

**Academic and Student Affairs Committee Minutes**  
**Trustee Nicole Washington, Chair**  
**December 6, 2023**

The meeting was called to order by Trustee Nicole Washington. Ms. Valeria Singleton called the roll, and the following committee members were present: Jamal Brown, Otis Claitt, Deveron Gibbons, Kristin Harper, Londe Mondelus, and Nicole Washington. A quorum was established.

Trustee Brown moved to approve the minutes for the meeting on October 11, 2023. Trustee Mondelus seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

There was one follow-up item from the October board meeting relating to the Career and Professional Development presentation for the 2021 – 2022 graduation cohort by majors for the 38% of the respondents that were still seeking employment. The information has been provided to the Trustees with a breakdown of those majors in the “Still Seeking” category update.

The Committee recommended approval of the following items:

**Request for Leave of Absence** - Per BOT Policy Number 2005-21, the University will consider requests for unpaid leave of absence from regular employees with at least one year of continuous service. The University grants leave of absence for the following reasons: parental, medical, educational, military service, and personal.

Trustee Mondelus moved to approve Andrew Jones' leave of absence for January 8, 2024, through December 20, 2024. Trustee Harper seconded the motion, and the motion was carried.

**Institutes and Centers Annual Report** - Florida Board of Governors Regulation 10.015 requires annual fiscal reporting for the State of Florida and University Institutes and Centers, along with a summary of evaluations conducted periodically for each. Copies of FAMU's Institutes and Centers 2023 Annual Report was provided for review and approval by BOG Regulation.

Trustee Gibbons moved to approve the Institutes and Centers 2023 Annual Report. Trustee Mondelus seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

**Reduce Degree Program Hours** - The School of Journalism and Graphic Communication is seeking to reduce the number of total credit hours from 125 to 120. The proposed action is requested to increase graduation rates, retention, and persistence among students enrolled in Public Relations and Journalism degrees.

Trustee Mondelus moved to approve the reduction in degree program hours for Journalism and Public Relations degrees. Trustee Brown seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

**Student Affairs Updates** – informational updates were provided:

- Dr. William Hudson, Jr., and his team provided updates on enrollment management, housing, financial aid, and hazing prevention.
- The Office of Undergraduate Admissions and Recruitment continues to experience significant increases in first-time-in-college (FTIC) applications, with a 4.6% increase.
  - December 4, 2023, marked the inaugural date for FAMU Decision Day. The Office of Admissions hopes that Decision Day creates a culture of anticipation and excitement and establishes a tradition that will make the admission process more personal and less transactional.
  - The academic profile of the incoming classes continues to increase. The Fall 2024 cohort has a grade point average of 4.06. In Fall 2023, the cohort had a grade point average of 4.03.
  - Currently, 2,555 transfer students are enrolled in the IGNITE program through FCS partners.
- The Office of University Housing portal opened on December 4 for newly admitted students. Before receiving the Housing application link, the students must submit their \$150 seat deposit.
- The U. S. Department of Education has amended the FASFA, and it will be available to students and parents on December 31, 2023. This will impact Title IV institutions across the country as the download of FASFA information to universities is projected for January 31. Oracle is scheduled to release a document to assist with implementation. Several departments (IT, Financial Aid, and Student Accounts) have been meeting weekly with Oracle to discuss issues impacting the processing and disbursement of aid. The other problems being monitored are the verification of students and the impact of changes to the federal Pell Grants.
- On November 11, 2023, FAMU held a ceremony to mark the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the U. S. Coast Guard (USCG) to facilitate training and recruitment for USCG active duty members.
- The final informational update was regarding the hazing prevention initiatives:
  - The University has two open investigations of possible violations of University Regulation 2.028.
  - The Alivetek online hazing course remains available to various entities.

**Academic Affairs Updates** – The following informational updates were provided:

- Interim Provost Watson provided brief updates on advising, including hiring, professional development, training, and technological integration. Also, a comprehensive update on the College of Law’s 30-60-90-day plan was provided.
  - **Academic Advising** – Since the last update, the university has hired a new director, Ms. Carlotta Mitchell, and six new advisors with a start date slated for January 5, 2024. The hires were for newly established positions. The pay is competitive to the other SUS institutions.
  - Twelve advisors attended the NACADA conference (professional development).
  - There have been joint training sessions with academic advising and the Office of Financial Aid to ensure a holistic student support approach.

- We have held preliminary implementation meeting with EduNav academic planning tool.
- “Dorm Storm” was held on November 29, 2023, and marked the beginning of an exciting partnership with the Student Government Association. The most recent meeting laid the foundation for future advising and enrollment initiatives collaboration.
- In preparation for the Spring 2024 semester, we are gearing up for a robust Enrollment Blitz scheduled for December 5-6. This initiative aims to streamline enrollment and ensure students are well-prepared for the upcoming semester.

**Question:** What percent of students are registered and ready for spring?

**Response:** Most colleges/schools have hit the 50% to 60% mark for student registration. The deans are making great strides by having their teams call the students, email blasts, and connecting with them via Canvas. Another check-in will be performed before the end of the semester.

**Question:** What type of support is in place, if any, for independent students?

**Response:** There are Foundation scholarships available. Dr. Friday-Stroud and her team are working hard to assist the students with balances. Also, the National Alumni Association has helped through the Students Scholarships Fund.

### **Comprehensive Update on the College of Law’s 30-60-90 Day Plan:**

**30-Day Update:** In the first 30 days of the plan, we have made strides in enhancing the leadership team of the College of Law. Mr. Cecil Howard was appointed as Associate Provost. In addition, the College of Law retained Dr. Cathy Oliver, a distinguished pedagogy consultant. Dr. Oliver will work closely with our faculty to implement cutting-edge teaching methodologies.

**60-Day Update:** In the second phase, the College of Law has intensified efforts to strengthen connections with the legal community. We have initiated dialogues with prominent law firms, alumni, and community leaders to foster partnerships to provide our students with invaluable experiential learning opportunities.

Furthermore, in collaboration with Dr. Oliver, the college has launched targeted faculty development programs to integrate innovative teaching strategies into curriculum.

**90-Day Update:** As we approach the 90-day mark, the College of Law has established a Legal Innovation Center. This center will serve as a hub for interdisciplinary collaboration, research, and innovation at the intersection of law, technology, and social justice. The aim is to position the College of Law as a leader in shaping the future of legal practice and advocacy.

Additionally, we are in the early stages of exploring a joint initiative with local law firms to create a mentorship program that connects our students with seasoned legal professionals. This program will provide our aspiring lawyers with real-world insights and guidance as they navigate their academic and professional journeys.

The first 90 days mark a period of transformation and growth for the College of Law. The addition of Mr. Cecil Howard as Associate Provost and the collaboration with Dr. Cathy Oliver underscore our commitment to academic excellence, innovation, and preparing our students for success in the dynamic field of law.

Dean Deidre Keller provided updates on the required curriculum compared to SUS law schools.

**Question:** How does the college determine vulnerable students?

**Response:** The data point that is most correlative to success for first-time bar passage is the GPA. In 2019 and 2020, a study showed that students who completed their first year with a GPA below 2.6 were vulnerable. So, we set the vulnerability mark at a 2.7 GPA. Vulnerable students are provided intensive advising by the Dean's team (the Dean, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, the Associate Dean for Student Learning and Assessment, or a member of the Academic Success team).

**Question:** Is there any value to “teaching to the test”? Also, can you explain more about the writing center?

**Response:** The writing center's purpose is to ensure that the students have a resource that can meet the students where they are as writers. Our students must take eight hours of legal research and writing, but the faculty who teach the course(s) encounter a wide range of writing skills. The writing center is intended to provide the students with onsite resources to get them up to speed so that the legal writing faculty can focus on the technical aspects of legal writing.

What does it mean to teach the test? Knowing and articulating rules is only about 20% of the test. The students must learn how to use the rules and in which factual circumstances. Dean Keller provided two suggestions: 1) The individuals who are teaching bar-tested subject matter should be assessing the students in ways that the bar is going to assess them, and 2) We should assess the students' retention of the subject matter that they learned in their first year. We have used BARBRIs diagnostic for many years. The data that we are currently receiving is focused not only on doctrinal learning but also on skills learning.

**Question:** How are we ensuring that each cohort of students gets the necessary skills and competencies they need throughout the curriculum? The 1L students are scripted. However, the 2L's and 3L's are unclear.

**Follow-up discussion is needed:** Diagnostic and summative assessments in the curriculum looking at both student proficiency and faculty effectiveness.

Mr. Howard stated that the College of Law is in the process of vetting and procuring a company that would provide comprehensive support from the beginning of the program. The next step is to identify the best suited vendor and existing programs in place to focus on the February bar exam test takers.

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole Washington, Committee Chair