



Full Board

June 2, 2025

FIU, Modesto A. Maidique Campus, Graham Center Ballrooms

MINUTES

1. Call to Order and Chair's Remarks

Board Chair Roger Tovar convened the meeting of the Florida International University Board of Trustees at 9:00 AM on Monday, June 2, 2025.

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*; Noël C. Barengo; Francesca Casanova; Dean C. Colson; Alan Gonzalez (*Zoom*); George Heisel; Jesus Lebeña; Alexander M. Peraza; Chanel T. Rowe (*Zoom*); Marc D. Sarnoff; and Alberto R. Taño.

Trustee Yaffa Popack was excused.

Board Chair Tovar welcomed all Trustees, members of the University administration, and the University community. He commented that in February, the Board of Trustees was faced with the all-important task of selecting FIU's next president. He thanked the FIU Presidential Search Committee for their dedication and for giving of their time. He also thanked the Funk Associates search firm. Board Chair Tovar recognized Presidential Search Committee Chair, Carlos A. Duarte, and Vice Chair, Marc D. Sarnoff.

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 delineated 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 Friday, May 30, 2025, four (4) requests to address the Board were received. The following individuals addressed the Board, regarding the agenda items related to the 3.1 Presidential Search and/or BT1. Approval of Presidential Appointment for Confirmation by the Florida Board of Governors:

- Matthew Marr, Associate Professor of Sociology and member of the FIU Faculty Senate and United Faculty of Florida-FIU, congratulated Interim President Nuñez on her appointment and conveyed his concerns over interventions by the government of the State of Florida.

- Thomas A. Breslin, Professor of Politics and International Relations, referred to a quote from George Washington, “There is nothing which can better deserve our patronage than the promotion of science and literature. Knowledge is in every country the surest basis of public happiness” and stated that if FIU is to continue growing and reach its goal of being a Top 30 Public University by the year 2030, its excellent administration, faculty, and staff, need the full and active support of the Board of Trustees.
- Tania Lopez, President of the United Faculty of Florida-FIU, shared faculty concerns over the lack of transparency and unilateral decision making, specifically referring to Interim President Nuñez entering into the ICE 287(g) agreement without the prior consultation with the FIU faculty.
- Noemy Diaz-Burgos, two-time alumna, shared her concerns regarding Interim President Nuñez’s comments in the recent University forums relating to diversity being divisive and shared her personal positive experiences with FIU as a diverse space.

Board Chair Tovar thanked the speakers for their comments.

3. Presidential Search Update

Board Vice Chair Duarte indicated that over the past several months, the FIU Presidential Search Committee has worked, alongside the experienced executive search firm, Funk Associates, to select a world-class leader to be the University’s next president. He thanked the members of the Presidential Search Committee for their service and thoughtful input. Board Vice Chair Duarte also expressed his gratitude to Presidential Search Committee Vice Chair Marc D. Sarnoff and Mr. Bill Funk of the Funk Associates search firm for their valuable assistance.

Board Vice Chair Duarte thanked the FIU community for being active participants in the search for the next President of FIU. He noted that the feedback provided via the survey on the Presidential Search website was summarized by the Funk team and is available on the website and has been shared with the Board of Trustees.

Board Vice Chair Duarte commented that the Presidential Search Committee worked diligently and thoughtfully in executing its responsibilities and complied with the requirements set forth in Board of Governors Regulation. He indicated that after a thorough review and interview process, the Presidential Search Committee selected three finalists for recommendation to the FIU Board of Trustees. He stated that the three finalists included a sitting president and sitting provost at other institutions, as well as FIU’s Interim President Jeanette M. Nuñez. Board Vice Chair Duarte pointed out that two of the finalists indicated that they would only move to the public phase of the search process if selected as the lone candidate and as a result, these two finalists withdrew their candidacy.

Board Vice Chair Duarte mentioned that the work of the Presidential Search Committee culminated in the Committee unanimously voting, on May 5, 2025, to recommend to the Board of Trustees Interim President Nuñez as the sole finalist to become the seventh president of FIU. Board Vice Chair Duarte stated that, pursuant to Florida law, once the Presidential Search Committee selected Interim President Nuñez as the final candidate to be sent to the Board of Trustees, the 21-day

period, where the name of the final candidate became public, began. He commented that on May 21, 2025, the University hosted four (4) open sessions where Interim President Nuñez engaged with faculty, staff, students, and other members of the University community. He added that said sessions, while held in person, were also available for online viewing. He stated that the transcripts of said sessions were provided electronically to the Trustees and are also found on the presidential search website.

Board Vice Chair Duarte pointed out that, as required by Florida Board of Governors Regulation and with the assistance of the Funk Associates team, an employment screening report was completed for Interim President Nuñez. Board Vice Chair Tovar stated that said report encompasses areas related to litigation, criminal, credit, and national sex offender. Board Vice Chair Duarte added that LexisNexis, Google, and social media background checks were also conducted. He indicated that all areas were clear for Interim President Nuñez.

Board Vice Chair Duarte remarked that since her appointment in February, Interim President Nuñez has worked tirelessly and has engaged meaningfully with FIU's students, faculty, staff, and community, focusing on improving the student experience, ensuring research excellence, and establishing and strengthening strategic alliances. He added that Interim President Nuñez is a proud double alumna, earning a bachelor's degree in political science and international relations in 1994 and a master's degree in public administration in 1998. Board Vice Chair Duarte stated that Interim President Nuñez is also a former adjunct faculty member, having taught a graduate-level course on health policy and serving as a guest lecturer over the years.

Board Vice Chair Duarte commented that Interim President Nuñez spent 15 years serving the State of Florida, both as a State Representative and, most recently, as Lieutenant Governor. He added that before serving in government, Interim President Nuñez was Vice President of Governmental Affairs at Jackson Health Systems and held similar leadership positions at Kendall Regional and Aventura Hospital Medical Center. He added that Interim President Nuñez's distinguished career, unique qualifications, and proven commitment to further cement FIU's position as a leader in higher education in Florida and across the country make her an excellent leader for FIU at this pivotal point in the University's journey. Board Vice Chair Duarte stated that on behalf of the Committee, he recommended to the FIU Board of Trustees Mrs. Jeanette M. Nuñez as the finalist to become the seventh president of FIU.

4. Interview Candidate, Mrs. Jeanette M. Nuñez, for president of Florida International University

Board Chair Tovar described the format for the interview with Interim President Nuñez. He noted that while Trustees have been provided with suggested questions, they are welcome to ask their own questions and follow up questions throughout the process.

Questions asked: **please refer to the meeting recording to view the full interview*

1. Would you tell us a little about yourself and briefly take us through your career?
2. How would the position of President of FIU fit with your long-term career goals?

3. Our President is responsible for a large and complex leadership portfolio. We are interested in hearing about your management style and philosophy. Specifically, describe your most important values as a leader and give specific examples where you have put them into practice.
4. How do you make FIU a safe spot for Jewish students and is acceptable to say "death to Jews" on FIU's campuses regardless of context?
5. The more opportunities our students have to participate in internships, mentorships, and any real work experience in their respective fields of study while they are a student at FIU will significantly increase their chances of obtaining a good paying job upon graduation. I know this firsthand. Can you share with us some of your ideas on expanding those internship opportunities for our students across all FIU colleges? I believe that all of us on this Board have a role to play in creating new channels for our students.
6. Given the challenges that all universities are facing, how will you manage your time?
7. The student journey is the center of the FIU experience. How have you interacted with students and what will you do to enhance student life?
8. During the community sessions, you mentioned that one of the areas for improvement that you have noticed is getting FIU's message out and that we can do a better job at that. Could you expand on that and let us know what plans or thoughts you may have to improve that?
9. What would the 'first 100 days' of your administration look like? What actions or steps would you be taking during the early days of your presidency?
10. Two of the most valued principles in higher education are shared governance and academic freedom. Please share your thoughts on these core values and how they will be part of your tenure should you be selected to be the next President of FIU.
11. Like most universities across the country, FIU Athletics is not a money-making proposition and I would like to ensure that you are taking into consideration that we spend at least as much on our female student-athletes as we do on our male student-athletes. The student body is funding approximately 60% of the athletic budget and the student body is about 62% female and there is no reason why we should not be allocating a proportionate amount of money on female sports as we are on male sports. What is your view on the expenditure of athletics funds for female student-athletes?
12. How would you prioritize the various needs of the institution's diverse stakeholders?
13. You've mentioned several challenges that we face. Is there one in particular that stands out and how do you plan to help us navigate through that?

14. What have you seen over the past three months and how do you envision your role moving forward as the president of FIU? How will you continue to elevate FIU? What do you envision and how do you envision doing it?

5. Action Items

BT1. Approval of Presidential Appointment for Confirmation by the Florida Board of Governors

Board Chair Tovar explained that pursuant to Florida Board of Governors Regulation 1.002, Presidential Search and Selection, the FIU Board of Trustees must select a final qualified candidate under the position criteria as president-elect for recommendation to the Florida Board of Governors for confirmation. He added that the president-elect must then personally appear before the Florida Board of Governors at a scheduled meeting as part of the confirmation process.

Board Chair Tovar commented that it is the combination of professional experience and an extensive network in South Florida and Tallahassee that makes Interim President Nuñez an ideal leader to help transition FIU into the future. He commented on her engagement and tireless efforts as a champion of FIU.

Trustees conveyed their support of the appointment of Mrs. Jeanette M. Nuñez as President of FIU. Trustees commented that Interim President Nuñez is passionate about FIU and possesses the qualities, attributes, and invaluable connections within the State of Florida to lead FIU now and into the future.

Board Vice Chair Duarte recognized the University's administrative team and stated that the appointment of President Nuñez adds to the strength of the administrative team.

A motion was made and unanimously passed that the Florida International University Board of Trustees select and appoint Mrs. Jeanette M. Nuñez as the seventh President of Florida International University for confirmation by the Florida Board of Governors.

Board Chair Tovar recognized President-Designate Nuñez's spouse, Mr. Adrian Nuñez.

BT2. Approval of Substantive Presidential Contract Terms

Board Chair Tovar explained that the FIU Board of Trustees must approve the substantive terms of the presidential contract. He added that the terms reflected in the Term Sheet are terms he previously discussed with President-Designate Nuñez. He indicated that as has been the Board's practice, the finalization of the contract with President-Designate Nuñez and execution thereof will be delegated to the Board Chair. Board Chair Tovar pointed out that the contract that will be offered to President-Designate Nuñez is generally similar to prior FIU presidential contracts in that it will include annual goal setting by the FIU Board of Trustees and president, annual evaluation of the president's performance by the FIU Board of Trustees, and a compensation package.

General Counsel Castillo presented the Term Sheet for the Board's review. He explained that the proposed terms set forth that the contract would consist of a five-year term to commence upon the Board of Governors' confirmation of President-Designate Nuñez's presidency, which is scheduled

for June 18, 2025. He indicated that the annual base salary will be \$925,000 and the annual performance based incentive bonus will be up to \$400,000 and that consistent with the Board's practice, will be awarded annually based on achievement of goals and objectives developed by President-Designate Nuñez and approved by the Board of Trustees. General Counsel Castillo explained that the proposed terms also include an annual retirement supplement of \$245,000, a car allowance of \$12,000 annually, housing will be provided for in the residence located at the Modesto A. Maidique Campus, out of pocket moving expenses of up to \$25,000 for both moves, the standard University executive service benefits, and miscellaneous benefits as outlined in the Term Sheet. General Counsel Castillo pointed out that severance pay will be set at the maximum amount permitted by state law if there is a termination. He added that there will also be a provision in the contract for outside activities with prior approval of the Board of Trustees Chair. General Counsel Castillo commented that, if approved by the Board of Trustees, the employment agreement will be executed consistent with the Term Sheet and will be signed after approval by the Board of Trustees, the Foundation's approval of its financial obligations, as applicable, and confirmation of the candidate by the Board of Governors. He stated that the draft employment agreement was shared with the Board of Governors General Counsel for compliance with state law.

A motion was made and unanimously passed that the Florida International University Board of Trustees (i) approve the key terms of the employment agreement for President-Designate Mrs. Jeanette M. Nuñez, as described in the Term Sheet, and (ii) authorize the Chair of the Florida International University Board of Trustees (BOT) to execute, on behalf of the BOT, a contract document consistent with the Term Sheet and including such additional terms and conditions as are typically included in university presidential employment contracts as the Board Chair determines appropriate.

6. New Business

Board Chair Tovar reflected on his tenure as a member of the FIU Board of Trustees and indicated that it is important for boards to evolve and change. He added that within the coming days, he would be submitting his resignation to the Florida Board of Governors.

7. 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 Friday, June 2, 2025 at 10:40 AM.