



**Full Board**  
**April 25, 2024**  
**FIU, Biscayne Bay Campus, Wolfe University Center, room 221**

**MINUTES**

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**1. Call to Order and Chair's Remarks**

Board Chair Roger Tovar convened the meeting of the Florida International University Board of Trustees at 12:12 PM on Thursday, April 25, 2024.

General Counsel Carlos B. Castillo conducted roll call of the Florida International University Board of Trustees and verified a quorum. Present were Roger Tovar, *Board Chair*; Carlos A. Duarte, *Board Vice Chair*; Cesar L. Alvarez; Noël C. Barengo; Dean C. Colson; Alan Gonzalez; Francis A. Hondal; Natasha Lowell; Yaffa Popack (*Zoom*); Gene Prescott; Chanel T. Rowe (*Zoom*); and Alexander P. Sutton.

Trustee Marc D. Sarnoff was excused.

Board Chair Tovar welcomed all Trustees, members of the University administration, and the University community. He also welcomed incoming Student Government President and student representative on the Board, Francesca Casanova who will begin her term on May 6, 2024. Board Chair Tovar also welcomed and commended cancer researcher Dr. Diana Azzam. He added that the groundbreaking treatment approach that Dr. Azzam is pioneering delivers faster results and more treatment options for doctors.

Board Chair Tovar stated that FIU Law graduates earned the highest first-time Florida bar passage rate among all Florida law schools on the exam administered in February. He noted that with a first-time passage rate of 82.6%, FIU Law surpassed the statewide average passage rate for accredited schools in Florida by 28.6 percentage points. Board Chair Tovar pointed out that the Florida Board of Governors will not be holding a Trustee Summit in 2024. He commented on important changes relating to the Florida Commission on Ethics annual financial disclosure process. He explained that beginning with the 2023 form year, which is filed in 2024, Form 1 - Statement of Financial Interests, must be filed electronically.

Board Chair Tovar mentioned that Women's Basketball finished the season with a 21-12 record and tied for second place in Conference USA (CUSA). Board Chair Tovar commented that Women's Tennis hosted and won the CUSA Championship for the second year in a row. He added that for the second straight year and thirteenth time in program history, the Panthers will be in the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) Tournament as the automatic bid from CUSA. Board Chair Tovar stated that the newly completed Sergio Lemme-PayCargo Tennis Center is a rebuild of six lighted asphalt tennis courts, with covered seating and scoreboard. He indicated that Women's

Beach Volleyball is currently ranked #14 with a 20-9 record and secured the second seed in the CUSA Tournament. He remarked that FIU Baseball currently has a 23-17 record and is in second place in CUSA. Board Chair Tovar added that senior Armando Becerra was named Conference USA Hitter of the Week and overall, had nine hits, nine runs batted in (RBI), three Home Runs, two doubles and one triple in the weekend sweep vs. New Mexico State. Board Chair Tovar noted that the Hydrotherapy room has been completely renovated with state-of-the-art Grimm Cryotherm Hydrotherapy pools for treating multiple athletes whole-body and extremity immersions.

Board Chair Tovar recognized Trustee Alexander P. Sutton's service on the Board, which concludes on May 6, 2024.

## **2. Public Appearances**

At the request of Board Chair Tovar, General Counsel Castillo addressed the public appearance requests. General Counsel Castillo explained that Section 9 of the Board of Trustees Bylaws governs public appearances before the Board of Trustees and sets forth registration procedures, time limits for speakers, and rules of decorum. He provided an overview of the rules of decorum. General Counsel Castillo commented that, pursuant to Section 9.1 of the Bylaws, a person who desires to be heard on a matter before the Board must register by 11:00 AM on the business day before the subject meeting by completing a public comment form. General Counsel Castillo indicated that as of 11:00 AM on Wednesday, April 25, 2024, two requests to address the Board were received. General Counsel Castillo proceeded to call the registered speakers by name. The following individual addressed the Board after his name was called:

- Brian Levine, alumnus and former member of student government and the Bayview Housing Council, acknowledged that despite challenges related to the pandemic, the Biscayne Bay Campus has begun to experience growth in terms of students living on campus and participating in on-campus events. He added that the Biscayne Bay Campus has untapped potential.

Board Chair Tovar thanked the speaker for his comments.

## **3. Foundation Report**

FIU Foundation Inc. Board of Directors Chair Adalio T. Sanchez commented on major priorities, including the hiring and onboarding of the Foundation's CEO, team retooling, enhancing processes and transparency, and maintaining momentum and enhancing fundraising. Chair Sanchez indicated that the Foundation Board welcomed Hugo Manuel Mantilla and Carlos Anthony Somoza, Esq. '93 as new members. Chair Sanchez commented on the second annual FIU Alumni Board of Directors D.C. fly-in. He indicated that fiscal year to-date, \$46.3M was raised towards the goal of \$83M. He added that major gift proposals which have already been delivered total \$38M with an additional \$9M in gift proposals anticipated to be delivered by the end of the fiscal year. Chair Sanchez commented on the current state of transition within University Advancement and presented an action plan, which addresses staffing, policy and procedures, and strategic planning for the future. He pointed out that for the eight months ended February 29, 2024, philanthropy totaled \$36M and of that, \$24.7M was received in cash. He indicated that as of February 29, 2024, the Foundation's total investment portfolio stands at approximately \$451.5M and on a fiscal-year-to-date basis, the

Total Managed Assets returned 7.87% net of fees. He noted that the performance of the FIU Foundation investment portfolio is well above the median of its peers on a one-, three-, five-, and ten-year basis.

#### **4. President's Report**

University President Kenneth A. Jessell introduced Dr. Azzam.

Dr. Azzam commented that she and her team are the first to demonstrate that functional precision medicine could be used to find effective treatment options for children even after standard treatments fail. She added that the publication of this approach in *Nature Medicine* is proof of principle and demonstrates that this approach can be used to offer treatment options for children and adult cancer patients who are running out of options. Dr. Azzam stated that while there are two ongoing clinical trials that can help a few patients, the goal is to be able to make said treatment accessible to any patient that needs personalized treatment options. She noted that her lab received a \$2M appropriation from the State of Florida to purchase the necessary robotic instrumentation. She remarked on working towards obtaining Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) certification, which will provide the foundation for U.S. Food and Drug Administration approval. In response to Trustee Dean C. Colson, Dr. Azzam indicated that upon receiving CLIA certification, the program would need \$5M to \$10M to scale up and purchase additional robotic arms, which could expand the reach of patients that can be helped. Senior Vice President for Research and Economic Development and Dean of the University Graduate School, Andres G. Gil commented on working with the University's governmental relations team to secure more government funding for the purchase of additional robotic arms. Sr. VP Gil added that Dr. Azzam also has a National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant under review. In response to Board Vice Chair Carlos A. Duarte, Sr. VP Gil stated that there is a provisional patent in place.

President Jessell stated that in March 2024, FIU hosted Florida Secretary of Commerce, Alex Kelly, Florida Agency for Health Care Administration Secretary, Jason Weida, as well as Lieutenant Governor Jeannette Nunez. President Jessell also commented on the visit from the President of Argentina, Javier Milei. President Jessell remarked that the University recently honored its top student employees. He stated that Relay for Life, benefiting the American Cancer Society, raised over \$40,000 and celebrated the 20th anniversary of the event on campus. He added that the Out of the Darkness Walk, benefiting the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, raised over \$33,000. President Jessell remarked on admitted student days at the Biscayne Bay and Modesto A. Maidique campuses. He indicated that on April 28, 2024, FIU will kick off five days of commencement ceremonies for spring 2024 graduates.

#### **5. Action Items – Consent Agenda**

Board Chair Tovar indicated that, in addition to Full Board minutes, the Consent Agenda includes action items FF2, recommended for Board approval by the Finance and Facilities Committee and G1 and G2 recommended for Board approval by the Governance Committee.

A motion was made and unanimously passed to accept the Consent Agenda, and members of the Board approved the following actions:

- **BT1. Minutes, February 29, 2024** - Approval of Minutes of the FIU Board of Trustees, Full Board meeting held on February 29, 2024.
- **FF2. Update Regarding Previously Approved Student Residence Facility Program and Total Project Cost at Modesto A. Maidique Campus** - Delegation to Board Chair and Vice Chair to finalize the student residence facility programming (e.g., number of beds), total project cost, resubmit all required documentation to the Florida Board of Governors and Division of Bond Finance, and execute all required documents associated with the student residence facility on behalf of the FIU Board of Trustees.
- **G1. Board Appointments, Florida International University Foundation, Inc.** - Approval of the appointments of the individuals listed in the board materials to the Florida International University Foundation, Inc. Board of Directors.
- **G2. Exclusion of the FIU Board of Trustees Corporate Secretary** - Adoption of a Resolution excluding the FIU Board of Trustees Corporate Secretary from the requirements for a personnel security clearance.

## 6. Action Items

### **FF1. Renewal of Naming of FIU Arena as the “Ocean Bank Convocation Center”**

There were no further questions from the Trustees.

A motion was made and unanimously passed that the FIU Board of Trustees approve the renewal of the existing naming of the FIU Arena, as the “Ocean Bank Convocation Center,” in accordance with a separate gift and naming rights agreement related thereto and the University’s and the FIU Foundation, Inc.’s Donative Naming Policy.

### **SP1. Florida International University Annual Accountability Plan, 2024**

Strategic Planning Committee Vice Chair Francis A. Hondal noted that the Strategic Planning Committee engaged in a thorough review of FIU’s 2024 Accountability Plan. There were no further questions from the Trustees.

A motion was made and unanimously passed that the FIU Board of Trustees (1) approve Florida International University’s Annual Accountability Plan as provided in the Board materials and (2) delegate authority to the University President to perform finish editing as needed and to amend consistent with comments received from the Board of Governors.

## 7. Status Reports, Board Committees

Board Chair Tovar mentioned that the following Committees met earlier in the day: Finance and Facilities; Strategic Planning; External Relations; and Governance.

### **Finance and Facilities Committee Report**

Board Vice Chair Duart, Finance and Facilities Committee Chair, provided highlights from the Finance and Facilities Committee’s meeting earlier in the day. He indicated that, in addition to the item approved as part of the Consent Agenda, the Committee also reviewed and approved the

renewal of the EdFinancial Services piggyback agreement for student financial aid call center services. He added that the renewal, which is amendment three, is for a term beginning July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025. Board Vice Chair Duart indicated that the total estimated cost from the initial term, which began July 1, 2022 through the potential fourth amendment ending June 30, 2026 is \$1.5M. He commented that Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration and Chief Financial Officer Aime Martinez presented the final audited financial statements for the University and direct support organizations issued by the State of Florida Auditor General for the fiscal year ending on June 30, 2023. Board Vice Chair Duart indicated that the auditors did not identify any deficiencies in internal control over financial reporting considered to be a material weakness or any instances of non-compliance or other matters required to be reported under Government Auditing Standards.

### **Strategic Planning Committee Report**

Trustee Hondal provided highlights from the Strategic Planning Committee's meeting earlier in the day. She commented that Provost and Executive Vice President Elizabeth M. Bejar provided updates regarding the 2030 strategic planning process. Trustee Hondal stated that Trustee Natasha Lowell provided an update on the Campus Master Plan and encouraged Trustees to attend the upcoming May 6, 2024 meeting of the Campus Master Plan Ad Hoc Committee. Trustee Hondal noted that Trustee Alexander P. Sutton provided a student government update.

### **External Relations Committee Report**

Trustee Hondal, Chair of the External Relations Committee, provided highlights from the External Relations Committee's meeting earlier in the day. She commented that Senior Vice President for Strategic Communications, Government and External Affairs Michelle L. Palacio reported on the ongoing reputation and rankings marketing campaign. Trustee Hondal mentioned that Sr. VP Palacio shared updates on the University's investments, partnerships, and accomplishment related to the strategic communications and marketing during the 2023-24 academic year and shared initial plans related to the 2024-25 academic year. Trustee Hondal stated that Sr. VP Palacio also shared videos, advertisements, sponsorships, magazine articles, and billboards around Miami which have continued focus on reinforcing and supporting the FIU preeminent mindset. Trustee Hondal indicated that Sr. VP Palacio also commented on recent successes in Tallahassee and at FIU in D.C.

### **Governance Committee Report**

Board Chair Tovar provided highlights from the Governance Committee's meeting earlier in the day.

### **8. New Business**

Trustee Sutton stated that the other registered speaker, Karina Hernandez, was not able to arrive in time to address the Board during the public comment period. Board Chair Tovar invited Ms. Hernandez to address the Board.

- Karina Hernandez, climate action advocate and member of the Student Government Association (SGA), commented on the recently passed SGA Resolution relating to a sustainability and environmental resilience action plan. She requested that the FIU Board of Trustees consider integrating said plan to the University's strategic plan.

**9. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment**

With no other business, Board Chair Roger Tovar adjourned the meeting of the Florida International University Board of Trustees Full Board on Thursday, April 25, 2024, at 1:14 PM.