



Board of Trustees Workshop
May 1, 2026
FIU Institute of Environment
The International Center for Tropical Botany at The Kampong
Morphology Lab
3959 South Douglas Road, Coconut Grove, Florida 33133
MINUTES

Trustees Present

Carlos A. Duart, *Board Chair*; Noël C. Barengo; Francesca Casanova; Tila Falic-Levi; George Heisel; Jesus Lebeña; Patrick McDowell; Alexander M. Peraza; Yaffa Popack; and Albert R. Taño

Welcome

Board Chair Duart welcomed the Trustees and members of the University administration. The Workshop commenced at 9:00 AM.

Dr. Chris Baraloto, Director of the International Center for Tropical Botany (ICTB) at The Kampong of the National Tropical Botanical Garden, delivered introductory remarks and provided an overview of The Kampong's history. He noted that the ICTB, housed within the Institute of Environment's Land and Biodiversity Division, was established through a partnership between FIU and the National Tropical Botanical Garden and is headquartered at The Kampong, the historic estate of plant explorer Dr. David Fairchild and one of the National Tropical Botanical Garden's five sites in Coconut Grove, Florida. He further noted that, with support from the Batchelor Foundation and the William R. Kenan Jr. Charitable Trust, FIU and the National Tropical Botanical Garden are advancing Dr. Fairchild's mission and legacy through the work of the ICTB. Dr. Baraloto also highlighted the Center's work in advancing research, education, and outreach in tropical botany, including graduate-level training and related educational programs focused on plant conservation and the study of tropical plant diversity.

Board Chair Duart recognized outgoing Student Government President and student Trustee Francesca Casanova, expressed appreciation for her service, and joined President Jeanette M. Nuñez for a plaque presentation and photograph.

President Nuñez provided an overview of the key themes discussed at the Board of Trustees Retreat, held in March 2026 at FIU in Washington, D.C. Trustees engaged in a high-level discussion regarding areas in which the University could make the greatest impact, with emphasis on aligning future efforts with the institution's mission, strengths, and long-term goals.

Wrap-up

The Workshop concluded at 11:13 AM.

DRAFT