



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Approved 02.12.25

Board of Trustees Retreat Meeting Minutes

November 19, 2024
1:00 – 4:30 P

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 1:00 p.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 Schmiz, and Kristen Wharton

III. Public Comment

There were no requests received for public comment.

IV. 2025-2030 Strategic Plan

Chair Beth Kigel opened the meeting stating her experience with President Stephenson and his team in the Strategic Planning process has been spectacular. She provided a high-level recap of the process to date. She also stressed that this is a working retreat; any edits that trustees have to the draft of the Strategic Plan will be incorporated into the final draft tonight in anticipation of the Board approving it during tomorrow's Board meeting.

President Devin Stephenson reviewed two printed documents: a full-color booklet which is a draft of the strategic plan, and a wire-bound, internal-only document that will assist staff in tracking progress via hard data and metrics.

President Stephenson underscored the collaboration that occurred throughout the writing process, with both internal and external stakeholders. He presented the three priorities that were identified from the Strategic Planning Summit; these priorities form the driving force behind the strategy that will be used to achieve desired outcomes.

A. Mission and Vision Statements

At Chair Kigel's directive, President Stephenson's leadership team reviewed the University's mission and vision statements. Both were re-written and brought forward for the trustees' consideration:

Mission Statement:

We serve students and industry through educational excellence and the discovery, advancement, and application of knowledge in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Vision Statement:

Highly desirable graduates and solutions for a resilient high-tech economy.

B. Guiding Principles

President Stephenson continued by reviewing the six principles that will guide the work of the staff and faculty. They are as follows:

1. Excellence and Opportunity
2. Student Focus
3. Steadfast Integrity
4. Community Collaboration
5. Fearless Curiosity
6. Forward Thinking

C. Three Priorities

President Stephenson reviewed the methodology used to formulate the top three priorities which included hiring Dr. Craig Collins of Sterling Consultants who facilitated a day-long summit comprised of 35 internal and external stakeholders. The three priorities are as follows:

1. Comprehensive Institutional Growth

Dr. Brad Thiessen, Vice President and Interim Provost, presented goals 1 and 2. Bryan Brooks, Vice President, Student Affairs, Enrollment Management, and Strategic Communications, presented goals 3 and 4. The goals under priority one include:

Goal 1: Maximize Florida Poly and industry collaboration by establishing a robust framework for corporate engagement.

Goal 2: Strengthen the reputation and influence of Florida Poly by positioning the University as a leading economic driver in the region.

Goal 3: Cultivate a rich Florida Poly Experience for students, staff, and faculty.

Goal 4: Bolster the University's financial sustainability and infrastructure.

Initiatives for each goal were presented as well.

2. Advancement through intentional resource development

Dr. Allen Bottorff, Vice President and CFO, presented goals 1 and 3. Mike Dieckmann, Vice President and CIO, presented goal 2. The goals under priority two include:

Goal 1: Enlarge financial assets and streamline operational efficiencies.

Goal 2: Improve teaching, elevate student learning, and boost research productivity while strategically leveraging resources to strengthen and promote the University's brand as a leader in technology and innovation.

Goal 3: Strengthen public and private partnership management and promote accessibility and transparency across all areas of the institution.

3. Academic and Industry Collaborative Partnerships

Kelli Stargel, AVP Strategic Relationships, presented the two goals for the third priority. They are as follows:

Goal 1: Formulate and execute a plan to establish a University Research Park and a Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, creating a hub for cutting-edge research, industry collaboration, and entrepreneurial development.

Goal 2: Strengthen industry collaboration across all divisions and strategically utilize the University's brand to foster impactful public and private partnerships that support educational excellence and the discovery, advancement, and application of knowledge in STEM.

D. Questions and Answers

David Fugett, Vice President and General Counsel, facilitated the question-and-answer portion of the meeting.

Trustee Dorian Abbot stated that the draft document is well-written. His primary feedback is to ensure both quantitative and qualitative metrics for success are built into the document. He provided three examples of initiatives that are too vague and how they could be improved. He also encouraged staff to think more about the statement on page 4 of the draft that reads, "Through these efforts, we are laying the groundwork for a future where Florida Poly is ranked as the top STEM university in the South..." Who is the University comparing itself to and what specific ranking is the administration trying to achieve? Trustee Abbot advised staff to go through each item and ensure there are metrics. President Stephenson pointed Trustee Abbot to the internal workbook which contains the metrics for each initiative under each goal.

Trustee Ilya Shapiro commented on the Mission statement where it says, "we serve students and industry." Do we also serve the development of new knowledge? Academia? The mission is tripartite, and we should consider including the development of new knowledge. Trustee Shapiro also asked if the Vision statement lacks a verb at the beginning of the statement. Brooks replied that it is an implied verb.

Trustee Shapiro recommended including a statement about developing a national brand at the bottom of page 7 so that the University becomes well-known across the country. He noted that "president's speaker series" should be capitalized.

Trustee Patrick Hagen reviewed minor scrivener's errors, including proper handling of acronyms.

Trustee Cliff Otto inquired if administration is committing to having a doctoral program by 2030. Brooks clarified it says "explore" but Trustee Otto replied that is too conservative. He believes the University should make that a priority by 2030. Provost Thiessen responded that four faculty Chairs are ready to begin a doctoral program. Market research is required, however, standing up a doctoral program within five years is achievable. President Stephenson pointed Trustee Otto to the internal tracking document where it states we will stand up a doctoral program by fall 2029.

Trustee Brad Towle inquired about Initiative 2.3 where it discusses expanding FIPR's research footprint. He asked if this includes research outside of the office of patent and technology and if the University can better align faculty research with FIPR. Fugett encouraged trustees to hold administration accountable to have a specific plan in one year. He shared that with the most recent patents filed, Florida Poly has become the standard across the state of Florida.

Trustee Taki Tsetsekas asked about Initiative 1.2 on the criteria for identifying research park mega partners. President Stephenson responded that there is one partner that administration has been vetting for over eight months. Criteria such as quality, sustainability, and the benefit they bring to our students and faculty are considered.

Chair Kigel noted that Priority 3's descriptor only mentions acquiring or developing current property, but nothing beyond that which includes academic or industry partners. These should be added along with a mention of Florida Poly's collaboration with other higher ed institutions.

Chair Kigel stated that the internal workbook has a lot of metrics and asked if the staff team felt they were manageable. President Stephenson responded that he believes they are ambitious but achievable.

XIII. Florida Poly and BOG Legislative Budget Requests (LBRs)

After a fifteen-minute break, Dr. Allen Bottorff, Vice President and CFO, reviewed both the University's Legislative Budget Request (LBR) and the BOG's request.

Florida Poly's LBR for FY25 is comprised of three primary requests, all of which are for recurring funding:

1. Student Recruitment to Elevate Enrollment: Appropriation in the amount of \$3.5M is being requested for personnel and operations to reach a goal of doubling enrollment to 3,000 FTE by 2030.
2. Student Success Enhancement: Appropriation in the amount of \$5M is being requested for personnel and operations with a goal of enhancing the quality of student success programs to attract top-tier students and faculty while also facilitating groundbreaking innovations and collaborative projects that drive technological advancement. Two desired outcomes directly affecting Florida Poly's PBF are increasing the academic progression rate from 70% to more than 80% over the course of two years and improving the four-year graduation rate from 40% to more than 50% over the course of the next three years.
3. Academic Program Innovation and Enhancement: Appropriation in the amount of \$13M is being requested for personnel and operations with a goal of enhancing its existing programs and developing new academic programs to produce highly competent graduates that meet the needs of Florida's innovation economy.
4. Public Education and Capital Outlay (PECO): Non-recurring appropriation in the amount of \$ 44.5M is being requested to fund the construction of the Student Achievement Center (SAC).

Bottorff then reviewed the LBR for the State University System (SUS). The SUS is requesting a beginning base of \$4.1M with additional performance incentives and other initiatives for a grand total of \$4.84M.

Legislative Plan and Advocacy

Kelli Stargel, AVP Strategic Relationships, presented the FY2025 Legislative Session goals and strategies which include setting intentional meetings with key legislative influencers, educating new members, and broadening support from the Governor's office and BOG. Stargel reviewed key dates during Session which includes Florida Poly Day at the Capitol March 19-20. She shared details of that day and encouraged all trustees to be there to participate.

Trustee Jesse Panuccio asked what the elevator pitch is for the \$44.5M to build the Student Achievement Center (SAC). Stargel responded the primary message is that the Institution is out of space for faculty, staff, and students. While academic buildings are being added, buildings that provide support services to students are desperately needed. Stargel will provide an updated talking points card for trustees to keep and use when the need arises.

Trustee Lyn Stanfield stated the SAC is about student engagement and retention. Stargel added that the University will need this additional space as we grow to 3,000 students.

XV. Closing Remarks and Adjournment

With no further business to discuss the meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Kristen J. Wharton
Corporate Secretary