



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Academic Enterprise, Research, and Student Success Committee **DRAFT** Meeting Minutes

May 21, 2026
3:00 – 3:45 P

Florida Polytechnic University
Barnett Applied Research Center (BARC) 2200
Virtual via Microsoft Teams

I. Call to Order

Committee Chair Sidney Theis called the Academic and Student Affairs Committee meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Kristen Wharton called the roll: Committee Chair Sidney Theis, Vice Chair Patrick Hagen, Trustee Sumanth Neelam, Trustee Christie Bassett, Trustee Colby Manrodt, and Trustee Derek Henderson were present (Quorum)

Committee members not present: N/A

Other Trustees Present: Board Chair Beth Kigel, Trustee Rob Kincart, Trustee Jeff Beelaert, Trustee Jack Harrell III, Trustee Ilya Shapiro

Staff Present: President Devin Stephenson, Provost Brad Thiessen, Dr. Tanner McKnight, Bryan Brooks, David Blanton, Cole Allen, Kelli Stargel, Katie Daniel, 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 6, 2026, Minutes

Trustee Patrick Hagen motioned to approve the Academic Enterprise, Research, and Student Success Committee meeting minutes of February 6, 2026. Trustee Christie Bassett 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 Strategic Initiatives and External Relations Committee Work Plan. There was no discussion on this item.

VI. 2027-28 General Education Course List

Dr. Brad Thiessen, Vice President and Provost, presented the proposed General Education course list for the 2027-2028 academic year. Final approval is required by the Board of Trustees by September 1st to meet state deadlines. Courses must meet criteria regarding academic competency, critical thinking, and factual historical content.

Thiessen stated that the University currently offers thirty-four approved courses. He proposed adding nine new courses and five associated labs, including:

- Humanities/Communication: Creative Writing and Introduction to the Novel
- Math: Business Calculus (supporting Data Science and Business Analytics)
- Natural Sciences: Anatomy, Physiology, Chemistry 2, and Organic Chemistry 1 & 2 (supporting the new Biomedical Sciences program)
- Social Science: Civil Discourse (as an option for civic literacy)

Trustee Sumanth Neelam motioned to recommend to the Board of Trustees approval of Florida Polytechnic University's 2027-28 General Education Course List. Trustee Derek Henderson seconded the motion; a vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

VII. New Academic Degree Programs for Consideration

Dr. Thiessen shared that the University is exploring twelve new Bachelor's degrees (including Interdisciplinary Engineering and Aerospace), three Master's programs (AI and Robotics, Scientific Communication, and Civil/Environmental Engineering), and a Doctoral program in Advanced Manufacturing. Additionally, the University is investigating 90–120 credit hour degrees (e.g., in Cybersecurity or Construction Management) pending Board of Governors (BOG) regulation amendments. These reduced credit hour degrees will still fulfill all state general education and civil literacy requirements.

As a point of information, Thiessen provided an accreditation update. The transition from SACSCOC to HLC is on track, with a comprehensive evaluation due in January. The University is also working with the newly formed accreditor (CPHE) and expects a decision by October.

Trustee Neelam inquired further about reduced credit hour programs. Thiessen responded that the status of reduced credit hour programs remains pending as the Board of Governors reviews a proposed regulation amendment in June. If approved, these programs would require explicit Board of Governors' authorization and specialized naming conventions. The University would be required to provide students with transparent disclosures regarding employment outcomes and the transferability of credits to graduate programs.

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

Vice President Bryan Brooks reported on the University's record-breaking enrollment and recruitment cycle. Current net deposits stand at 983, a significant increase year-over-year from last year's 758. Total applications reached 5,602, far exceeding the goal of 5,000. Housing is reaching capacity, and a waiting list has been initiated for the fall.

Brooks also highlighted the recruitment of championship-winning coaches for Florida Poly's new athletic programs and noted that the first soccer match against New College of Florida is scheduled for August 29th.

IX. Closing Remarks and Adjournment

With no further business to discuss the meeting adjourned at 3:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Kristen J. Wharton
Corporate Secretary

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