



Full Board
January 20, 2026
Zoom

MINUTES

1. Call to Order and Chair's Remarks

Board Chair Carlos A. Duart convened the meeting of the Florida International University Board of Trustees at 3:01 PM on Tuesday, January 20, 2026.

General Counsel Carlos B. Castillo conducted roll call of the Florida International University Board of Trustees and verified a quorum. Present were Carlos A. Duart, *Board Chair*; Noël C. Barengo; Francesca Casanova; Tila Falic-Levi; Alan Gonzalez; George Heisel; Jesus Lebeña; Patrick McDowell; Alexander M. Peraza; Nestor Plana (*joined after roll call*); Yaffa Popack; and Alberto R. Taño.

Trustee Fred Voccola was excused.

Board Chair Duart welcomed Trustees Nestor Plana and Tila Falic-Levi, newly appointed by the Florida Board of Governors for terms starting January 7, 2026. Board Chair Duart commented that Trustee Plana, Founder, Chairman, and CEO of Independent Living Systems, succeeds Mr. Dean C. Colson, while Trustee Falic-Levi, Miami-based educational leader and Founding President of the Jewish Culture High School, replaces Ms. Chanel T. Rowe. Board Chair Duart remarked that Trustee Patrick McDowell, appointed by Florida Governor Ron DeSantis for a term beginning January 13, 2026, takes over Mr. Marc D. Sarnoff's seat and is the Founder, Chairman, and CEO of McDowell Properties and McDowell Housing Partners. Chair Duart also congratulated Trustees Alan Gonzalez and Yaffa Popack on their reappointments to the FIU Board of Trustees.

Board Chair Duart stated that the Board's Bylaws provide that the Board Chair may, in consultation with the President, allow an item to be presented to the Full Board without prior consideration by a Board committee when circumstances warrant. He added that directly proceeding to a Full Board meeting without a prior committee meeting provides the most expeditious and efficient means by which to review the time-sensitive agenda items.

2. Public Appearances

There were no requests for public comment.

3. Action Items

3.1 Performance-Based Funding Model - New Metric 10

Board Chair Duart indicated that during the November 6, 2025 Florida Board of Governors (BOG) meeting, the BOG approved a motion requesting that the university boards of trustees submit a new

Performance -Based Funding (PBF) Metric 10 for approval at the January 2026 BOG meeting, to be part of the new PBF model. He added that the the BOG requires the university boards of trustees to approve the new metric.

Provost and Executive Vice President Elizabeth M. Bejar presented the new PBF Model Metric 10 for the Board's review, explaining that State University System (SUS) institutions were asked to refine their own Metric 10 from a selection of options and categories that align with the SUS system-wide strategic plan of 2030. She added that after thoughtful deliberation and due diligence, the University's recommendation is to request that the number of National Academy Members be selected as FIU's PBF Model Metric 10. Provost Bejar stated that members of the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine are distinguished thought leaders in their fields and contribute to research excellence goals and objectives, supporting and participating in grant development and attainment and providing mentorship to junior faculty. She commented that the baseline year for the BOG data is 2024-25 and that reflects eight (8) National Academy Members who are currently affiliated with FIU and per the BOG guidelines that sets the benchmark at five (5) points. She noted that upon approval, the Board of Trustees metric will be forwarded to the BOG for their review and consideration.

A motion was made and unanimously passed that the FIU Board of Trustees approve the National Academy Members as the University's Performance-Based Funding Model - New Metric 10,.

3.2 Proposed Amendment to Regulation FIU-113 Smoke and Tobacco-Free Campus

Trustee Alberto R. Taño, Vice Chair of the Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee, requested that General Counsel Castillo present the proposed amendments to Regulation FIU-113 Smoke and Tobacco-Free Campus for the Board's review. General Counsel Castillo indicated that the there are three proposed amendments to FIU Regulation 113: 1. the designation of the Provost or the Provost's designee as the authority who must provide prior written approval for the current limited exception for the use of smoking and or vaping products in specific designated areas as part of University research or education programs; 2. adding a limited exception for the smoking of tobacco products at University events in specific outdoor designated areas, subject to the Provost or the Provost's designee prior written approval; and 3. removing the Ronald W. Reagan Presidential House from the scope of the Regulation.

Trustee Noël C. Barengo stated that permitting smoking at official University events, even with restrictions, sends a contradictory message and risks normalizing tobacco use in institutionally endorsed spaces where students, faculty, staff, and community members are present. He added that secondhand smoke exposure is not eliminated in outdoor settings, particularly in crowded or semi-enclosed event spaces, which raises concerns, as individuals with health vulnerabilities may be exposed involuntarily while fulfilling academic or professional obligations. Trustee Barengo mentioned that the proposed amendment also introduces inconsistency and discretionary enforcement by requiring case-by-case approval. He commented that the Regulation should explicitly prohibit any direct or indirect involvement, funding, sponsorship, or support from the tobacco or vaping industry in FIU-sponsored events, research or activities. He offered to assist in revising the current regulation in a way that reinforces FIU's smoke- and vape-free commitments.

In response to Board Chair Duart, Provost Bejar stated that the Regulation is being written to allow for flexibility and to allow for the administration on a case-by-case basis to review the facts and the opportunities and the risks associated with each event and determine accordingly.

Chair Duart encouraged collaboration to ensure that the Regulation aligns with FIU's commitment to a smoke- and tobacco-free environment, allowing limited exceptions where appropriate.

A motion was made and passed that the FIU Board of Trustees approve the proposed amendments to Regulation FIU-113 Smoke and Tobacco-Free Campus, and delegation of authority to the University President to approve any subsequent non-material amendments based on comments to the Regulation received from the Florida Board of Governors or as a result of the regulation-making process.

Trustee Barengo voted against the motion.

4. New Business

Board Chair Duart noted that the Board's next regularly scheduled Committee and Full Board Meetings will be held on February 26, 2026.

5. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

With no other business, Board Chair Carlos A. Duart adjourned the meeting of the Florida International University Board of Trustees Full Board on Tuesday, January 20, 2026, at 3:19 PM.