.

Action Items for the next meeting:

1. Dr. Jones to gather information on Elevating Student Success by College and School.
 2. Explore what needs to change for students not eligible for PELL to graduate at comparable rates.
 3. Trustee Brown to investigate how DRS metrics can be integrated into the SUS 2030 Strategic Plan.
- With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.