



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

# Strategic Initiatives and External Relations Committee Meeting Agenda

**May 22, 2026**  
**9:45 AM – 10:30 AM**

*OR Upon the Conclusion of the Governance, Audit, and Compliance Committee Meeting*

**Barnett Applied Research Center (BARC) Room 2200 and  
Virtual via Microsoft Teams**

**Dial in: 1-863-225-2351 | Conference ID: 631 490 822#**

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Beth Kigel, Chair  
Eliot Peace

Sumanth Neelam, Vice Chair  
Colby Manrodt

Jesse Panuccio  
Rob Kincart

## MEETING AGENDA

- |       |  |  |
|-------|--|--|
| I.    | Call to Order  | Beth Kigel, Chair  |
| II.   | Roll Call  | Kristen Wharton,<br>Corporate Secretary  |
| III.  | Public Comment   | Beth Kigel   |
| IV.   | <a href="#">Approval of the November 10, 2025, Minutes</a><br><i>*Action Required*</i> | Beth Kigel   |
| V.    | <a href="#">2025-2026 Strategic Initiatives and External Relations Work Plan</a>       | Beth Kigel   |
| VI.   | <a href="#">External Relations and Economic Development</a>                            | Kelli Stargel<br>Vice President,<br>Strategic Initiatives,<br>Development, &<br>External Relations |
| VII.  | <a href="#">International Relations</a>  | Mustapha Achoubane<br>Senior Global Affairs<br>Officer   |
| VIII. | Closing Remarks and Adjournment  | Beth Kigel   |



## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

# Strategic Initiatives and External Relations **DRAFT** Meeting Minutes

November 10, 2025  
11:00 A – 11:45 A

Florida Polytechnic University  
Virtual via Microsoft Teams

### I. Call to Order

Committee Chair Beth Kigel called the Strategic Initiatives and External Relations Committee meeting to order at 11:01 a.m.

### II. Roll Call

Kristen Wharton called the roll: Committee Chair Beth Kigel, Committee Vice Chair Sumanth Neelam, Trustee Eliot Peace, Trustee Colby Manrodt, and Trustee Jesse Panuccio were present (Quorum).

Committee members not present: n/a

Other Trustees Present: Trustee Sid Theis

Staff Present: Provost Brad Thiessen, Dr. Tanner McKnight, David Blanton, Cole Allen, Kelli Stargel, Joshua Millican, and Kristen Wharton

### III. Public Comment

There were no requests received for public comment.

### IV. Approval of the September 18, 2025, Minutes

**Trustee Colby Manrodt made a motion to approve the Strategic Initiatives and External Relations Committee meeting minutes for September 18, 2025. Trustee Jesse Panuccio seconded the motion; a vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.**

### V. 2025-2026 Strategic Initiatives and External Relations Work Plan

Committee Chair Kigel reviewed the Strategic Initiatives and External Relations Committee Work Plan. There was no discussion on this item.

### VI. External Relations and Economic Development

Vice President Kelli Stargel briefed the Committee on the University's engagement levels with corporate and industry partners: partnership, engagement, exploration, and introduction. She also announced a new initial level of engagement, "pursuing," for organizations at the earliest stage of relationship development. Stargel then provided updates on current partnerships.

Chair Beth Kigel noted that one company had been referred to Florida Poly by Florida Commerce, which—along with Select Florida—continues to keep the University top of mind for collaborative opportunities. She added that the upcoming Board Retreat will help shape priorities and identify which industry partners the University should actively pursue.

Stargel concluded with an overview of additional companies currently engaged with Florida Poly, as well as those in the exploration, introduction, and pursuing stages.

## VII. Government Relations

Committee Chair Kigel prefaced Stargel’s presentation by noting that the Florida Legislature is currently in Committee Weeks in Tallahassee, with Session scheduled to begin on January 13, 2026.

Stargel outlined the ongoing work of her team during Committee Weeks and provided an update on the University’s Legislative Budget Request (LBR). She reported that Senator Burton will shepherd both of Florida Poly’s legislative budget requests through the Senate, while Representative Canady will present the operational request and Representative Tomkow will present the Student Achievement Center (StAC) request in the House. Stargel noted that talking points will be provided to each trustee, and her team can schedule legislative appointments for anyone planning to be in Tallahassee in the coming months.

While no date has been set for Florida Poly Day at the Capitol, Stargel aims to hold the event early in Session. Potential dates will be shared with trustees interested in participating. Chair Kigel asked about the funding outlook for the coming year. Stargel responded that the Legislature intends to reduce the state budget by \$2 billion, signaling a potentially tight budget year.

Vice Chair Jesse Panuccio encouraged continuing to make the full request for the University’s needs while also beginning conversations about longer-term priorities for the coming years. Chair Kigel emphasized the importance of demonstrating return on investment and outcomes. She suggested that Stargel’s team invite companies, industry partners, and Foundation Board Directors who may be willing to advocate alongside the University and the Board of Trustees.

**Federal Update:** Congressman Franklin has submitted a funding request for Florida Poly to establish a Public Service Applied Innovation Laboratory (PSAIL). The program would support the creation of a high-impact experiential learning initiative focused on cybersecurity and artificial intelligence (AI). Stargel is awaiting final confirmation from the Congressman’s office regarding the request.

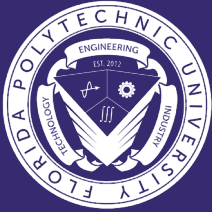
## VIII. Closing Remarks and Adjournment

With no further business to discuss the meeting adjourned at 11:36 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Kristen Wharton

Corporate Secretary to the Board of Trustees



# Committee Work Plan

## Strategic Initiatives and External Relations Committee Work Plan 2025-2026

### SEPTEMBER

- Strategic Initiatives and External Relations Committee Charter (*review and approve every two years*)
- Strategic Initiatives
  - Receive updates on university strategic plan initiatives related to external relations
- External Relations and Economic Development
  - Review progress on key industry partnerships and identify opportunities for expansion
- Government Relations
  - Preview state and federal legislative and funding priorities for the upcoming sessions

### NOVEMBER

- External Relations and Economic Development
  - Status report on corporate and industry partnerships, and economic development involvement
- Government Relations
  - Report status of legislative committee meetings
  - Review updates on federal funding requests and appropriations process

### FEBRUARY

- Strategic Initiatives
  - Review University initiatives with significant external impact (e.g., research park collaborations, possible program funding)
- External Relations and Economic Development
  - Discuss advancement of new partnerships and external collaborations
- Government Relations
  - Assess progress in the legislative session (state and federal)
  - Review alignment of funding results with the university strategic priorities

### JUNE

- Strategic Initiatives
  - Conduct an annual review of committee performance against the work plan
  - Recommend updates and goals for the next academic year
- Government Relations
  - Final report on state legislative session outcomes
  - Receive update on federal appropriations and grants status
  - Discuss future goals
- External Relations and Economic Development
  - Review fiscal year outcomes for partnerships and set priorities for the coming year

**Florida Polytechnic University  
Strategic Initiatives and External Relations Committee  
Board of Trustees  
May 22, 2026**

**Subject: External Relations and Economic Development**

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**Proposed Committee Action**

Information only – no action required.

**Background Information**

Kelli Stargel will deliver a strategic update on our corporate and industry engagement lifecycle, highlighting key milestones in current partnerships. She will also share information on the University's ongoing involvement in the economic development landscape.

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**Supporting Documentation:** N/A

**Prepared by:** Kelli Stargel, Vice President, Strategic Initiatives, Development, and External Relations

**Florida Polytechnic University  
Strategic Initiatives and External Relations Committee  
Board of Trustees  
May 22, 2026**

**Subject: International Relations**

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**Proposed Committee Action**

Information only – no action required.

**Background Information**

Mustapha Achoubane, Senior Global Affairs Officer, will brief the Board on the progress of Florida Poly's global outreach efforts. The presentation will include a summary of recent diplomatic hosting and international delegation visits, as well as an assessment of how these opportunities expand the University's global collaborations and strategic initiatives.

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**Supporting Documentation:** N/A

**Prepared by:** Kelli Stargel, Vice President, Strategic Initiatives, Development, and External Relations