



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Approved 02.12.25

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

November 20, 2024
9:30 – 11:30 A

Florida Polytechnic University
Barnett Applied Research Center (BARC)
and Virtual via Microsoft Teams

I. Call to Order

Chair Beth Kigel called the Board of Trustees meeting to order at 9:39 a.m.

II. Roll Call

Kristen Wharton called the roll: Chair Beth Kigel, Vice Chair Jesse Panuccio, Trustee Ilya Shapiro, Trustee Patrick Hagen, Trustee Dorian Abbott, Trustee Lyn Stanfield, Trustee Cliff Otto, Trustee Sidney Theis, Trustee Christos Tsetsekas, and Trustee Brad Towle were present (Quorum).

Board Trustees not present: n/a

Staff Present: President Devin Stephenson, Interim Provost Brad Thiessen, Dr. Allen Bottorff, David Fugett, Mike Dieckmann, Kathy Bowman, Kelli Stargel, David Blanton, Melaine Schmitz, and Kristen Wharton

III. Public Comment

There were no requests received for public comment.

IV. 2024-2025 Board of Trustees Work Plan

Chair Kigel reviewed revisions to the Board of Trustees Annual Work Plan. These revisions reflect two changes to the Academic and Student Affairs Committee's Work Plan which was revised to reflect recent amendments to Florida Board of Governors' regulations. Items that are no longer required by BOG regulation were removed from the Committee's Work Plan. They include:

- (a) Annual report and Seven Year Review for FIPR (removed from November)
- (b) Annual report for the Advanced Mobility Institute (removed from November)

As such, the Board needs to remove these same reports from the Board of Trustees' Annual Work Plan. There were no questions by the Board on the revisions to the Work Plan.

A motion was made by Trustee Patrick Hagen to approve the revised Board of Trustees Work Plan for FY25. Trustee Lyn Stanfield seconded the motion; a vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

V. Chair's Remarks

Chair Beth Kigel expressed her appreciation to the trustees and to President Stephenson and staff for their engagement in yesterday's Board retreat. She also stated her interactions with Florida Poly partners and investors at last night's Thankful Celebration event as well as at this morning's faculty breakfast were very meaningful.

VI. President's Remarks

President Devin Stephenson expressed his gratitude that the Board has entrusted him to lead the Florida Poly. He stated that the right organizational structure is being put into place to support the institution. He also highlighted that the success of our students is paramount.

VII. Faculty Senate President Report

Trustee Brad Towle, Faculty Senate President, reported on faculty's productive discussions with Provost Thiessen on lab management, curriculum changes, process concerns, and document management. He announced a new initiative for spring, Florida Poly Research Day, which will showcase the University's research to institutional stakeholders.

VIII. SGA President Report

Trustee Christos "Taki" Tsetsekas, noted key SGA initiatives in regard to student clubs and organizations. This includes providing seed money to clubs to establish new campus traditions and facilitating discussions on the development of intercollegiate sports teams. Tsetsekas also noted the continued renovations of the "Phoenix Nest;" shared about the campus' "space tree;" announced newly elected SGA senate leaders; and announced a mentorship program for military veterans and international students to help them adapt to campus life.

Trustee Abbot inquired how many veterans Florida Poly has as students and what support they currently receive. Trustee Tsetsekas responded that the University has approximately 50 veterans as students, but there are no current resources. Trustee Cliff Otto recommended Trustee Tsetsekas contact his counterparts in the local colleges and universities as there may be programs for veterans that Florida Poly can engage with.

IX. Consent Agenda

Chair Kigel brought forward the consent agenda for trustee approval.

A. Governance, Audit, and Compliance Committee

- 1. Approve Regulation FPU-2.006 Application Fee and Admissions Deposit**

B. Finance and Facilities Committee

- 1. Approve the HES Facilities Management Contract - Custodial Services**
- 2. Approve the amended rental rate thresholds in the Florida Poly Student Housing System from fiscal year (FY) to Fall of the indicated year**
- 3. Approve the Residence Hall III Retail Space Remodel Project**

C. Board of Trustees

- 1. Approve Board of Trustees Meeting minutes from November 6, 2024**
- 2. Approve Board of Trustees Meeting minutes from November 30, 2024**

As each of the consent agenda items comes before the Board with unanimous approval from the respective Committees, there is no need for a second. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

X. Committee Reports

A. Governance, Audit, and Compliance Committee

Committee Chair Cliff Otto stated at the Governance, Audit, and Compliance Committee meeting, David Blanton provided updates on external and internal audits. Blanton also reported that all concerns, deficiencies, and weaknesses in the Foundation audit have been resolved, and he is collaborating with the President to strengthen enhanced monetary controls.

Committee Chair Otto said David Fugett discussed amended Regulation FPU-2.006 Application Fee and Admission Deposit which was approved by the Committee and is on today's consent agenda for Board approval.

The Committee brought two items forward that require action by the full Board:

1. Composite of the Trustees' Evaluation. One hundred percent of the trustees participated in the survey regarding the immediate past President's Annual Review. Upon discussion of the outcome, the Committee recommended that the Composite of the Trustees' evaluations be approved as the document reflecting the immediate past President's annual evaluation for 2023-24. Chair Kigel offered favorable comments from her conversation with Board of Governors Chair Lamb.

As this item, approval of the "President's Annual Review, July 2023 to June 2024, Composite of the Trustees' Evaluations" as the document reflecting the President's Evaluation, comes before the Board with unanimous approval from the Governance, Audit, and Compliance Committee, there is no need for a second. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

2. Immediate Past President's Compensation Bonus. Committee Chair Otto stated the Committee then discussed the immediate past president's compensation bonus and recommends the compensation bonus be 28% of the ending annual base salary. This percentage is based on the composite of the President's Evaluation in which 5 out of 10 Trustees gave an overall rating of "Exceeded", while 4 trustees gave an overall rating of "Achieved," and 1 gave an overall rating of "Partially Achieved," and is aligned with the requirements in the President's Employment Agreement.

Committee Chair Otto then stated his desire to see past president Avent receive the full 30% compensation bonus based on Avent's contribution over his ten-year tenure.

Trustee Ilya Shapiro reflected that the numbers, based on the trustees' ratings, suggest a 25% bonus.

For context, Chair Kigel added that one of the opportunities the Board will have is consideration of emeritus status for Dr. Avent. A policy exists in the Faculty Handbook which states faculty and the university president may be considered for emeritus status once they officially retire; however, Dr. Avent is returning to the faculty, not fully retiring. Chair Kigel is currently researching options with staff for Board consideration at a future meeting.

Trustee Abbot questioned whether the Board is evaluating Dr. Avent's work in FY24 where a 25% bonus makes sense versus evaluating Dr. Avent's body of work over the past 10 years. He said there should be a balance between setting a precedent and recognizing a body of cumulative work.

Trustee Sid Theis stated his support for awarding Dr. Avent the full 30%. Trustee Lyn Stanfield concurred. She suggested for the future the Board consider refining what the evaluation encompasses to eliminate any bias.

A motion was made by Trustee Cliff Otto to award the immediate past president, Dr. Randy Avent, a performance compensation bonus in the amount of 30% of his fiscal year 2024 base salary. Trustee Dorian Abbot seconded the motion; a vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

B. Finance and Facilities Committee

Committee Chair Lyn Stanfield stated the Finance and Facilities Committee received the University's Q4 financial update for the period ending June 30, 2024, which highlighted continued strong financial ratios and a growth of 8.4% in net position to \$223 million. In addition, the Committee also received the University's Q1 financial update for the period ending September 30, 2024, which again highlighted continued, strong financial ratios and a growth of 5.9% in net position over last year same period, to \$226.3 million.

The Committee received an update on the five major campus construction projects that are underway, followed by an update on the Advancement and Foundation activities. In that update, they reported on the Alumni Relations and Annual Giving Programs, the Corporate Impact Network & Parent Network, Donor Acquisition and Retention, an update on the Changemaker Campaign, and giving benchmarks for other universities. The Foundation presented their year-end financial report for FY24 and their FY25, first quarter financial update.

In addition, the Committee reviewed, approved, and recommended Board approval for three items, which were approved on today's consent agenda.

C. Academic and Student Affairs Committee

Committee Chair Sidney Theis stated the Academic and Student Affairs Committee received a report from Interim Provost Brad Thiessen who projected a Performance-Based Funding score of 77, which would earn Florida Poly full funding for 2025-26. Provost Thiessen shared additional details on the University's four-year graduation rate, including comparisons with other engineering programs within the State University System; an update on faculty recruitment efforts; and a notice about the upcoming ABET re-accreditation visit in January 2025.

Committee Chair Theis also reported that Vice President Bryan Brooks provided a report on Student Affairs, Enrollment Management, and Strategic Communications. In this report, the Committee was introduced to new leadership in Enrollment Management and Student Affairs. The Committee was also updated on successful student events, including the 2024 SGA Transition Ceremony, the Career Fair, and the Dale Carnegie leadership sessions.

XI. 2025-2030 Strategic Plan: Approval

Vice President Bryan Brooks reviewed all of the substantive changes to the draft of the Strategic Plan since the trustees reviewed it at the Board Retreat the prior day. He also identified where the metrics are located within the document per Trustee Stanfield's request.

A motion was made by Trustee Cliff Otto to approve the revised University mission statement to read, "We serve students and industry through educational excellence and the discovery, advancement, and application of knowledge in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics." Trustee Sidney Theis seconded the motion; a vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Trustee Lyn Stanfield to approve the 2025-2030 Strategic Plan as revised from yesterday's presentation at the 2024 Annual Retreat of the Board of Trustees. Trustee Dorian Abbot seconded the motion; a vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

XII. Faculty Panel

Chair Kigel welcomed the five faculty panel members and moderator David Fugett. Dr. Sanna Siddiqui, Dr. Ala J. Alnaser, Dr. Ayesha Dina, Dr. Artem Malinin, and Dr. Nathan Dawson participated on the panel. A robust exchange of information occurred between faculty and trustees. Faculty recommended adding degrees in aerospace engineering, biomedical engineering, applied statistics, information technology, biotechnology, and artificial intelligence. One suggested turning the most popular concentrations into majors and turning the less popular concentrations into technical offerings. Faculty stated the need to research the job market for the next 5-10 years to determine what programs are most needed. There was also strong consensus for establishing a Ph.D. program and capitalizing on undergraduate research.

XIII. Board of Trustees Meeting Calendar

Chair Kigel reviewed the upcoming Board calendar noting that the next round of Committee and Board meetings will occur in February 2025.

XIV. Board of Governors Meeting Calendar

Chair Kigel shared that the next Board of Governors meeting will be held January 29-30, 2025, at the University of North Florida in Jacksonville.

XV. Closing Remarks and Adjournment

Chair Kigel recognized Kathy Bowman, Vice President of Advancement and CEO of the University Foundation, for her outstanding work over her five-year tenure. She wished Bowman well in her retirement.

With no further business to discuss the meeting adjourned at 11:32 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Kristen J. Wharton
Corporate Secretary