

FLORIDA **A&M** UNIVERSITY

Board of Trustees

Meeting Minutes December 4, 2025

CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

Deveron Gibbons, Chair

Chair Gibbons called the meeting to order at 2:15 p.m. Trustees Brown, Bryant, Dopson-Rodriguez, Figgers, Gainey, Gibbons, Harper, Perry, Reed, and White established a quorum.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The meeting opened with a public comment period, during which speakers were reminded to confine their remarks to agenda items and to address the Board collectively.

Chekesha Kidd offered comments regarding President Johnson's 100-day report, the President's stated goals, and what she described as growing instability within the enterprise. She cited concerns about micromanagement, the hiring of unqualified leaders, and faculty and staff being underpaid while carrying the burden of two or three roles due to an unclear organizational structure and numerous vacancies. She further raised issues related to research, economic development, student success, accountability, fundraising, transparency, and the President's visibility on the main campus.

Kimberly Godwin-Manning addressed the Board with concerns about the University's financial instability and its declining reputation. She noted decreases in annual giving and the frustration and disengagement among alumni. She also shared her distress over students contacting her for assistance with rent in order to remain enrolled, juxtaposed with what she described as more than a million dollars in increased administrative salaries for individuals she believes are unqualified. She emphasized that the University's future is tied to the success of its students, faculty, staff, and alumni—groups she believes will reinvest in the institution when strong and credible leadership is in place.

MISSION MOMENT

Keyona Williams, a fourth-year Criminal Justice scholar from Tallahassee, FL, delivered the Mission Moment. Before enrolling at the University, she served in the military and later worked in law enforcement. She shared that she chose this career path so that young men and women who look like her could see that good officers still exist—officers who demonstrate integrity, compassion, honesty, and purpose in their service.

Becoming a Rattler was a long-held dream, yet she never anticipated how profoundly the University would shape her life. As a non-traditional student, her involvement in the Transfer Student Association and the FAMU Student National Alumni Association helped her find

community and belonging. Her meaningful interactions with faculty further inspired her to pursue her ultimate goal of returning to the classroom as a college professor.

Before concluding, she offered a charge to the Board on behalf of non-traditional students who want to be engaged but often face barriers due to demanding schedules and personal responsibilities. She urged the Board to consider creating more intentional and flexible opportunities—such as occasional socials, hybrid events, and programs designed to help online and working students feel connected. Not events *for* older students, she emphasized, but events that *include* them.

AWARD PRESENTATION

Chair Gibbons presented the Chairman’s Award to several distinguished recipients, including some who were unable to attend. Among those recognized was Mr. Curtis Johnson, Immediate Past President of the FAMU National Alumni Association, honored for his exemplary leadership. Mr. Johnson expressed his gratitude to the Board for the recognition and extended heartfelt thanks to the members of his executive board, staff, and volunteers for their tireless efforts in supporting the University’s students.

Following the President’s Report, Mr. Tony Ezell joined the meeting virtually to receive recognition for his outstanding leadership and unwavering commitment to the University. Chair Gibbons also acknowledged additional honorees in their absence: Mr. John Thompson and Mr. Roy Moore.

CHAIR’S REPORT

Deveron Gibbons, Chair

Chair Gibbons announced the committee assignments for 2026 and introduced the newly established Special Committee on the Developmental Research School, to be chaired by Trustee Jamal Brown. Trustee Brown will collaborate closely with President Johnson as the committee examines whether there is a strong basis for pursuing charter school status, as well as opportunities to enhance funding and curriculum offerings.

The committee will conduct comprehensive research and present recommendations to the Board that position the school in alignment with other developmental research schools across the state affiliated with colleges and universities—most of which currently hold A or B ratings.

Mrs. Taylor will distribute the updated committee roster to all trustees.

PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Marva B. Johnson, President

President Johnson opened her report by expressing appreciation to the Board for their leadership and partnership. She highlighted significant progress in operational and financial health, student

success initiatives, and strategic priorities, including the University's advancement toward R1 research status. During her first 120 days, she visited most of the University's campuses—most notably the College of Law and the Brooksville Agricultural and Environmental Research Center—and engaged with more than 4,000 students, faculty, staff, alumni, industry partners, and higher education peers. She noted that their insights have been invaluable.

Working closely with the finance team, the University has corrected or initiated corrective actions on all major audit findings and strengthened fiscal controls through its partnership with Mitchell Titus. The Operational Excellence Task Force has also been relaunched to reinforce accountability, transparency, and performance across every unit. These efforts reflect a firm commitment to institutional stability, compliance, and long-term sustainability. Additionally, the University launched the Health Sciences Enterprise and the Research Innovation Division, opened new centers in quantum science, pharmaceutical engineering, and financial excellence, and expanded access to emerging technologies through the Digital Rattler Initiative.

President Johnson reported that the student success ecosystem has been strengthened through the opening of two new academic support hubs and the modernization of advising, student services, and financial support. Scholarship processes have been improved, and a comprehensive degree-completion pathway is under development. Recommendations have also been made to enhance admissions and financial aid operations. These improvements are designed to better align recruitment efforts and assure families that FAMU remains affordable and a top choice. The University is also working to align its goals with SUS30 and achieve the 70% four-year graduation rate benchmark.

To build and retain a high-quality workforce, the University has invested in its employees by providing bonuses and proposing faculty raises. It has allocated \$1.5 million for professional development opportunities for faculty and staff and has begun developing a modernized compensation model that rewards excellence and strengthens retention.

FAMU continues to advance innovation and research. The University received a \$400,000 NSF grant to support student success, and the Meek Eaton Black Archives Research Center and Museum secured a \$500,000 grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

President Johnson also celebrated the achievements of students, faculty, and alumni. In September, students and faculty participated in the Nexus Energy, Water and Food Summit in Hungary. Students in the School of Journalism earned top honors at the Florida Print Awards, receiving 10 Best of Category awards, 13 Awards of Excellence, and 43 honorable mentions—the most of any participating institution. Students in the School of Business and Industry won first place and a \$25,000 prize at the 2025 KIND Perfect Pitch Competition. Nike selected FAMU as one of four institutions featured in its new Yard Runners footwear campaign.

During Homecoming, the band rehearsal hall was officially named in honor of distinguished alumni Drs. Bernard and Shirley Pooler Kinsey. In support of their legacy, alumnus Michael Walker and his wife, Pam, pledged \$100,000 toward the Marching 100 Band Hall. The University also unveiled a bronze statue honoring the enduring legacy of President Emeritus Frederick S. Humphries. The Destination FAMU recruitment tour held consecutive events in St. Petersburg, Tampa, and Orlando, and the University launched its first micro-donation platform, the FAMU

Change app. President Johnson concluded by congratulating the Women's Volleyball Team for securing their fourth SWAC championship in five years.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION REPORT

Trustee Zayla Bryant, SGA President

Trustee Bryant provided an update on the Student Government Association's fall semester accomplishments, highlighting successful events, legislative actions, and increased student engagement. The legislative branch passed several bills addressing recycling initiatives, support for transfer students, enhancements to living-learning communities, and updates from the A&S Budget Committee.

She also outlined SGA's upcoming spring programming, which includes Be Out Day, FAMU Day at the Capitol, the State of the Black Student Summit, the Women's Summit, Awareness Fest, and Relay for Life. Looking ahead, SGA will continue advancing key initiatives such as financial literacy workshops, mental health awareness programming, residence hall maintenance, support for athletics and the Marching 100, monthly fireside chats to strengthen student engagement, environmental sustainability efforts, parking improvements, and deeper connections with satellite campuses.

FACULTY SENATE REPORT

Trustee Jamal Brown, Faculty Senate President

Trustee Brown introduced members of his "Dream Team"—Dr. Franzetta Fitz, Dr. Kelly Bailey, and Mr. Robert Senior—and highlighted significant progress in online course approvals and expansion efforts designed to enhance student success. The team developed a new online faculty certification pipeline that incorporates pedagogy and the Quality Matters (QM) rubric, enabling faster course development and improved instructional quality. With both internal and external QM integration, faculty and the University gain a stronger academic profile and align with national standards for online course design and delivery. These improvements have reduced bottlenecks in the course approval process and strengthened collaboration between instructional design and ITS services.

He noted that the new certification pathway provides faculty with a clear route to online teaching excellence, elevating their professional profiles upon completion. Institutionally, this work supports compliance with BOG online course quality standards and expands the University's capacity to offer high-quality online courses.

Trustee Brown also summarized several strategic priorities raised by faculty and the University's responses:

- **Competitive, SUS-aligned compensation, financial relief, and an improved pay model.**
Received: A 4% bonus for staff and a proposal for base salary increases and faculty bonuses.
- **Research and instructional career tracks, defined workloads, clearer expectations, professional development, and integration of AI and emerging technologies.**

Received: A plan to develop research and instructional career tracks; opportunities for faculty to engage directly with the Provost; \$1.5 million allocated for professional development; and expansion of the Digital Rattler Initiative.

- **Enhanced shared governance, leadership accountability, and stronger operational support.**

Received: Participation from 171 individuals in listening sessions with President Johnson.

- **Advancement of career ladders, modernization of graduate student support, and strengthened R1 research infrastructure and partnerships.**

Received: Commitments to modernize academic advising; establishment of two new academic success hubs; launch of the Health Sciences Enterprise and the Research Innovation Division; creation of the Centers for Quantum Science, Pharmaceutical Engineering, and Financial Leadership; and expanded industry partnerships.

- **Stronger governance and oversight of the Developmental Research School (DRS), with alignment to University strategy.**

Received: Formation of the Special Committee on DRS.

ANNUAL BOARD ETHICS TRAINING

The Annual Board Ethics Training was postponed to a later date.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Academic and Student Affairs Committee

Trustee Deveron Gibbons, Vice Chair

The Academic and Student Affairs Committee met today. The following trustees were present: Jamal Brown, Zayla Bryant, Jocelyn Dopson-Rodriguez, Deveron Gibbons, Belvin Perry, and Nicole Washington. A quorum was established.

The Committee recommended approval of the following items:

- Minutes for the September 17, 2025;
 - Institutional Accreditation;
 - Credit Hour Reduction;
 - Tenure Recommendations; and
 - Performance-Based Funding Model 2 – FAMU Metric 10:
 - Option 1: Percentage of undergraduate internship participation and
 - Option 2: Annual Giving.

The Committee also heard an update on the enrollment management plan, academic program prioritization, textbook affordability, and post-tenure review audit.

This concludes the report.

Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee

Trustee Michael White, Chair

Earlier today the Audit, Risk, and Compliance Committee met. The Committee took up one action item – approval of the minutes from the September 17, 2025 meeting.

We also received informational updates from Compliance, Risk and Audit.

Chair Gibbons, this concludes my report.

Budget, Finance, and Facilities Committee

Trustee Craig Reed, Chair

The Budget, Finance, and Facilities Committee met on Thursday, December 4, 2025. The December meeting agenda consisted of two (2) action items and two (2) information items.

Action Items:

The action items consisted of **(1) Amendment to BOT Regulation 8.001, Motor Pool and Vehicle Use, and (2) Amendment to BOT Policy 2006-05, Motor Pool and Vehicle Use.**

Information Items:

The Budget, Finance, and Facilities Committee heard presentations by Acting SVP Nichole Murry and AVP Kendall Jones, on two (2) information items: **a) Quarterly Financial Report – Budget to Actuals and b) Deferred Maintenance/Capital Renewal Update.**

The December 2025 Budget, Finance, and Facilities Committee meeting report concludes.

Direct Support Organizations and Athletics Committee

Trustee Kristin Harper, Chair

The Direct Support Organizations and Athletics Committee convened on December 4, 2025.

The Committee approved minutes from the September 17, 2025, DSO & Athletics Committee Meeting.

The Committee was presented with the following action items:

- 1) FAMU Foundation, Inc. Bylaws Recommended Amendments.
- 2) FAMU Foundation Board Member Term Renewals for 2024 and 2025.
- 3) Three (3) Newly Elected FAMU Foundation Board Members.

The Committee also received updates from University Advancement, the Direct Support Organizations and the Athletics Department.

This concludes the Direct Support Organizations and Athletics Committee report.

Governance Committee

Trustee Belvin Perry, Chair

The Governance Committee met today and approved the minutes from September 17, 2025. President Johnson presented a framework outlining her goals for 2025–2026. After a thorough

discussion, the committee voted to postpone the decision in order to allow additional briefings with the President. Administrative staff will distribute a poll to trustees by tomorrow, December 5, to confirm their availability for a Special Meeting on December 17 or 18, at which time the goals will be considered for approval.

This concludes my report.

CONSENT AGENDA

- **Items Approved Unanimously:**
 - Board Minutes.
 - September 18, 2025
 - October 10, 2025
 - Institutional Accreditation
 - Credit Hour Reduction
 - Tenure Recommendation
 - Performance-Based Funding Model 2 – FAMU Metric 10, Option 1, Percentage of undergraduate internship participation, and Option 2, Annual Giving.
 - Amendment to BOT Regulation 8.001,
 - Motor Pool and Vehicle Usage Policy
 - Amendment to BOT Policy 2006-05,
 - Motor Pool and Vehicle Use
 - Foundation Bylaws Recommended Amendments
 - Re-Elected to the Board (Term Expiration: December 31, 2024)
 - Re-Elected to the Board (Term Expiration: December 31, 2025)
 - Newly Elected Board Members (Term Commencement: January 1, 2026)

Trustee White reported that he has been working with President Johnson and the leadership team to review the University’s master plan. He shared that during the recent Board of Governors meeting, several governors noted that FAMU likely has the most underutilized land within the State University System. In response, he suggested exploring opportunities to develop University-owned land and retail facilities as a means to generate revenue while also stimulating economic growth on the southside of Tallahassee.

Chair Gibbons requested that Trustee White research how other universities are approaching their master planning processes and provide updates to the Board as this work progresses.

ADJOURNMENT:

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