

FLORIDA **A&M** UNIVERSITY

Board of Trustees

Meeting Minutes September 18, 2025

CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

Kristin Harper, Chair

Chair Harper called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. Trustees Brown, Bryant, Crossman, Dopson-Rodriguez, Figgers, Gainey, Gibbons, Harper, Perry, Reed, Vazquez, and White established a quorum.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The meeting began with a public comment period, where speakers were instructed to limit their remarks to agenda matters and address the board as a whole. The following persons signed up for public comments:

- Raja Davis, Dream Defenders, who criticized the lack of student input in leadership appointments and called for transparency in financial matters.
- Richard Gregg – Professor, School of the Environment, highlighted the need for more instructional designers and emphasized collaboration across the university.
- Devin Nobles warned about potential hostile takeovers of Florida state universities and criticized the board for not listening to students, faculty and staff.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Kristin Harper, Chair

Expressing deep gratitude for the opportunity to serve the institution through transformative milestones and challenging times, Chair Harper reflected on her tenure as chair, highlighting key accomplishments such as:

- Leading the committee that crafted the 2022–27 Boldly Striking Strategic Plan, which elevated the University into the top 100 national universities and sparked its pursuit of Carnegie 1 Research status.
- Celebrating unprecedented successes in fundraising, research expenditures, four-year graduation rates, athletic championships, and performance-based metrics.

She extended heartfelt thanks to Dr. Beard for his steadfast leadership during a turbulent period, commending his role as interim president. In his absence, she presented an award to Mrs. Beard as a token of appreciation.

Turning to President Johnson, she acknowledged the controversies surrounding the process that brought her to the University but emphasized that the position she holds is both genuine and impactful. Chair Harper encouraged President Johnson to define her presidency not by its beginnings but by the achievements she will deliver for students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the communities served. She urged her to lead with unwavering dedication to excellence tempered with compassion, thanking her for actively engaging in listening sessions and committing to

transform insights into actions that uphold FAMU's integrity, strengthen its reputation, and inspire confidence among those who entrust their futures to the University.

She expressed gratitude to current and former chiefs of staff, board liaisons, and staff in the Office of the President—especially Carmen Cummings-Martin, Kimberly Taylor, Cynthia Henry, Vernon Bryant, and Linda Barge-Miles—for their invaluable partnership and support. Appreciation was also extended to Vice President Seniors Dr. Alonda Thomas, the IT and Communications teams, catering staff, direct support organizations, the FAMU National Alumni Association, the Foundation Board of Directors, the FAMU Boosters, and leaders within the Industry Cluster.

To the FAMU students, she affirmed they are the very reason the Board exists—every decision, policy, and meeting ultimately circles back to their education, dreams, and futures. She also thanked fellow alumni for being the steadfast guardians of FAMU's legacy and living proof of her promise, reminding them that they represent the University's gift to the world. She called upon them to carry FAMU's name, mission, and reputation with pride—protecting it fiercely, advocating boldly, and never forgetting the spirit of FAMU. The strength of the University lies in the commitment of those who demonstrate their love through action.

In conclusion, Chair Harper emphasized that this iconic institution demands a president and governing board who embody its strength—those who put mission above politics, service above self, and who never silence, overlook, or disregard the Rattler community or the University's enduring future in every decision. Though her tenure as chair is ending, her dedication to FAMU remains steadfast, for the University must continue to serve as a beacon of opportunity and success for bold, brilliant students and future Rattlers yet to come.

FAMU today, FAMU tomorrow, FAMU forever!

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Trustee Belvin Perry presided over the election for Board Chair and Vice Chair. He began by noting that while candidates had been nominated during the June meeting, Robert's Rules of Order required the Board to open the floor for additional nominations. Trustee Deveron Gibbons was nominated for Board Chair; with no further nominations, he was elected unanimously. Following this, Trustee White was nominated for Vice Chair and, likewise, was elected unanimously after no other nominations were put forward. The ceremony concluded with the formal transfer of leadership to Chair Gibbons.

Subsequently, Chair Gibbons and Vice Chair White were recognized and invited to address the Board. Chair Gibbons began by expressing gratitude to outgoing Chair Harper, commending her consistent service marked by integrity, principle, and character. He presented Chair Harper with a bouquet of roses, the gavel from her tenure as chair, and a commemorative plaque. Vice Chair White thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve and pledged his continued dedication to the University's best interests. He also expressed appreciation for Chair Harper's leadership.

Chair Harper responded with sincere thanks for the unexpected honors and extended her congratulations to Chair Gibbons and Vice Chair White as they assume their new roles.

MISSION MOMENT

At the start of his tenure, Chair Gibbons introduced a new tradition to board meetings called the "Mission Moment." Beginning with this meeting, each session will open with a brief highlight showcasing a student achievement, faculty innovation, alumnae success, or a story of community impact. This initiative aims to center the Board's discussions on the core purpose of their service and to remind members of the real lives affected by their decisions.

The inaugural "Mission Moment" was delivered by Evan Lesure, a third-year social work student. He shared his journey as a combat diver trainee and called on the University to deepen its empathy toward all students—particularly supporting Black male students and the women striving to stay in school while caring for their children.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Marva B. Johnson, President

President Johnson opened her report by expressing sincere gratitude to outgoing Chair Harper for her dedicated leadership and unwavering commitment to the University's success. She then provided a comprehensive update on the University's progress, emphasizing several key achievements and strategic initiatives. Notably, the University has made significant advances in student success, demonstrated by improved graduation rates and enhanced employment outcomes.

FAMU's accomplishments have been recognized nationally, earning the distinction of a Fulbright HBCU Institutional Leader and securing the top spot on Niche's 2026 list of the best HBCU schools in America. The University is also advancing academic excellence through innovative programs such as the Career Center's Micro Certification initiative and the establishment of new partnerships with industry leaders.

President Johnson outlined her ambitious 100-day plan, which prioritizes student success, academic excellence, robust support for faculty and staff, strengthened partnerships, and alignment of operations with state objectives. The Board engaged in a discussion about enrollment trends, expressing concern that current projections may fall short of the 2027 target of 10,000 students. In response, the administration detailed strategies to bolster partnerships, enhance transfer rates, and intensify marketing efforts aimed at student recruitment. They also emphasized that the University continues to offer strong value despite recent tuition increases.

Finally, the Board requested a more detailed report on the 100-day framework at the next meeting, with particular attention to metrics and milestones related to achieving R1 research status, including specific actions and timelines.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION REPORT

Trustee Zayla Bryant, SGA President

Trustee Bryant delivered a comprehensive report on her administration's activities, highlighting efforts in student engagement, campus events, and initiatives to support mental health and overall student well-being. The discussion included upcoming events such as Lobbying 100,

SGA Week, the presidential inauguration, and Homecoming festivities featuring concerts by various artists. She underscored the importance of collaboration with student government and other key stakeholders to enhance campus resources and enrich the student experience.

Trustee Bryant also addressed concerns regarding the allocation of the A&S fee, suggesting a reallocation of funds to prioritize student success while scaling back support for campus facilities. Trustee White and others emphasized the need for improved communication with the Student Government Association (SGA) and proposed establishing liaison roles to facilitate better information sharing.

In closing, Dr. William Hudson announced a new initiative that will offer 10 students the opportunity to travel to Israel, with Trustee Bryant honored as the first selected participant.

FACULTY SENATE REPORT

Trustee Jamal Brown, Faculty Senate President

Trustee Brown delivered the Faculty Senate report, emphasizing key strategic initiatives across the University. His update highlighted advancements in curriculum development, faculty involvement, and research growth. He noted progress in streamlining course approval procedures, strengthening connections with industry alumni, and recent visits to FAMU DRS facilities. Trustee Brown stressed the critical need to balance faculty teaching responsibilities with research commitments, and outlined upcoming leadership activities and professional development opportunities. The report concluded with a focus on expanding grant funding and fostering new research collaborations with government agencies.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Academic and Student Affairs Committee

Trustee Deveron Gibbons, Vice Chair

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

The Committee recommended approval of the following items:

- Minutes for June 11, 2025;
- Request for Leave of Absence (Nandi Riley);
- Academic Calendars (2025-2026 and 2026-2027);
- Annual Textbook and Affordability Report; and
- Self-Supporting Programs Annual Report.

The Committee also heard updates on admissions, financial aid, and hazing prevention. In addition, an update on the licensure pass rates and academic program efficiency

Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee

Trustee Michael White, Chair

Yesterday the Audit, Risk, and Compliance Committee met. The Committee took up three action items.

ACTION ITEMS

The Committee approved the:

- I. **Minutes** for the June 11, 2025, meeting;
- II. Office of Compliance and Ethics Annual Report and Program Plan; and
- III. The Office of Compliance and Ethics Charter document.

These items are included in the Consent Agenda for the full Board meeting.

Chief Risk Officer Deidre Melton provided informational items including:

- I. **The 2025 University Risk Assessment: Top 10 Enterprise Risks**
- II. **The 2025 Internal Controls Assurance Statement; and**
- III. **An update on the SUS ERM Consortium; and**
- IV. **Highlighted 5 ERM Reports focused on:**
 - a. **Emergency Management,**
 - b. **Campus Safety and Security,**
 - c. **Student Health,**
 - d. **Campus Facilities, and**
 - e. **Environmental Health and Safety.**

Finally, VP Maleszewski presented items including:

- I. The Division of Audit Annual Report;
- II. Audit and Investigative Follow-up;
- III. Internal and External Audit Updates; and
- IV. Division of Audit Updates.

I led a discussion regarding implementation of Workday and requested additional information be brought back to the December BOT meeting.

Budget, Finance, and Facilities Committee

Trustee Craig Reed, Chair

The Budget, Finance, and Facilities Committee met on Wednesday, September 17, 2025. The September meeting agenda consisted of four (4) action items and two (2) information items.

Action Items:

The action items consisted of (1) **Minutes from June 11, 2025, Committee Meeting;** (2) **The approval of the FY 2025-2026 University Carryforward Spending Plan and Fixed Capital Outlay Budget** (3) **Amendment to Regulation 3.017 – Schedule of Tuition and Fees** and (4) **Asset Works Service Contract Amendment.**

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)** Project Updates.

The September 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 September 17, 2025.

The Committee approved minutes from the June 11, 2025, DSO & Athletics Committee Meeting.

The Committee was presented with the following informational items:

- 1) FY 2024-2025 University Advancement Close-Out which finished the year at just over \$17 Million.

- 2) FY 2025-2026 University Advancement Updates which is at \$3.1 Million as of September 10, 2025.
- 3) Athletics Department updates from Deputy AD Travis Glasgow.

Governance Committee

Trustee Belvin Perry, Chair

The Governance Committee convened on September 17, 2025, and approved the following action items:

- Minutes from the June 11, 2025 meeting
- President Beard's performance bonus
- The amended 2026–2027 Legislative Budget Request, totaling **\$176.7 million**, comprising of **\$100 million in non-recurring funds** and **\$76.7 million in recurring funds**

Some of the Board Norms discussed but tabled for future consideration included:

1. Fiduciary responsibilities and stakeholder alignment
2. Commitment to responsible oversight
3. Active advocacy for the University
4. Recognition of the Board's administrative excellence
5. Embracing a learning-oriented mindset
6. Upholding ethical standards

Board Operating Procedures

President Johnson reported that the Board of Governors declined the proposed amendment to the Board Operating Procedures that would have removed clauses 4.2 (vi and vii), which grant the University President sole authority over athletic employment agreements. As a result, the procedures will remain unchanged.

Board Goals

The Board engaged in a strategic discussion around goal-setting and proposed the following initiatives:

- Incorporate milestone-based metrics into the Strategic Plan
- Conduct a comprehensive policy review
- Enhance philanthropic efforts and fundraising strategies
- Reevaluate committee charters
- Foster student engagement through informal lunch meetings
- Increase interaction with individual schools and colleges to maintain mission alignment
- Develop a performance scorecard tracking graduation rates, retention, financial indicators, and more

Trustees are encouraged to submit additional goal suggestions to Mrs. Taylor within two weeks. These will be compiled and distributed ahead of the next board meeting.

President's Goals

The President's goals will be formally presented at the December Board Meeting.

Government Relations Update

Vice President Robinson provided an overview of key government relations topics, including:

- Florida and federal legislative session calendars
- Overview of the Florida Board of Governors
- Legislative funding mechanisms
- State budget and Joint Legislative Budget Commission updates
- Federal budget process and current proposals related to student aid

- Discussion of items added and removed in the amended budget request

Candidates for Office

The Governance Committee will present the following candidates to the full Board:

- Chair: Deveron Gibbons
- Vice Chair: Michael White

The Committee Chair will oversee the election process.

Special Committee on the College of Law

Trustee Belvin Perry, Chair

Yesterday, an update was provided on the Special Committee on Law. The following trustees were present: Jocelyn Dopson-Rodriguez, Emery Gainey and Belvin Perry. A quorum was established.

The updates included the College of Law's active response to committee findings and student feedback by enhancing student support services—such as facilities, bookstore, and dining—expanding academic offerings in emerging areas like Cyber Law and AI and the Law, and strengthening experiential learning opportunities. Faculty are also preparing for the NextGen Bar Exam in coordination with the college's forthcoming strategic plan. These efforts represent a comprehensive approach to improving student success and ensuring the college remains future-ready.

Strategic Planning and Performance Measures Committee

Trustee Kristin Harper, Chair

The Strategic Planning and Performance Measures Committee met on Wednesday, September 17, 2025. The meeting was attended by Chair Harper, Vice Chair Vazquez, Trustee Brown, Trustee Bryant, Trustee Gibbons and Trustee Washington. A quorum was present.

Action Items:

Approval of Minutes from June 11, 2025 meeting.

The committee approved the minutes from the June 11, 2025 meeting.

Information Items:

Strategic Plan Monitoring/U.S. News & World Report.

The report focused on **strategic alignment** between FAMU's Boldly Striking Strategic Plan and the newly adopted SUS30 Strategic Plan. The discussion emphasized building a **data-driven performance culture**, developing a **metrics readiness dashboard**, and ensuring all initiatives are tied to measurable outcomes for student success, institutional excellence, and statewide impact. Dr. Jones will review how the Boldly Striking Strategic Plan aligns with SUS30 priorities, outline progress on building a data-driven performance culture and the Metric Readiness Dashboard, and share next steps for closing gaps, securing key industry MOUs, and integrating results into reporting. He will also briefly review the U.S. News & World Report methodology to ensure initiatives advance student success, institutional excellence, and statewide impact.

Key Themes

- **Year 4 Strategic Plan Implementation:** Establishing baselines, benchmarks, and cross-functional teams to align university priorities with SUS30 goals.

- **Workforce Readiness & Partnerships:** Expanding internships, faculty externships, and industry partnerships, especially with “iconic companies,” to improve graduate outcomes and post-graduate employment metrics
- **Data & Accountability:** Creating a system to track persistence, completion, and program performance; deploying data stewards to ensure quality and timeliness of reporting
- **Operational Metrics:** Introducing dashboards to monitor fiscal health (cash-to-debt ratios, space utilization), ensuring efficiency and institutional readiness
- **U.S. News & World Report Rankings:** Targeting 3–5 indicators (graduation rates, employment outcomes, faculty salaries, research citations) to strengthen FAMU’s national standing

Follow-Up Actions:

Trustee Washington recommended analyzing FAMU’s historical outcomes in comparison with other SUS institutions and peer universities that serve similar student populations. The goal is to better understand how FAMU’s results align with its peers and use those insights to help shape the evolution of the Performance-Based Funding (PBF) model.

Trustees urged stronger **enterprise-level engagement** with corporate partners, more **collaboration across colleges**, and advocacy for **cluster-based performance funding models** that reflect FAMU’s unique mission and student demographics

CONSENT AGENDA

- **Items Approved Unanimously:**
 - Board Minutes.
 - August 6-7, 2025
 - August 21, 2025
 - August 28, 2025
 - Request for Leave of Absence (Nandi Riley)
 - Academic Calendars (2025-2026 and 2026-2027)
 - Annual Textbook and Affordability Report
 - Self-Supporting Programs Annual Report
 - OCE Annual Report and Program Plan
 - OCE Charter
 - FY 2025-2026 University Carryforward Spending Plan and Fixed Capital Outlay Budget
 - President Beards Bonus (7.5%)
 - Legislative Budget Request

AWARD PRESENTATIONS

Before adjourning the meeting, Chair Gibbons unveiled the Chairman’s Award, established to honor exceptional Rattlers for their remarkable contributions. The inaugural recipients included standout athlete Glenn Edwards, Former Board Chair Bill Jennings, Senator Arthenia Joyner, Congresswoman Carrie Meeks, and Booker Gainor, who made history as the first Black mayor and city manager in Cairo, Georgia’s 157-year legacy. Mr. Gainor, present at the meeting, shared his inspiring personal journey, detailing his academic struggles and ultimate success, highlighting the profound influence of the University’s motto, “Excellence with Caring.” Chair Gibbons also announced the formation of a dedicated committee for FAMU DRS, aimed at securing the necessary resources and strategic guidance to support their continued success.

ADJOURNMENT:

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