



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Academic and Student Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes

May 28, 2025
9:00 – 10:00 A

Florida Polytechnic University
Virtual via Microsoft Teams

I. Call to Order

Committee Chair Sidney Theis called the Academic and Student Affairs Committee meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

II. Roll Call

Kristen Wharton called the roll: Committee Chair Sidney Theis, Trustee Colby Manrodt, Trustee Edwar Romero-Ramirez, Trustee Lyn Stanfield, Trustee Ilya Shapiro, and Trustee Dorian Abbot were present (Quorum)

Committee members not present: N/A

Other Trustees Present: Trustee Sam Neelam and Trustee Cliff Otto

Staff Present: President Devin Stephenson, Vice President and Provost Brad Thiessen, Dr. Allen Bottorff, Bryan Brooks, David Blanton, Cole Allen, Melaine Schmiz, Dr. Tom Dvorske, Dr. Jon Pawlecki, Kevin Calkins, and Kristen Wharton

III. Public Comment

There were no requests received for public comment.

IV. Approval of February 5, 2025, and April 24, 2025, Minutes

Trustee Ilya Shapiro motioned to approve the Academic and Student Affairs Committee meeting minutes of February 5, 2025, and April 24, 2025. Trustee Edwar Romero seconded the motion; a vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

V. 2024-2026 Academic and Student Affairs Committee Work Plan

Committee Chair Theis reviewed the Academic and Student Affairs Committee Work Plan. There was no discussion on this agenda item.

VI. Academic and Student Affairs

A. Student Affairs, Enrollment Management, and Strategic Communications Report

Vice President Bryan Brooks presented a report on spring semester activities which included the following: Career Fair, SGA elections, Family Day, Florida Poly Pi Run, Florida Poly Days at the Capitol, Osceola County Career Coaches' visit to campus, the first annual Scholarship Dinner, Polk County Principal's Day where over 50 principals toured the campus, production of a new Florida Poly commercial, IFF Grand Opening, the inaugural Dale Carnegie student training, spring concerts, and moonlight breakfast. Brooks also noted that the SGA allocated \$250k of their funds to the construction of the Student Achievement Center (StAC).

Brooks also shared current and favorable enrollment projections for fall 2025 and reviewed the phenomenal growth in the University's social media analytics. President Devin Stephenson commented that all these efforts are intentional and will grow the institution.

Trustee Ilya Shapiro asked whether the importance of attracting high-quality applicants has been clearly communicated to the Admissions staff. In response, Brooks explained that in past admissions cycles, the University used to defer student deposits, but this is no longer the case. The current Admissions team accepts deposits without deferrals, which may directly influence the projected enrollment increase for Fall 2025.

A. Academic Affairs

1. Academic Degree Programs for Consideration

Vice President and Provost Brad Thiessen presented a list of proposed academic degree programs for the Committee's consideration. He noted that state regulations require the Board of Trustees to review potential future degree offerings each year. Thiessen shared a list of 11 programs under consideration, along with information on which other State University System (SUS) institutions currently offer them.

Trustee Shapiro asked whether the high number of universities offering biomedical degrees suggests that Florida Poly should instead focus on areas where it could be a market leader, rather than entering a highly competitive space. Thiessen noted that pursuing a biomedical degree might still be worthwhile if the University can offer a unique approach or secure an industry partner. He outlined the next steps: conducting market research to assess employment demand, student interest, and alignment with existing programs. This analysis will help narrow down the list, with the goal of identifying approximately three programs to move forward with.

2. Amendments to Florida Polytechnic University's 2025 Accountability Plan

Thiessen explained that since the Committee's April 24 meeting, his team has conducted a more in-depth analysis of the relevant data. After discussions with Board of Governors (BOG) staff, they mutually agreed to raise the short- to mid-term targets for three key performance metrics:

Metric 1: Percentage of bachelor's graduates employed or enrolled in further education earning \$40,000 or more,

Metric 4: the four-year graduation rate for first-time-in-college (FTIC) students, and

Metric 5: academic progress rate

Committee Chair Theis asked about the consequences of not meeting these revised goals. Thiessen responded that if the targets are not met, the goals would likely be adjusted downward in the following year.

Trustee Lyn Stanfield motioned to recommend to the Board of Trustees approval of Florida Polytechnic University's 2025 Accountability Plan with amendments made to goals for Performance-Based Funding metrics 1, 4, and 5. Trustee Ilya Shapiro seconded the motion; a vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

3. General Education Courses for 2026-27

Thiessen presented a proposed list of general education courses for the 2026–2027 academic year, which must be approved by the Board of Governors (BOG) by December 1. The list includes 33 courses, with the recent addition of *PHY2053: Algebra-Based Physics* and its associated lab. Thiessen also encouraged the Board to consider including institutional courses such as *Legal and Ethical Management Issues in Technology* and *Principles of Microeconomics*.

Trustee Lyn Stanfield asked whether the list represents the full set of general education offerings. Thiessen confirmed that it does. She then raised a concern about the potential impact of rising enrollment—specifically, whether it could lead to an excessive number of general education courses or larger class sizes. Thiessen responded that the University can offer multiple sections of the same course to accommodate demand. While most general education classes are capped at 30 students, some first-year courses may have up to 48. He emphasized the need to adjust offerings as enrollment grows to maintain manageable class sizes, track student progress, and ensure adequate section availability.

In response to the addition of an algebra-based physics course, Trustee Stanfield also asked how the University plans to support first-time-in-college (FTIC) students to help them succeed. Thiessen outlined several initiatives, including 24/7 tutoring through Knack, maintaining smaller class sizes, and enhancing instructional quality through the University's new Teaching and Learning Center, which will support faculty development.

Trustee Lyn Stanfield motioned to recommend to the Board of Trustees approval of Florida Polytechnic University's 2026-27 General Education Course List. Trustee Edwar Romero seconded the motion; a vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Closing Remarks and Adjournment

With no further business to discuss the meeting adjourned at 9:51 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:
Kristen J. Wharton
Corporate Secretary