

2024 Retreat Meeting Minutes

DAY 1 - AUGUST 7, 2024

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Kristin Harper officially called the meeting to order. A quorum was established with Trustees Aly, Cliatt, Crossman, Figgers, Gibbons, Harper, Lawson, May, Perry, Reed, Stone, Washington, and White present.

Chair Harper then convened the retreat, which was moved online due to a tropical storm, by providing an overview of the two half-day retreats that consisted of information, presentations, and discussions on the Presidential transition search and selection process, licensure passage rates, performance-based funding, the accountability plan, trustee ethics and the gift report concluding with the Board of Trustees meeting.

PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITION, SEARCH AND SELECTION

Ms. Artis Hampshire-Cowans of Leveraged Leadership Group, LLC began the conversation by emphasizing the Board's strength and effectiveness during the transition. She shared insights from her experience in transitioning five presidents and other leaders. She also advised the Board to take the time to define their search criteria and to ensure the search firm finds a customized fit for the institution's needs. She discussed the challenges and considerations in selecting a new president for a university, emphasizing the need for a clear understanding of the institution's needs and the candidate's qualifications and expectations. Ms. Hampshire-Cowans also highlighted the complexity of the work, the churn in presidential positions, and the increased focus on return on investment. She also stressed the importance of communication, alignment, and re-establishing credibility in the search process. Trustee Reed asked for insights on board preparation. Ms. Hampshire-Cowans suggested a timeline of three to four months for preparation of the search, aligning with the academic year, and she encouraged the Board to commit to and lean into what it takes to become a high-performing board. Ms. Hampshire-Cowans emphasized the importance of solid relationships and competencies among decision-makers in organizations to manage conflicts and make joint decisions effectively. She also highlighted the significance of constructive decision-making for the reputation of the institution and the Board.

Further discussion on selecting a suitable candidate for a leadership position using a search firm ensued. Ms. Hampshire-Cowans explained that search firms maintain a pool of potential candidates and use the 'pivot' tool to evaluate candidates based on their alignment with the institution's core values. She emphasized the importance of evaluating candidates based on their performance in various situations rather than relying solely on routine visits with the search committee. She also commented on the importance of a search consultant or lead consultant who understands the institution and can conduct difficult interviews. Lastly, Chair Harper presented an overview of the Board of Governors Regulation 1.002 for the presidential search and selection process. Afterward, the Board deliberated on the regulation for the presidential search and selection process, the importance of following established policies, and the next steps in the search process. Chair Harper also discussed the need for a designated spokesperson and maintaining confidentiality in the search process.

LICENSURE PASSAGE RATE, PERFORMANCE-BASED FUNDING, AND THE ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN

Provost Watson led the presentation by presenting the freshman transition ceremony initiative, initiated by Dr. Jennifer Collins, the Associate Provost for Student Success, three years ago. The ceremony involves welcoming first-year students with appropriate white and black attire, with faculty dressed in regalia. The presentation also included pictures from the ceremony, showcasing the gathering of first-year students and the group photo taken at Bragg Memorial Stadium. Afterward, Dr. Watson presented an initiative to improve student success, focusing on key areas such as licensure pass rates, performance-based funding metrics, and an accountability plan. She highlighted the efforts of the School of

Nursing, which recently hired a new dean and reported a 100% pass rate on the virtual ATI, which translated into those who have taken the NCLEX exam that are successful as well. She also addressed Chair Harper's question about the program completion rate, explaining that the starting point for measurement is those admitted as nursing majors. She indicated that the students are initially admitted as Pre-Nursing majors before being admitted into the nursing program. Trustee Gibbons questioned the origin of projections for the schools, leading Dr. Watson to clarify that they were set by the University team and approved by the Board of Trustees after a detailed data analysis by Dr. Roddick Jones' team. She further explained that these projections were aspirational goals based on data and an understanding of the institution's capabilities. Trustee Washington and President Beard added that the goals should be aspirational and realistic, balancing the need for challenge with the likelihood of success. The discussion also covered the key strategies for the School of Nursing, which included ensuring student progress, success coaching, faculty recruitment, and continuous development. Next, Provost Watson presented the performance of the physical therapy program, highlighting a high first-time pass rate and the program's focus on curriculum enhancement, clinical practice, research, and community engagement. Afterward, Provost Watson reviewed the pharmacy program and highlighted the change in the comprehensive exam, which was recalibrated to align with the actual NAPLEX exam. With those changes in place, there is a 90% score, with some previous fluctuations. Trustee Washington emphasized the importance of preparing students for the bar passage exams. Chair Harper highlighted the need to start bar prep from day one. Provost Watson then outlined the College of Pharmacy's curriculum changes, focusing on more practice and simulations, support and tutorial programs, early intervention, frequent feedback, and test-taking strategies. The three top key performance indicators are looking at the admission data, comprehensive exam performance, and first-time licensure exam pass rates. The team also discussed the possibility of amending university policies to reflect the practices of sister institutions, which would require a plan B program in certain areas. Finally, Provost Watson reported on the performance of the College of Law, highlighting improvements in admission standards and the implementation of mandatory bar preparation from the first year. She also shared that the July 2023 bar exam results were significantly better than the previous February exam. However, Trustee Washington cautioned that the College of Law was still underperforming, with a bar pass rate of 47.1% compared to the goal of 80%. Trustee Perry questioned the law school curriculum's instructional methods and the use of bar-related courses. Provost Watson confirmed that an expert had been hired to analyze teaching practices and that the faculty was being held accountable through faculty evaluations and using bar-type questions in exams. The group discussed the need for improvement in the foundational courses, just as FIU has done, with a focus on the faculty teaching approach and bar passage rates. Trustee Lawson proposed the formation of a weekly committee led by Provost Watson to investigate the issues and implement necessary changes. Provost Watson highlighted recent changes, such as hiring agencies to improve teaching strategies and introducing a data dashboard to monitor improvements. The five key strategies the College of Law presented are bar preparation, admissions, faculty recruitment and retention, marketing and communications, and campus climate. The three key performance indicators presented were licensure pass rates, academic progress, and semester grades in the foundational courses. The team also discussed the need for increased funding to attract top-tier students and improve program offerings, focusing on diversifying resources for law students. Creating a compelling narrative for funding requests and involving a broad community of stakeholders was also emphasized. The team also discussed the importance of strategic student recruitment and prioritizing cohorts.

Dr. Lewis Johnson discussed the performance-based funding system in Florida, explaining that funding is allocated based on outcomes rather than access. He presented FAMU's score, suggesting that the University could achieve a more stable performance by aiming for an 85% excellence score. He also informed the Board that the Board of Governors had revised the Programs of Strategic Emphasis (PSE) list, which would significantly impact the University's performance. Trustee Washington added that the updated list is more closely tied to labor market demand in Florida, and the University would need to adjust its degree mix accordingly. Dr. Johnson indicated that changes to the metrics could disrupt the University's performance pattern. He discussed the University's graduation rates and their implications,

highlighting that the four-year graduation rate reflects college readiness. In contrast, the six-year rate reflects the University's ability to support students from diverse backgrounds. He shared that the University has surpassed its peers in the four-year graduation rate despite having a lower six-year rate. Dr. Johnson also analyzed the incoming student profiles for the 2019 cohort and discussed the efforts to improve students' academic performance. Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, he expressed optimism about the future, emphasizing the University's above-average retention and graduation rates. Dr. Johnson presented data showing the relationship between high school GPA and four-year graduation rates and discussed the impact of ACT scores. He also highlighted five areas of focus to improve the four-year graduation rate. Chair Harper, Dr. Johnson, Trustee Lawson, Provost Watson, and President Beard discussed the challenges of balancing Florida A&M University's mission with the need to meet performance metrics. They explored strategies to improve the University's four-year graduation rate, including enrolling more students with dual enrollment credits, improving advising systems, and engineering the incoming cohort's composition. The group also discussed the need for early intervention, improving metrics, and investing in pre-collegiate programs and individualized education to enhance student performance. Concerns were raised about competing with top schools in the State for minority students, and the need for further thought and analysis on this issue was acknowledged.

Dr. Roddrick Jones presented the accountability plan, which includes 41 metrics aligned with the Board of Governors' strategic plan. Dr. Jones highlighted the plan's key achievements, which included the selection of two students as White House HBCU scholars, a \$10 million grant for a new University Transportation Center, and a partnership with Chevron Corporation and the Fab Foundation to create a digital fabrication lab, and joining Grow with Google's HBCU Career Readiness Program to train a hundred thousand black college students in digital skills by 2025. He also reported an increase in the 4-year graduation rate to 35%, the highest ever. He outlined strategies to improve student success and enrollment management. The conversation ended with Dr. Beard expressing his optimism about the future and emphasizing the importance of working together. Chair Harper announced the continuation of the retreat the following morning.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business for the Board, the meeting adjourned.

DAY 2 - AUGUST 8, 2024

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Kristin Harper officially called the meeting to order. A quorum was established with Trustees Aly, Cliatt, Crossman, Figgers, Gibbons, Harper, Lawson, May, Perry, Reed, Stone, Washington, and White present.

TRUSTEE ETHICS

Chair Harper thanked the trustees and administrators for participating in the university retreat and highlighted the importance of continuing education. She introduced Carrie Stillman, Executive Director of the Florida Commission on Ethics, who provided an overview of the Commission's role and responsibilities. Ms. Stillman explained that the Commission enforces the State's code of ethics, including the Sunshine Amendment, and offers guidance on complaints and formal advisory opinions. She also introduced the newly launched E-filing system for financial disclosure forms. She focused on specific laws related to conflicts of interest. Ms. Stillman underscored the importance of public officials prioritizing the public's interest over their own, as outlined in the Code of Ethics. She also discussed the misuse of public positions.

Ms. Stillman highlighted the 2018 Amendment 12, which prohibits obtaining a disproportionate benefit by abusing one's office. She also explained laws restricting conflicting employment and contractual relationships to ensure a balance between public service and protecting the public interest. Afterward, she mentioned specific, narrowly construed exemptions but advised seeking guidance to confirm them. Next, Ms. Stillman discussed the concept of voting conflicts in Florida's law, explaining that a conflict arises when a measure could lead to a unique private gain or loss for the person, their relatives, business associates, or principals. She emphasized the importance of disclosing conflicts and abstaining from voting, if necessary. She highlighted the procedures for handling voting conflicts as an official. She also stressed the importance of the annual financial disclosure season at the Florida Commission on Ethics, reminding everyone of the deadline for filing disclosure forms and the potential consequences of failing to do so. She encouraged the use of the electronic financial disclosure management system for filing. She offered assistance with any questions or issues regarding the filing process. Ms. Stillman also discussed the strict laws governing gifts and bans for public officials in Florida. She explained that violations of these laws could result in civil penalties of up to \$20,000 per violation. She emphasized the importance of scrutinizing any gift or provision of value to determine whether it constitutes a prohibited expenditure. Director Stillman also clarified the concept of 'expenditure,' which includes any payment, distribution, loan, advance, reimbursement, or deposit of value made by a lobbyist or principal of the executive branch for lobbying. She further highlighted the ban on gifts from political committees and the requirement for equal or more significant consideration to be given within 90 days for gifts received. Lastly, Ms. Stillman clarified the rules regarding gift acceptance from vendors or lobbyists, emphasizing the importance of avoiding conflicts of interest in public office. She explained the valuation and reporting requirements for various gifts received and assistance was offered in navigating the gift laws. Trustee Crossman had to clarify questions about the policy on restricted donors and hiring construction companies. The discussion also emphasized the need for more interaction and understanding between different groups to improve the Board's functioning.

GIFT REPORT

Trustee White began the discussion by highlighting several communications and internal control failures identified in the Gift report, urging everyone to rally around President Beard to ensure the University's continued success. Mr. Michael McLaughlin of Buchanan, Ingersoll, and Rooney presented a detailed report on accepting the gift of private stock, highlighting key issues such as the lack of due diligence, missing policies, and the absence of checks and balances between the University and the Foundation. One of the recommendations in the report was to separate the positions of Vice President of Advancement and the Executive Director of the Foundation because the two positions should serve as a check and balance to one another. Trustee Crossman clarified, and Mr. McLaughlin agreed that there was no evidence of illegal activities or personal financial gain by any member of the University. Chair Harper stated, for the record, that the interviewees did not include anyone from the Foundation Board of Directors because they were not involved in this transaction.

Regarding reputational damage and donor-giving, the University is on track with donor-giving compared to the prior year. The Board discussed the need for outside expertise to revise the gift acceptance policy, the importance of compliance with donor confidentiality laws, and the need for actions to follow broken procedures. Discussion was held on the timeline to correct and implement the recommended changes. The Board also agreed to consider recommendations to mitigate potential legal liability, repair identified gaps, including procedures for accepting private stock, and build confidence with their external audience. President Beard will provide an update on the next steps during the September Board of Trustees meeting.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Kristin Harper officially called the meeting to order. A quorum was established with Trustees Cliatt, Gibbons, Harper, Lawson, Perry, Stone, Washington, and White present.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no requests for public comments.

BOT POLICY 2005-05

VP Brown presented and requested approval of the amendment to BOT Policy 2005-05, Preparation and Submission of the Budget, which aims to incorporate federal and State-mandated budget changes, increases in salary, health insurance, retirement rate, and other mandatory changes. The update is intended to maintain consistency with modifications made by the Florida Board of Governors and ensure the University's policy remains current and compliant with relevant regulations. Trustee Gibbons moved approval of BOT Policy 2005-05, which was seconded by Trustee Lawson. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

RE-ELECTION OF FOUNDATION BOARD MEMBERS WITH TERMS ENDING 12/23/2024

Trustee Gibbons requested that the agenda item be moved to the September Board of Trustees meeting to ensure correct information related to the Foundation and term lengths are provided to the Board. Trustee Perry moved that the agenda item be moved to the meeting in September. The motion was seconded by Trustee Lawson and was approved with a unanimous vote.

2024-2025 FAMU FOUNDATION BUDGET

Trustee Gibbons began by stating that the DOS and Athletics Committee met on July 30, 2024, and approved the FY 2024-2025 operating budgets for all direct support organizations. The FAMU Foundation Executive Committee met on August 7. It approved an amended operating budget to include Interim President Beard's salary funding. COO Palm presented the significant changes in the budget for the current year, highlighting a decrease in contingency revenue and an increase in staff salaries, particularly for the gift officer position for athletics and the Marching 100. Trustee Gibbons moved that the 2024-2025 amended budget of the FAMU Foundation, with the friendly amendment that the President or the appropriate person from the Administration return and re-evaluate building in what we anticipate will be an expense and an investment depending on the way you look at it in athletics, be approved. Trustee Washington seconded the motion. The motion carried. The Board also discussed the need for better reporting of fundraising expenditures and the potential for a recurring athletic budget.

EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT FOR COACH PATRICK CAREY

The Board discussed the employment agreement for Coach Patrick Crarey, with VP/AD Sykes recommending his contract for approval and highlighting his proven track record. General Counsel Wallace presented the amended one-year contract, which included additional incentives. Trustee Stone moved the agreement to be approved, and Trustee Cliatt seconded the motion. The motion carried.

GIFT REPORT

Chair Harper led a discussion on the acceptance of the Gift report. Trustee Lawson moved to accept the gift report, which includes a work plan that executes recommendations and actions offered by the President, the COO, and

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Board of Trustees

whomever the President designates by the September Board meeting. Trustee Gibbons seconded the motion. The motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA

Chair Harper read the Consent Agenda:

DSO1: 2024-205 National Alumni Association Budget

DSO2: 2024-2025 Rattler Boosters Budget

DSO 3: Honorary Naming of Fogg Planetarium, Challenger Learning Center

Chair Harper asked for removals or additions to the Consent Agenda. There were none. Trustee Perry moved approval of the Consent Agenda, and seconded by Trustee Lawson. The motion carried.

President Beard expressed his gratitude for the support and emphasized the need for continued hard work and dedication to the University.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business for the Board, the meeting adjourned.