



**FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

FIU, Modesto A. Maidique Campus, Graham Center Ballrooms

**Thursday, November 20, 2025
12:15 PM**

or

Upon Adjournment of Previous Meeting

Chair: Yaffa Popack

Vice Chair: Chanel T. Rowe

Members: Francesca Casanova, Alexander M. Peraza, Alberto R. Taño

AGENDA

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1. Call to Order and Chair's Remarks | Yaffa Popack |
| 2. Approval of Minutes | Yaffa Popack |
| 3. Information and Discussion Items: No Action Required | |
| 3.1 Marketing and Strategic Communications Update | Michelle L. Palacio |
| 3.2 Government and Community Relations Update | Christina Castillo |
| 4. New Business | Yaffa Popack |
| 5. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment | Yaffa Popack |

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Meeting Book - 11.20.25 - External Relations Committee Meeting

1. Call to Order and Chair's Remarks
Yaffa Popack

2. Approval of Minutes
Yaffa Popack

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3. Information and Discussion Items: No Action Required

3.1 Marketing and Strategic Communications Update
Michelle L. Palacio

3.2 Government and Community Relations Update
Christina Castillo

4. New Business
Yaffa Popack

5. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment
Yaffa Popack

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November 20, 2025

Subject: Approval of Minutes of Meeting held November 21, 2024

Proposed Committee Action:

Approval of Minutes of the External Relations Committee meeting held on November 21, 2024.

Background Information:

Committee members will review and approve the Minutes of the External Relations Committee meeting held on November 21, 2024.

Supporting Documentation: Minutes: External Relations Committee meeting,
November 21, 2024

Facilitator/Presenter: Yaffa Popack, *Chair, External Relations Committee*

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External Relations Committee

November 21, 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' External Relations Committee meeting was called to order by Committee Chair Yaffa Popack at 11:05 AM on Thursday, November 21, 2024.

General Counsel Carlos B. Castillo conducted roll call of the External Relations Committee members and verified a quorum. Present were Yaffa Popack, *Committee Chair*; Chanel T. Rowe (*Zoom*), *Committee Vice Chair*; Francesca Casanova, Natasha Lowell, and Alberto R. Taño.

Trustee Gene Prescott was excused.

The following Board members were also in attendance: Board Chair Roger Tovar and Trustees Noël C. Barengo, Dean C. Colson, Alan Gonzalez, Francis A. Hondal, and Marc D. Sarnoff.

Committee Chair Popack welcomed all Trustees and members of the University administration. She also welcomed the University community and general public.

2. Approval of Minutes

Committee Chair Popack asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes of the External Relations Committee meeting held on April 25, 2024. Hearing none, a motion was made and unanimously passed to approve the minutes of the External Relations Committee meeting held on April 25, 2024.

3. Information/Discussion Items

3.1 Strategic Communications, Government and External Affairs Update

- Strategic Communications Update
- Governmental Relations Update

Senior Vice President for Strategic Communications, Government and External Affairs, Michelle L. Palacio highlighted the transformation of Florida International University over the last five (5) years including achieving Preeminence and being ranked in the Top 50 public by U.S. News. She shared that FIU was ranked #2 in the U.S. and #13 in the world, for making an impact, by Times Higher Education's Impact rankings. She added that additional investments are being made to promote the FIU academic brand globally. Sr. VP Palacio commented that FIU has been ranked #1 for economic and social mobility by U.S. News. She mentioned the historic funding from the Florida Legislature and that University President Kenneth A. Jessell represented FIU at the Organizational Session in Tallahassee, where new members of legislative leadership were welcomed.

Sr. VP Palacio discussed federal accomplishments including the historic 2024 appropriation numbers. She remarked that FIU ranked first among all universities in Florida in securing federal investments. She commented that final action by Congress is pending for the fiscal year 2025 appropriations; detailing that if Congress were to act and pass final appropriations bills, the University can expect \$49.6M in total appropriations, with \$11.6M in directed earmarks. She commented on the appointment of FIU Green School Fellow and United States Senator, Marco Rubio as Secretary of State. She presented a video highlighting FIU. Sr. VP Palacio explained that brand awareness efforts are focused on ensuring that FIU is well-positioned for maximum visibility in target markets and audiences. She shared examples, including showcasing FIU's arts and cultural initiatives, signage in Reagan National Airport in Washington, D.C., part of the local veteran's appreciation campaign, an invitation to join the Times Higher Education World 100, and an advertisement showcasing the FIU campus.

Sr. VP Palacio mentioned efforts to recruit the next generation of students, including continuing the partnership with the Office of Admissions. She shared that over 125,000 mail pieces have reached potential applicants and presented the new "welcome pack" that future students who applied to the November 1st early action day will receive on December 11th. She detailed that students will be welcomed to the University with new branded merchandise and printed pieces focused on the student experience, and on-campus living. She mentioned an emphasis on the FIU Honors College and presented what new Honors College students will receive on their decision days. Sr. VP Palacio explained that FIU has two (2) final first-time-in-college application deadlines (December 3rd and February 25th). She presented a new recruitment video.

Sr. VP Palacio showcased the second annual Research Magazine, set to debut in January 2025. She detailed that the magazine features three (3) different covers to display the expertise of FIU faculty. She added that the covers represent three (3) leading research initiatives and top journal placements in *Nature Medicine*, and *Journal Science*; and highlight the Experience Impact 2030 Strategic Plan's three (3) strategic focus areas of health, environment and environmental resilience, and innovation. Sr. VP Palacio noted the partnership with *MinuteEarth* and presented examples of science-based videos. Sr. VP Palacio mentioned a focus on continuing the academic peer reputation campaign through investments in over 30 different conferences and academic events.

Sr. VP Palacio shared that the Strategic Communications, Government, and External Affairs team has supported and participated in more than 100 community relations events since August 2024. She mentioned a new program director tasked with helping elevate the CasaCuba initiative, arts and culture community relations efforts, and a strategic local government portfolio. She described the role in advancing research, namely the work of Professor Diana Azzam in precision medicine and the National Science Foundation's Natural Hazards Engineering Research Infrastructure, Wall of Wind Experimental Facility. Sr. VP Palacio commented on the opportunities for students and alumni at FIU in Washington, D.C., noting that a Green School Academic semester program will be added to the FIU Honors Hamilton Fellow's program. She highlighted additional efforts such as hosting resilience and climate technology gatherings and leveraging FIU in D.C. to work with partners including the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation.

Sr. VP Palacio commented on the implementation efforts of the Experience Impact 2030 Strategic Plan. She shared a brief outline of the strategic plan and mentioned infrastructure investments. She explained that resources are being used to secure additional external agency support to strengthen efforts in Florida and key national markets. She presented research used to inform the decision making and strategy for the University. Sr. VP Palacio presented six (6) core goals that are serving as the foundation to propel the goals of the Strategic Plan. Said goals include launching a refreshed brand in January 2025, implementing an internal preeminent mindset initiative, continuing and expanding the academic peer campaign, expanding individual discipline campaigns, and establishing a plan for the strategic focus areas. Related to the fifth goal, Sr. VP Palacio provided an update on the FIU and Baptist Health South Florida alliance marketing. She noted that the Baptist and FIU teams worked to complete a residency recruitment marketing effort and are finalizing the new brand design/creative concept for the alliance. She explained that the sixth goal includes developing and implementing a unified marketing strategy and framework that will develop university-wide consistency. She explained that the goals will help with expanding FIU's overall brand, reduce market saturation and duplicative efforts, manage the predicted enrollment cliff, and require changes in the decentralized way that the University has structured marketing previously. Sr. VP Palacio presented the framework for the Implementation Campaign and highlighted immediate next steps, developed in conjunction with the Moore Agency. Sr. VP Palacio explained that the FIU multimedia team, Digitize Lab in the Division of IT, and Facilities Management, collaborated to develop an enhanced version of the video known as "FIU in 2030" and presented the updated video.

Trustee Francis A. Hondal commented on the story-telling aspect of FIU and the importance of having a unified marketing and brand strategy. She mentioned collaboration across the University related to the brand. Committee Chair Popack clarified that the videos were created by the University team and commented on the MinuteEarth videos. Board Chair Roger Tovar encouraged the University Administration to assess the opportunities and resources to ensure that the "FIU story" is being communicated effectively. Committee Vice Chair Chanel T. Rowe emphasized Trustee Hondal's comment related to collaboration across the University and mentioned the global brand and fundraising. Trustee Hondal and Senior Vice President for University Advancement and CEO of the FIU Foundation, Inc., Kenneth C. Hall commented on commented on engaging with corporate partnerships.

4. New Business

No new business was raised.

5. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

With no other business, Committee Chair Yaffa Popack adjourned the meeting of the Florida International University Board of Trustees External Relations Committee on Thursday, November 21, 2024 at 11:42 AM.

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