



**Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee**  
**February 29, 2024**  
**FIU, Modesto A. Maidique Campus, Graham Center Ballrooms**

**MINUTES**

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

The Florida International University Board of Trustees' Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee meeting was called to order by Committee Vice Chair Dean C. Colson on Thursday, February 29, 2024, at 12:01 PM.

General Counsel Carlos B. Castillo conducted roll call of the Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee members and verified a quorum. Present were Trustees Dean C. Colson, *Committee Vice Chair*; Cesar L. Alvarez; Noël C. Barengo; Yaffa Popack; Alexander P. Sutton; and Roger Tovar, *Board Chair and Athletics Liaison*.

Trustees Natasha Lowell, *Committee Chair*; and Marc D. Sarnoff were excused.

The following Board members were also in attendance: Board Vice Chair Carlos A. Duarte, and Trustees, Francis A. Hondal, and Gene Prescott.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

Committee Vice Chair Colson asked if there were any changes or corrections to the minutes of the Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee meeting held on December 7, 2023. Hearing none, a motion was made and unanimously passed to approve the minutes of the Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee meeting held on December 7, 2023.

**3. Action Items**

**AP1. Tenure as a Condition of Employment**

Provost and Executive Vice President Elizabeth M. Bejar explained that Tenure as a Condition of Employment (TACOE) is reserved for individuals who have achieved highly prestigious academic careers prior to their becoming FIU faculty. She added that TACOE candidates have either received or are eligible for tenure at their previous institution. She indicated that, at the time of hire, the faculty candidate understands the expectation that the tenure and rank appointment will be granted upon review of the candidate's materials by the department, the college, the Provost, the President and Board of Trustees. She mentioned that the FIU department and college have vetted the scholarly qualifications and completed the required expedited tenure review for the candidate, Dr. Adam Carrico.

Provost Bejar explained that Dr. Adam Carrico will be joining the Robert Stempel College of Public Health and Social Work Department of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention as a

professor. She noted that Dr. Carrico is a leading expert in behavioral interventions for human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) prevention and studies the overlapping epidemics of stimulant use and HIV/AIDS. Provost Bejar added that he has secured extensive National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding, with several funded projects as principal investigator with total costs exceeding \$32M for the American Transformative HIV Study. She mentioned that Dr. Carrico has received three (3) new awards since joining FIU and has published extensively in prestigious journals in his field. Provost Bejar added that he has led several key institutional and community initiatives around public health and HIV/AIDS prevention. She noted that Dr. Carrico is active in his service to the profession and is a grant reviewer for the NIH.

A motion was made and unanimously passed that the Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee recommend that the FIU Board of Trustees approve of the candidate Adam Carrico for Tenure as a Condition of Employment as specified in the Board materials.

**AP2. Program Termination: Bachelor of Science in Physical Education**

**AP3. Program Termination: Master of Science in International and Intercultural Education**

**AP4. Program Termination: Master of Science in Urban Education**

Committee Vice Chair Colson asked if Committee members required explanation or discussion regarding the proposed program terminations. There were no questions or comments from the Committee members.

A motion was made and unanimously passed that the FIU Board of Trustees Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee recommend that the FIU Board of Trustees approve the termination of the Bachelor of Science in Physical Education, Master of Science in International and Intercultural Education, and Master of Science in Urban Education.

**AP5. New Program Proposal: Bachelor of Science in Data Science and Artificial Intelligence**

Provost Bejar explained that faculty in the College of Engineering and Computing (CEC), Knight Foundation School of Computing and Information Sciences (KFSCIS) propose the implementation of a new Bachelor of Science degree in Data Science and Artificial Intelligence. She added that the proposed degree will respond to the increasing workforce demand for skilled professionals who are equipped to lead in several fields, including data analysis, machine learning, and business intelligence. She mentioned that the growth of the digital economy has resulted in a critical need for skilled data professionals, and that data scientists are increasingly sought after to fill lucrative positions across a variety of sectors. She added that the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects the occupation of data scientist to grow by 36% nationwide between the years of 2021 and 2031. Provost Bejar noted that the proposed Bachelor of Science in Data Science and Artificial Intelligence will provide students with foundational knowledge and skills required to meet workforce demand across a variety of sectors, including healthcare, technology, finance, manufacturing, and e-commerce. Provost Bejar acknowledged members of the College of Engineering and Computing Knight School of Computing and Information Sciences leadership who were in attendance at the meeting. She recognized Ines Triay, Interim Dean, CEC; Mark Weiss, Interim Vice Dean, CEC; Trevor Cickovski, Associate Director of KFSCIS; and Greg Murad Reis, Assistant Teaching Professor at KFSCIS and researcher at the Institute of Environment who authored the program proposal.

Trustee Francis A. Hondal commented on the potential to initiate corporate partnerships with programs such as the Bachelor of Science in Data Science and Artificial Intelligence. She inquired about whether there are corporate partnerships with the newly proposed degree program in motion. Provost Bejar explained that there have been discussions regarding the incorporation of such partnerships to ensure that there are intentionally curated experiences for the students. She noted the piloting of the “inclusive computing programs” wherein elements of computer science are integrated into degree programs of various disciplines. Provost Bejar added that FIU is working with corporations of different scales and sectors to ensure that there is a variety of opportunities for students to engage with corporations.

A motion was made and unanimously passed that the Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee recommend that the FIU Board of Trustees approve the New Program Proposal: Bachelor of Science in Data Science and Artificial Intelligence.

#### **AP6. Updated Senior Management Official, Continued Exclusions of Trustees other than the Board Chair and Continued Delegation to the Key Management Personnel**

Committee Vice Chair Colson asked if there were any questions regarding the Updated Senior Management Official, Continued Exclusions of Trustees other than the Board Chair and Continued Delegation to the Key Management Personnel. Hearing none, a motion was made and unanimously passed to recommend that the Florida International University Board of Trustees adopt a Resolution (a) updating the designation of the Senior Management Official for FIU’s facility clearance; and (b) continuing to: (i) exclude all Trustees except for the Chair of the Board of Trustees from the requirements for a personnel security clearance and (ii) delegate to the Key Management Personnel certain responsibilities and authorities pursuant to 32 CFR Part 117, National Industrial Security Program Operating Manual.

### **4. Discussion Items**

#### **4.1 Strategic Plan and Campus Master Plan Updates**

Provost Bejar shared the Strategic Plan 2023 timeline and explained that ten (10) listening sessions were scheduled with nine (9) having been conducted. She added that over 1,500 participants registered to attend, with approximately 800 attendees participating across the nine (9) listening sessions. She mentioned that the next stage includes visioning sessions with areas of focus in environment and environmental resilience, health, and technology and innovation. Provost Bejar added that there are efforts underway to schedule a workshop prior to the next regularly scheduled Board of Trustees meetings on April 25, 2024, to explore the 2030 Strategic Plan in depth. She highlighted the pillar committee leadership; including six (6) co-chairs who are leading a group of 52 members from across the University landscape. She mentioned their role in bringing forward the goals of the strategic plan to university senior leadership.

Committee Vice Chair Colson asked about how additional funding from the State Legislature fits into the strategic planning process. Provost Bejar explained that the mission is the focus of the process, noting that senior leadership does not want to be limited by funding when thinking about areas of innovation and technology. She added that the five-year strategic plan sets the foundation for the next 50 years. University President Kenneth A. Jessell concurred and added that the University leadership wants to ensure that funding is aligned with the strategic objectives of the

University. He noted that FIU is a university of first choice for many individuals and mentioned that the largest freshman class was admitted to FIU in 2023. He assured that there will be transparency with funding allocations and ensuring that investments are consistent with the strategic plan. In response to Vice Chair Colson's inquiry, President Jessell advised that there have been workshops about the campus master plan and that it must be aligned with the strategic plan. Board Chair Roger Tovar asked that the strategic planning committee members engage in the investment of funds that are obtained from the legislative session. President Jessell added that there is a focus on environment and environmental resilience, health and innovation and technology throughout the strategic planning process and that it has been a collaborative process with the students, faculty, staff and stakeholders. Board Chair Tovar pointed out that hiring professors like Dr. Adam Carrico is a testament to the success of FIU. He added that there should be a balanced approach and a continued elevation of the University. President Jessell mentioned that the partnership between FIU and Baptist and the symposium of national leaders in health at FIU in Washington, D.C. demonstrate the recent accomplishments of FIU. Trustee Hondal emphasized the importance of understanding the overarching strategic plan in conjunction with the campus master plan. Committee Vice Chair Colson added that FIU is located in a growing, fast-paced city and encouraged the FIU administration to be prepared for opportunities that might be presented to the University within the next five (5) years. Provost Bejar advised that a Strategic Planning Committee workshop will be held on March 20, 2024.

Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration and Chief Financial Officer Aime Martinez provided an update on the 2015-2030 Campus Master Plan process. She advised that there will be a meeting of the Campus Master Plan Ad Hoc Committee on March 7, 2024, and that all trustees are invited to attend. She added that the meeting will consist of an update on the land use and development plans the Modesto A. Maidique Campus (MMC), Biscayne Bay Campus (BBC) and Engineering Center (EC). Sr. VP and CFO Martinez advised that there will be a more in-depth discussion on the plan for MMC. She provided an overview of the timeline including the advertising period scheduled for March 10, 2024, public hearings to be held on March 21 & 22, 2024, and a public comment period scheduled for March 22 – June 22, 2024. She also noted that there will be a second comment period and that these steps are to take place prior to projected Board of Trustees approval by September 12, 2024. She added that upon Board of Trustees approval the negotiation of the Campus Development Agreement (CDA) will begin with the City of North Miami for BBC and Miami-Dade County for MMC and EC.

Committee Vice Chair Colson shared a concern about bringing forward the master plan for Board of Trustees review and approval between August 15 – September 12, 2024, and then needing further revisions. Provost Bejar explained that the Campus Master Plan Ad Hoc committee is comprised of trustees and University administration and has met twice. Board Chair Tovar added that there are no significant changes in the master plan that have been developed through the process. President Jessell commented that the University administration is proud to have had so much involvement from the Board of Trustees throughout the master plan process.

#### **4.2 Research Update**

Senior Vice President for Research and Economic Development and Dean of the University Graduate School Andres G. Gil provided an overview of the current research activities taking place

at FIU. He showed the total research expenditures which are presented to the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Florida Board of Governors (BOG). He noted that the growth of FIU's research has been largely driven by faculty hires such as the TACOE candidate, Dr. Adam Carrico who automatically brought in \$5M in grants to FIU. He explained that between 2010-2020, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* placed FIU among 15 universities that doubled their research expenditures. He added that in 2010, FIU hired Dr. William Pelham Jr. and that Dr. Todd Crowl was hired in 2012 and is now the Director of the FIU Institute of Environment. Sr. VP Gil provided an overview of the categories that the NSF uses to distinguish research expenditures. He added that an aspect of the preeminence rankings for the state of Florida includes being ranked in the top 100 in six (6) out of the eight (8) categories. He added that FIU currently ranks in the top 100 in seven (7) out of the eight (8). He noted that in 2023, FIU had \$38M in facilities and administrative (F&A) costs in comparison to 2010 where FIU had \$14M in F&A costs.

Sr. VP Gil commented on the legacy of Dr. William Pelham Jr., noting that he was a national and international figure in attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) research. He added that Dr. Pelham started the Center for Children and Families (CCF) at FIU, authored nearly 500 peer-reviewed publications and was awarded more than \$100M in research funding. He mentioned that the CCF serves over 3,000 families annually. Sr. VP Gil mentioned that Dr. Pelham established a great team that will be able to continue the work of the CCF.

Sr. VP Gil mentioned the new grants for the Center for Translational Science and highlighted Dr. David Marciano and Dr. Maria Franco who both received funding from the NIH for projects in the development of therapeutics for Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension. He also commented on the new grants focusing on artificial intelligence research and training, noting the work of Dr. Sumit Jha in establishing an Artificial Intelligence Center of Excellence and Dr. Sara Pezeshk whose project focuses on promoting coastal biodiversity through AI-driven modular sea wall design and construction. Sr. VP Gil highlighted the work that is being done through FIU in Washington, D.C. and the recognition that FIU has received regarding the research being conducted. He noted the inauguration of the Population Health Initiative in partnership with the University of Washington which is directed by members of the National Academies of Medicine. Sr. VP Gil commented on the important members of the biomedical sciences community in the United States who have visited FIU in Washington, D.C. and recognize the work that FIU is doing in research and innovation.

### **4.3 FIU/Baptist Affiliation Update**

Senior Vice President for Health Affairs and Dean of the Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine Juan C. Cendan provided an update on the affiliation between FIU and Baptist Health. He mentioned that on January 11, 2024, there was a "kick-off" meeting with members of Baptist and FIU leadership where six (6) committees were formed, and the work of each committee was shared at upon conclusion of the retreat. He commented on the goal of operationalizing the work of the committees. He mentioned that the committees have been meeting routinely with great communication between FIU and Baptist leadership. Committee Vice Chair Colson noted that he, Board Vice Chair Carlos A. Duarte, Provost Bejar, President Jessell, Dean and Sr. VP Cendan, and members of Baptist Health leadership travelled to Tallahassee to speak with members of the Florida Legislature. Dean and Sr. VP Cendan added that he perceived that members of Baptist Health leadership were impressed by the access and support that FIU has in the Florida Legislature.

#### **4.4 Student Government Updates**

Trustee Alexander P. Sutton shared that he along with student leaders met with members of the Florida Legislature to advocate for the FIU and Baptist partnership. Trustee Sutton shared that the Student Senate voted down the “*Ceasefire Non*” resolution. He added that the Student Senate proposed resolutions including advocating for safety measures in on-campus housing, a Muslim prayer space on campus, and alumni access to their FIU email addresses. He commented on a petition from alumni requesting lifetime access to FIU email for active alumni which collected 752 signatures, with 94% of students surveyed saying they would face difficulties if alumni email access was restricted to 1 year after graduation. He added that the Student Senate resolution recommends that alumni be allowed to opt-in to retain access to their student email after graduation as a potential solution. Trustee Sutton shared that the Student Senate held a town hall meeting with international students. He mentioned that SGA is proceeding with its Constitutional Convention; noting that there is a draft revised Constitution, which is expected to be voted on by the Student Senate in March 2024, to be followed by a vote from the student body through a referendum.

Trustee Sutton commented on the SGA elections process. He detailed that there are two (2) candidates running for Student Body President, and two (2) student political parties with candidates running for election to the Student Senate. He advised that voting is scheduled to take place on March 5-6, 2024. He shared that the SGA Budget Committee concluded the annual budget process, where a revenue of approximately \$20M of student Activity and Service Fees were allocated. He added that SGA has scheduled a referendum of the student body regarding increasing the Activity and Service Fee and the Health Fee to take place on April 17, 2024. He commented that the referendum will be non-binding and that if it should pass, he would like to have conversations with President Jessell about forming a committee to investigate a change to these fees. Trustee Sutton added that he established a commission to investigate FIU’s academic advising, and that he would like to present a finalized report on student academic advising during the April 25, 2024, Board of Trustees meetings. He added that he is working with the Honors College to finance a revitalization of the EdgeLab space and with the FIU libraries about purchasing study pods and nap pods.

#### **4.5 Faculty Senate Updates**

Trustee Noël C. Barengo advised that the Faculty Senate has met twice since the last Board of Trustees meetings in December 2023. He added that the Faculty Senate is expected to meet four (4) times in the spring and summer 2024 semesters, with elections of the chair, vice-chair and secretary to be held during the April 2024 meeting. He noted that the Faculty Senate will begin meeting in person starting in the fall 2024 semester. Trustee Barengo shared that Professor David Chatfield was approved as Faculty Senate Governmental Liaison and will also serve as chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Governmental Relations. He asked Dr. Chatfield to stand and be recognized. He mentioned that the Faculty Senate Interprofessional Cross-disciplinary Committee organized a virtual workshop titled “Stronger Together Through Collaboration”. He also noted that there was a 2030 Strategic Plan listening session held in February for members of the Faculty Senate. Trustee Barengo shared that the Faculty Senate is participating in the nationwide faculty satisfaction survey administered by the Harvard Graduate School of Education’s Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education

(COACHE). Trustee Barengo mentioned that Board Chair Tovar addressed the Faculty Senate during the February 13, 2024, meeting and answered their questions.

Trustee Barengo shared that during the fall 2023 semester, faculty members reviewed the group two (2) core curriculum to identify courses that require modification to adhere to the newly adopted standards. He added that they recommended changes to course descriptions and/or learning outcomes and are finalizing the review before submitting the report to President Jessell. He mentioned that faculty members, the chair of the sociology department and FIU administration are developing solutions regarding the Principles of Sociology course (SYG 2000) that was removed from the group one (1) core curriculum course list. Trustee Barengo commented that as part of the FIU Plan for Implementing Civil Discourse Recommendations, FIU administration has approached the Faculty Senate regarding whether they will endorse the Florida Board of Governors Statement on Free Expression. He added that the Faculty Senate is glad to see the BOG efforts to recognize and affirm the principles of academic freedom in their statement on Civil Discourse; noting that the Faculty Senate will begin to review and discuss the Statement during this spring 2024 meetings and at the next Advisory Council of Faculty Senates (ACFS) meeting in March 2024. Trustee Barengo added that Governor Timothy M. Cerio has committed to meeting with the Faculty Senate at the June 2024 BOG meeting.

Trustee Barengo added that the Faculty Senate General Education and Assessment Ad Hoc Taskforce will be conducting faculty focus groups during the spring 2024 semester. He detailed that the faculty focus groups are conducted to assess faculty members' knowledge and understanding of the purpose of the core curriculum, perception of the core curriculum meeting student needs, general education preferences, and perceived strengths and areas in need of improvement. He mentioned that two (2) Faculty Get-Togethers have been held; sponsored by the Office of Research and Economic Development and the College of Business. Trustee Barengo thanked Dr Gil and Dean Hardin for hosting the Faculty Get-Togethers.

#### **5. Academic Affairs Regular Reports**

There were no questions from the Committee members in terms of the Academic Affairs regular reports included as part of the agenda materials.

#### **6. New Business**

No new business was raised.

#### **7. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment**

With no other business, Committee Vice Chair Dean C. Colson adjourned the meeting of the Florida International University Board of Trustees Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee on Thursday, February 29, 2024, at 12:56 PM.