



Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee
September 12, 2024
FIU, Modesto A. Maidique Campus, Graham Center Ballrooms

MINUTES

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 Chair Francis A. Hondal on Thursday, September 12, 2024, at 11:20 AM.

General Counsel Carlos B. Castillo conducted roll call of the Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee members and verified a quorum. Present were Trustees Francis A. Hondal, *Committee Chair*; Alberto R. Taño, *Committee Vice Chair*; Noël C. Barengo; Francesca Casanova; Dean C. Colson; and Roger Tovar, *Board Chair and Athletics Liaison*.

Trustee Natasha Lowell was excused.

The following Board members were also in attendance: Board Vice Chair Carlos A. Duarte, and Trustees, Alan Gonzalez, Yaffa Popack, Gene Prescott, and Marc D. Sarnoff.

Committee Chair Francis A. Hondal welcomed the trustees, University leadership and general public. She thanked Trustee Natasha Lowell for her leadership as the prior Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee Chair and welcomed Trustee Alberto R. Taño as Vice Chair of the Committee.

Provost and Executive Vice President Elizabeth M. Bejar shared that Dr. Michael Heithaus has agreed to serve as Vice Provost for Biscayne Bay Campus and Environmental Resilience. She announced that Dr. Jorge Valdes has been named dean of the FIU Nicole Wertheim College of Nursing and Health Sciences. She advised that Raul Ruiz has agreed to join the Office of the Provost as a 2024 Faculty Fellow. Provost Bejar mentioned that over 8,600 new students were welcomed to their first fall semester at FIU. She provided an overview of the composition of the new cohort and the nearly 49,000 degree-seeking students enrolled in the fall 2024 semester.

2. Approval of Minutes

Committee Chair Hondal asked if there were any changes or corrections to the minutes of the Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee meeting held on June 5, 2024. Hearing none, a motion was made and unanimously passed to approve the minutes of the Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee meeting held on June 5, 2024.

3. Action Items

AP1. Tenure as a Condition of Employment Nominations

Committee Chair Hondal stated that Tenure as a Condition of Employment (TACOE) is proposed for two (2) candidates and added that to be considered for TACOE, newly hired faculty must qualify for tenure at FIU based on their caliber of work and/or tenure status at their previous institutions. Provost Bejar delineated that TACOE is reserved for individuals who have achieved highly prestigious academic careers prior to their becoming FIU faculty; noting that TACOE candidates have either received or are eligible for tenure at their previous institution. She added 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 indicated that said method is the regular process for tenure and promotion decisions at FIU. She mentioned that the FIU department and colleges have vetted the scholarly qualifications and completed the required expedited tenure review for the candidates. She noted that the candidate biographies and curriculum vitas are included in the Board materials. She commented on the TACOE candidates: Dr. Stacey Pavelko, who will be joining the Department of Communication Sciences & Disorders in the Nicole Wertheim College of Nursing and Health Sciences as Associate Professor; and Dr. Navid Tahvildari who will be joining the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering as Associate Professor.

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 of the two (2) candidates for Tenure as a Condition of Employment as specified in the Board materials.

AP2. Textbook and Instructional Materials Affordability Annual Report

Heather Russell, Vice Provost for Faculty Leadership and Success, presented the 2023-24 Textbook and Instructional Materials Affordability and Transparency annual report for Committee review. Vice Provost Russell stated that, in fall 2023 and spring 2024, the University was in compliance, with 98% of textbook adoptions submitted by the legal deadline of 45 days prior to the first day of class for each semester and reported any late adoption activity and/or modifications that occurred after said deadline. She explained that all general education course syllabi are available publicly through the newly acquired Simple Syllabus platform. She also noted that all of FIU's required and recommended textbooks and instructional materials may be viewed, searched, and downloaded by the public using the University's Textbook and Instructional Materials (TIM) search engine. Vice Provost Russell commented on the Panther Book Pack Program through the partnership with Barnes & Noble, detailing that fewer students are opting out of said program. She noted collaborative approaches with FIU Enrollment Services, FIU Law, the Center for the Advancement of Teaching, and FIU Libraries who continue to dedicate resources to support student success through textbook and instructional materials affordability.

A motion was made and unanimously passed that the FIU Board of Trustees Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee recommend to The Florida International University Board of Trustees approval of the Textbook and Instructional Materials Affordability and Transparency Annual Report.

AP3. Honorary Degree Nomination

Provost Bejar explained that Diane Ramy Faulconer was nominated for an Honorary Degree by the Nicole Wertheim College of Nursing and Health Sciences. She noted that the Faculty Senate Honorary Degree and Awards Committee recommended the nomination to the Faculty Senate which approved the nomination in November of 2023. She shared excerpts from the nomination letter which related to Mrs. Faulconer's contributions to healthcare and FIU.

A motion was made and unanimously passed that the FIU Board of Trustees Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee recommend to The Florida International University Board of Trustees endorsement of Diane Ramy Faulconer as a recipient of a Doctor of Science, *honoris causa* from Florida International University.

4. Information and Discussion Items

4.1 First Amendment – Landscape Analysis of Curricular and Non- Curricular Offerings

Provost Bejar provided an overview of the Florida State University System (SUS) and Florida College System (FCS) Civic Literacy Competency Requirement, highlighting four (4) of the courses that satisfy said requirement. She reviewed the competencies associated with said courses. She presented options for further exploration as First Amendment initiatives at FIU including: 1) badges or micro-credentials, 2) FIU College of Law First Amendment Summer Institute, 3) First Amendment/Civics module in the First Year Experience Course or Pre-orientation requirements, 4) Hosting or sponsoring university debates to showcase open dialogue, and 5) Development of partnerships with public, private, and foundations that support First Amendment work.

Committee Chair Hondal commented on FIU's ability to offer contemporary forums for conversations related to the First Amendment, with practical applications. Trustee Marc D. Sarnoff shared historical context and personal accounts related to the First Amendment; namely October 7, 2023, 1938 University of Indiana exclusion of Jewish students and teachers, the commencement of World War II in 1939, and his participation in the UCLA injunction to prevent keeping Jewish students off campus. He mentioned that the First Amendment is not mandatorily taught at the FIU College of Law or undergraduate level. He commented that he has worked with the University administration, notably President Jessell and Provost Bejar on said concern. He emphasized the importance of educating students on what the First Amendment provides and what it does not provide protections for. Trustee Dean C. Colson commented on the importance of studying the First Amendment. Trustee Sarnoff shared that he would be willing to reevaluate the status of First Amendment education at the next September Board meetings. Board Chair Roger Tovar mentioned the events of October 7, 2023, and that he is supportive of the comments made by Trustee Sarnoff. He emphasized that the University should be a leader in this subject. Provost Bejar emphasized that FIU is following evidence-based practices, meeting compliance and striving to excel in this area. Board Chair Tovar mentioned collaborating with faculty. President Jessell concurred with the comments made and provided an example of how FIU has excelled through the incorporation of global learning in various aspects of the University. Provost Bejar clarified that the First Amendment is taught through select mandatory courses and is a graduation requirement for students entering FIU in fall 2024. Committee Chair Hondal mentioned leveraging programs and courses that are currently offered at FIU and finding a simple way to meet the objective of increasing the knowledge of the First Amendment for students.

4.2 Student Government Updates

Trustee Francesca Casanova congratulated the FIU Football team for winning their inaugural game at Pitbull Stadium. She mentioned the Panthers' First Night event and shared that during the "Week of Welcome" the Student Government Association (SGA) welcomed over 400 students at a "Lunch Break with SGA". Trustee Casanova added that during the summer, eight (8) members of the SGA leadership visited the FIU in DC office. Trustee Casanova commented that the SGA Senate passed a resolution titled "Committing to Excellence: FIU's Preeminence Resolution", celebrating FIU on achieving its designation as a Preeminent Research University. She delineated that SGA has designated over \$200,000 in various scholarships this year to support students. She explained that she approved an allocation of an additional \$150,000 in scholarships to be made available for students that qualify for emergency aid. Trustee Casanova stated that SGA has partnered with the Student Life Skills (SLS) instructors to give each first-year student a "Panther" hat, with over 2,000 having been distributed. She mentioned that SGA partnered with FIU Athletics to sponsor FIU students to attend the FIU versus Florida Atlantic University football game. She mentioned the events related to FIU Homecoming detailing that the Homecoming Football Game taking place on September 21st.

4.3 Faculty Senate Updates

Trustee Barengo thanked the University administration for their collaboration with the Faculty Senate. He commented that from June to September 2024, the Faculty Senate (FS) and the Steering Committee of the Faculty Senate each met three (3) times. He shared that David Chatfield was confirmed as Governmental Liaison, Nathan Dodge was confirmed as Parliamentarian/Sergeant-at-Arms, and Amy Paul-Ward was elected as Faculty Senate Secretary. Trustee Barengo explained that the BOG provided feedback on the list of FIU Core Curriculum courses that was approved by the Board on July 31st and added that revisions are in progress. He shared that the Faculty Senate approved/endorsed the FIU 2025-2030 Strategic Plan. He commented that faculty are concerned about one of the potential locations of the aquatic center in the Campus Master Plan and have opposed the construction at Site #11. He commented on the pool's impact on the Astro Science Observatory, campus safety, and the loss of green space in said location. He mentioned that the FIU administration and the United Faculty of Florida (UFF-FIU) reached an agreement regarding the 2024-2027 Collective Bargaining Agreement. He detailed that the agreement includes a Summer Research Enhancement and secures additional funding for summer research enhancement awards. Trustee Barengo mentioned that he visited the FIU Global Forensic & Justice Center. He shared that the Faculty Convocation will take place on September 26th and that a Faculty Get-Together is scheduled for September 27th at the FIU Biscayne Bay Campus, sponsored by the Chaplin School of Hospitality & Tourism Management.

5. Academic Affairs Regular Reports

Committee Chair Hondal asked that Senior Vice President for Health Affairs and Dean of the Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine, Juan C. Cendan provide an update on the FIU and Baptist Health South Florida Collaboration. He mentioned the status on the Joint Graduate Medical Education programs and Medical Center, and that the first joint hire under the FIU and Baptist collaboration is a Director of Robotic Cardiac Surgery.

6. New Business

No new business was raised.

7. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

With no other business, Committee Chair Francis A. Hondal adjourned the meeting of the Florida International University Board of Trustees Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee on Thursday, September 12, 2024, at 12:26 PM.

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