

FLORIDA **A&M** UNIVERSITY

Board of Trustees

Meeting Minutes
December 5, 2024

CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

Kristin Harper, Chair

Chair Harper called the meeting to order. Trustees Brown, Cliatt, Crossman, Harper, Lawson, May, Perry, Reed, and Stone established a quorum. Trustees Gibbons, Washington and White joined the meeting late.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Zachary Ansley expressed his concerns on the Board's delay in selecting the executive search firm for the Presidential Search and slow progress towards selecting the next University, but was optimistic that the Board would fulfill its duty in the selection process. Ashely Sepulveda raised concerns about the University's handling of complaints and the dismissal of Professor Maritza Reyes and demanded the Board investigate wrongful actions taken by employees of the College of Law and the failures of Provost Watson and provide Professor Reyes a step three public hearing on her dismissal.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Beard began his report by sharing a video that highlighted University accomplishments and major events since beginning his tenure. At the conclusion of the video, President Beard reminded the Board of the President's Toy Drive that will be held in the Grand Ballroom on December 6, 2024. He also announced that the Marching 100 will be participating in the Band of the Year Competition on December 13, 2024 at Mercedes Benz Stadium in Atlanta, GA. The winner of the event wins \$100,000.00. Finally, he welcomed Vice President and Director of Athletics, Angela Suggs; Vice President of Government Relations, Atty. Jamal Sowell; Vice President, Chief Marketing and Communications Director, Alonda Thomas; Interim Vice President of General Counsel, Shira Thomas; and Vice President and Chief of Staff, Tola Thompson, to their new roles.

Next, he acknowledged faculty, staff and students for their efforts in making FAMU the highly recognized, national institution of higher learning and announced intentional initiatives set forth that will play a critical role in aiding the University on the path to continue achieving goals outlined in the *Boldly Striking* strategic plan. He reported on the University's achievements thus far, including its 81st ranking among national public universities; its recognition as the highest ranked public historically black college and university in America for the sixth consecutive year and third overall, public and private, and its 20th ranking on top performers in social mobility. As the University enters the third year of its 2022-2027 strategic plan, the strategic priorities

(student success, academic excellence, leveraging the brand, long-term fiscal health and sustainability, and organizational effectiveness and transformation) as well as the anticipated outcomes are helping to achieve the objective of being recognized as a leading public university.

President Beard shared his annual, qualitative goals as follow:

Goal 1: Four-year Graduation Rate/Student Retention - Increase the University's four-year graduation rate (PBF metric) to 46%; Increase second year retention rate to 88%.

Goal 2: Comprehensive Evaluation and Programmatic Enhancements, Licensure Pass Rate - Execute action plans that deliver first-time licensure pass rates of: Nursing to 85%; Law to 80%; Pharmacy to 90%; Physical Therapy to 88%. Perform Comprehensive Assessment of each professional program and implement strategies of “Best Practices.” Will explore and implement policies that will ensure test taking cohorts have demonstrated a high probability of test passage.

Goal 3: Annual Giving - Increase annual giving to \$25 million.

Goal 4: R&D Expenditures - Increase total R&D expenditures to \$60M.

Goal 5: Organizational Leadership - Strategy – Effectively implement the Year-three goals, and priorities outlined in the Boldly Striking Strategic Plan. Develop policy and implement procedures for accepting gifts to the University or DSO’s. Ongoing improvement in the attainment of Top 100; Development of Succession Plan for Colleges and Schools, --- Organizational Effectiveness; Create a Culture of Accountability through the development of Expectation Contracts. Continue implementation of the Customer Service Enhancement or Improvement Initiative.

During the presentation, President Beard discussed the progress and future plans of the institution, emphasizing the importance of strategic priorities and goals for the years 2024-2025. The discussion included the need for a more qualitative approach to the goals, focusing on strategies and policies to achieve the 2027 ultimate goals. He also highlighted the importance of leadership, fiscal management, and engagement with the community. The conversation ended with a review of the institution’s key performance indicators and a discussion on the importance of experiential learning and education.

CHAIR’S REPORT

Chair Harper began by thanking the Board for their valiant work and service to the University and to the State of Florida. She reflected on the literal and figurative challenges and transitions in 2024 that the University had to navigate and overcame. Chair Harper expressed her excitement on what the future holds for the University and the Board. During the year, the Board held joint meetings with the Direct Support Organizations (DSOs) and establish KPIs that are aligned with the *Boldly Striking* Strategic Plan. She also highlighted her engagement with current and potential donors, legislators, member of the Board of Governors and the Chancellor, students and other community supporters attending events for the Industry Cluster, Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce breakfast, Homecoming Convocation, and the 40 under 40 Gala. Work continues with the Presidential Search and the strategic plan. The Research DSO has been reestablished as a 501C3. Dr. Jami Valentine Miller distinguished alum and first African American woman to earn a PhD from John Hopkins University in Physic, was appointed a member to that research. In

closing, Chair Harper recognized Linda Barge-Miles for her dedicated service to the University and the Board.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION REPORT

Trustee Loryn May, SGA President

Trustee May recognized and thanked fellow members of the SGA leadership. She reported on the Student Government Association activities and progress, including events and initiatives completed, and upcoming events. Some events and initiatives completed include debate and election watch parties, food and item drives, volunteering at the Kearney Center, a town hall with Tallahassee mayor, John Daly, Student Government Association Week and twelve events from the homecoming calendar. Eight new freshmen senators were elected and sworn in. Upcoming events include Be Out Day, Scholars and Suits, Academic Mixer, transfer student mixer, a grocery shuttle and a town hall with the freshman caucus and athletes. Two students, Dave Noble, Director of Community Affairs and Economic Development, and Brittany Young, Chief of Staff, were highlighted for academic excellence as well as their dedication to serving the student body.

FACULTY SENATE REPORT

Trustee Jamal Brown, Faculty Senate President

Trustee Brown began his presentation by thanking the President and leadership team for their dedication to faculty and staff concerns, expressing gratitude to various individuals and teams for their hard work. He discussed faculty feedback and compensation issues, highlighting the importance of considering FAMU DRS' data and the need for a competitive salary to attract and retain talent. Trustee Brown also introduced the National Education Association data on faculty salaries and rankings, emphasizing the need for strategic alignment with partnerships and the importance of considering professional schools in compensation philosophy. Concerns about retaliation and the need for a closed-door session to discuss these issues were addressed. Trustee Gibbons suggested a regular litigation report and a review of current policies to address these concerns. The discussion ended with a reminder to focus on policy and governance.

PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH

Chair Harper began the discussion by announcing members appointed to the President Search Committee as Tamika Anderson, Trustee Jamal Brown, Trustee John Crossman, Dr. Eisenhower Etienne, Trustee Natlie Figgers, Trustee Deveron Gibbons – Search Committee Chair, Kim Godwin, Cheryl Harris, Curtis Johnson, Lisa LaBoo, Alan Levine, Loryn May, Dr. Joanne Pitter, Curtis Taylor, and Rafael Vasquez. The search firms were vetted based on their experience, history, and fee structure. The search committee is an advisory board that will vet candidates and recommend a concise list of highly qualified candidates to the FAMU Board of Trustees for consideration. The Board will interview the finalists and select the 19th President of FAMU, subject to ratification by the Board of Governors of the State University System. The Board members then provided their rankings for the top three search firms, with Storbeck Search Diversified Group, Isaacson Miller and Russell Reynolds being the top three. The Board also discussed the Presidential Search Committee charge and voted to approve it. Afterwards the Board and representatives from the top three search firms began a question-and-answer type

discussion. The main topic of discussion was the firms' approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives and their ability to follow state regulations. The trustees raised concerns about potential conflicts of interest and firms' ability to identify and place diverse candidates. The firms responded by sharing their commitment to DEI, their history of placing diverse candidates, and their adherence to state regulations. Trustees also raised questions about the firms' compensation practices and their ability to conduct thorough background checks. The board discussed the process of selecting the top three firms and the need for further information from the firms. There were concerns about the firms' ability to comply with state regulations, which led to a discussion about the need for a special meeting to address these concerns. Trustee Perry motioned to postpone the vote on the search firms, open it up to all search firms, the Board submit questions to the chair so the search firms will be prepared to answer them, and that this be done at a special meeting. Trustee Gibbons seconded the motion. The roll call vote was as follows:

Trustee Brown – Yes

Trustee Cliatt – No

Trustee Crossman – Yes

Trustee Figgers – No

Trustee Gibbons – Yes

Trustee Harper – Yes

Trustee Lawson – Yes

Trustee May – No

Trustee Perry – Yes

Trustee Reed – No

Trustee Stone – No

Trustee Washington – Yes

Trustee White - Yes

The motion passed.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Academic and Student Affairs Committee

Trustee Otis Cliatt, Vice Chair

The Academic and Student Affairs Committee met on Wednesday, December 4, 2024. Trustees Jamal Brown, Otis Cliatt, Deveron Gibbons, Kristin Harper, Kelvin Lawson, and Loryn May were present and established a quorum.

The committee recommended approval of the following items:

- Minutes for the September 12, 2024, meeting
- Tenure upon Hire – Dr. Shannon Smith and Dr. Dale Wesson
- Amendment to Regulation 4.001 (Curriculum Requirements)
- Self-Supporting Programs Annual Report
- Institutes and Centers Annual Report

The Committee also heard updated on the admissions report, the Career Center, and hazing prevention.

Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee

Trustee John Crossman, Vice Chair

The Audit and Compliance Committee met on Wednesday, December 4, 2024. The Committee took up several action items.

ACTION ITEMS

The Committee approved the:

- Minutes for the September 11, 2024, meeting.
- Updates to the University's Risk Appetite Statement.
- Updates to the Internal Controls and ERM Policy; and
- Updates to the Division of Audit Work Plan.

Chief Compliance and Ethics Officer Calhoun and Chief Privacy Officer Baker provided informational items. Deputy Chief Operation Officer Melton provided updates on the Gift Report corrective actions and the Office of Enterprise Risk Management. Finally, VP Maleszewski and Audit Director Wright presented several information items including Audit and Investigative Follow-up, Internal and External Audit Updates, and Division of Audit Update.

Budget, Finance, and Facilities Committee

Trustee Craig Reed, Chair

The Budget, Finance, and Facilities Committee met on Wednesday, December 4, 2024. The December meeting agenda consisted of two (2) action items and two (2) information items. The action items consisted of the minutes from September 12, 2024, Committee Meeting, and Amendment to the FY 2024-2025 Operating Budget – SGA Carryforward for Activity and Service Fees. The two information items included the Vice President for Finance and Administration's Report, facilitated by VP Rebecca Brown, including personnel announcements and the Department Spotlight: Emergency Management, Quarterly Financial Report – Budget to Actuals, Project Updates, and Compensation Study Update, which also included updates from the COO, the Chief Human Resources Officer, the Provost and the Chief Budget Officer. This was followed by Dr. Akins' presentation on the Stimulus Funding Expenditure Report to Date.

Item identified for follow-up action:

Segal to provide a proposal to expand the scope of the Compensation Study to include an aggregate for SUS schools only, along with adding FAMU DRS.

Direct Support Organizations and Athletics Committee

Trustee Deveron Gibbons, Chair

The Direct Support Organizations and Athletics Committee convened on December 4, 2024.

The Committee recommended approval of the following items:

- 1) FY 2024-2025 Foundation Operating Budget Amendment in the amount of \$750,000 in funding for the Department of Athletics.

The Committee was presented with the following informational items:

- 1) A review of the FAMU Foundation Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation from Alexander Haas.

- 2) Divisional Updates for University Advancement and the Direct Support Organizations.
- 3) AD Suggs provided an update on the Athletics Department.

Governance Committee

Trustee Kenny Stone, Chair

The Governance Committee met on December 4, 2024, and approved the September 12, 2024, minutes. President Beard presented his 2024-2025 goals, which was approved with the caveat of revisiting the fundraising goal. The final agenda item, the Government Relations Update, was presented by VP Jamal Sowell.

Strategic Planning and Performance Measures Committee

Trustee Kristin Harper, Chair

The Strategic Planning and Performance Measures Committee met on Wednesday, December 4, 2024. Trustee Harper, Vice Chair Gibbons, Trustee Brown, Trustee Stone, Trustee Reed, Trustee Cliatt, and Trustee May were in attendance. A quorum was present.

The committee approved the minutes from the May 22, 2024, meeting.

Chair Harper initiated the meeting by highlighting today's agenda, which features an update on the year-3 implementation of our 2022-2027 strategic plan. This ongoing process prioritizes communication, accountability, ownership, benchmarking, and reporting to facilitate proactive planning and informed decision-making. Dr. Jones was then invited to discuss the current progress and outline future strategic plan initiatives at both the university and unit levels.

Dr. Jones presented slides detailing progress in the following areas:

- Strategic Priorities
- Annual Implementation Timeline
- Year 3 Key Initiatives
- Strategic Plan Crosswalk
- Data Quality Assurance

Following the presentation, Chair Harper expressed thanks and commended Dr. Jones, emphasizing the importance of both the presentation and the effective utilization of data.

Trustee Reed extended commendation and appreciation to Dr. Jones. He recommended establishing a formal and consistent method for gathering feedback from stakeholders involved in developing and evaluating strategic planning initiatives across all phases of implementation.

Trustee Brown thanked Dr. Jones for his presentation and inquired about the inclusion of DRS in the strategic plan metrics. Dr. Jones clarified that DRS is not currently included but can be incorporated in future updates. Trustee Brown recommended integrating metrics for DRS into the strategic plan.

Chair Harper concurred that including data on the number of students transitioning from DRS to FAMU would be advantageous, along with incorporating data related to our Bright Student Scholars.

Trustee Stone highlighted the success of FAMU's 40 under 40 event during homecoming and emphasized the importance of nurturing relationships with the esteemed honorees for future strategic initiatives. He suggested ongoing improvement in this area each year.

Dr. Jones began by updating and providing an overview of the initial charge to identify strategic planning initiatives and key performance indicators (KPIs) aligned with the university's "Boldly Striking" Strategic Plan, informing the development of the DSO's full Strategic Plan. He noted that his meetings with COO Palm were engaging and productive sessions with DSO members, yielding valuable feedback on organizational goals and objectives. Each organization collaboratively identified three goals and strategic initiatives, along with three years of progressive KPIs to measure each goal. Dr. Jones emphasized how targeted priorities demonstrated the potential impact of these initiatives on university strategic priorities and showcased the alignment between each DSO's goals and the university's strategies.

Chair Harper redirected the discussion to focus on the specific goals established by the DSOs, underscoring the alignment achieved and the progress made in developing purposeful goals and KPIs to actively support the university's "Boldly Striking" strategic priorities.

Trustee Reed asked about the level of involvement from each organization in developing these plans. Chair Harper reiterated that each organization participated collaboratively in formulating the plans. Trustee Reed acknowledged this as excellent progress and commended the team for their efforts.

President Beard commended the progress made and reiterated the significance of these initiatives for the university's future. He emphasized that this framework sets the stage for ongoing progress and advancement at the university.

CONSENT AGENDA

A. Board of Trustees Minutes (BT)

- BT1 September 12, 2024
- BT2 September 20, 2025
- BT3 October 16, 2024

B. Academic and Student Affairs Committee (ASA)

- ASA1 Tenure Upon Hire
 - Dr. Shannon B. Smith
 - Dr. G. Dale Wesson
- ASA2 Amended Regulation 4.001 – Curriculum Requirements
- ASA3 Self-Supporting Programs Annual Report
- ASA4 Institutes and Centers Annual Report

C. Audit and Compliance Committee (AACC)

- AACC1 Risk Appetite Statement
- AACC2 Internal Controls & ERM Policy
- AACC3 Division of Audit Workplan Update

- D. Budget, Finance, and Facilities Committee (BFF)
 - BFF1 Amendment to the FY 2024-2025 Operating Budget – SGA Carryforward for Activity & Service Fees

- E. Direct Support Organizations Committee (DSOA)
 - DSOAC1 FY 2024-2025 Foundation Operating Budget Amendment

- F. Governance Committee (GC)
 - GC1 President Beard’s 2024-2025 Goals

Chair Harper reviewed the Consent Agenda with the Board. The consent agenda was moved and seconded by several trustees, and it passed with a unanimous vote.

CLOSED SESSION FOR CYBERSECURITY

The Cybersecurity closed session was postponed until the February 2025 Board meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

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