



**Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee  
September 14, 2021**

**FIU, Modesto A. Maidique Campus, Graham Center Ballrooms and via Zoom**

**MINUTES**

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**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 Natasha Lowell on Tuesday, September 14, 2021, at 11:12 a.m.

General Counsel Carlos B. Castillo conducted roll call of the Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee members and verified a quorum. Present were Trustees Natasha Lowell, *Committee Chair*; Donna J Hrinak, *Committee Vice Chair*; Cesar L. Alvarez; Jose J. Armas, *Health Affairs Liaison (via Zoom; joined after roll call)*; Dean C. Colson, *Board Chair*; Joerg Reinhold; Chanel T. Rowe; Alexander Rubido; Marc D. Sarnoff; and Roger Tovar, *Board Vice Chair and Athletics Liaison*.

Trustees Gene Prescott and Carlos Trujillo (*via Zoom*) and University President Mark B. Rosenberg were also in attendance.

Committee Chair Lowell welcomed all Trustees and members of the University administration. She also welcomed Trustees, University administrators, and staff attending via the virtual environment and the University community and general public accessing the meeting via the University's webcast.

Provost and Executive Vice President Kenneth G. Furton commented on the appointment of Dr. Heather Russell as Vice Provost for Faculty Leadership and Success, noting that Dr. Russell succeeds Dr. Kathleen Wilson who plans to retire at the end of 2021. Provost Furton noted that Dr. Russell serves as Dean of the School of Environment, Arts and Society and has served, since its inception, on the Steering Committee for the Office of Faculty Leadership and Success. Provost Furton remarked that after nearly three years at the helm of the Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine (HWCOC), Dean Robert Sackstein has announced that he will be accepting the position of Senior Vice President for Global Medical Affairs at FIU. Provost Furton mentioned that Dr. Juan Cendan, Vice Dean, Executive Associate Dean for Student Affairs, and Professor of Surgery at HWCOC, is now serving as Interim Dean of HWCOC, adding that Dr. Cendan is a widely published researcher and recently received the Association of American Medical Colleges' Thomas Hale Award for Investigators. Provost Furton introduced Mr. Ryan Kelley, Director for the Office of Civil Rights Compliance and Accessibility, formerly Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Access (IDEA) and Title IX Coordinator for the University.

## **2. Approval of Minutes**

Committee Chair Lowell asked that the Committee approve the minutes of the meeting held on June 16, 2021. A motion was made and unanimously passed to approve the minutes of the Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee meeting held on June 16, 2021.

## **3. Action Items**

### **AP1. Tenure as a Condition of Employment Nominations**

Committee Chair Lowell explained that there are six (6) Tenure as a Condition of Employment (TACOE) nominations, adding 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 institution. Provost Furton pointed out that TACOE is reserved for individuals who have achieved highly prestigious academic careers at other peer institutions, adding that TACOE candidates have either received or are eligible for tenure at their previous institution. He explained 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 the FIU Board of Trustees. Provost Furton indicated that the TACOE candidates have been vetted and briefly commented on each of the TACOE candidates.

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 the approval of six (6) candidates for Tenure as a Condition of Employment as specified in the Board materials.

### **AP2. 2022-2023 Legislative Budget Requests**

Committee Chair Lowell indicated that the 2022-23 Legislative Budget Requests (LBRs) have been formally submitted to the Florida Board of Governors (BOG) for review and approval. Provost Furton presented the 2022-23 LBRs for Committee review, pointing out that the LBRs are a result of an assessment of needs developed by the BOG, in cooperation with State University System of Florida (SUS) institutions. He indicated that the BOG requires that all SUS institutions submit their LBRs to their respective Board of Trustees for review and approval. He commented that FIU is requesting \$4,850,188 for the Strategic Degree Implementation Plan, adding that the Plan will transform and reengineer how strategic degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and health are taught and optimized to increase retention, graduation rates, post degree marketability, career placement, and advancement or entrepreneurship. Provost Furton remarked that FIU is also requesting \$15.15M, recurring, for the Program of Distinction in Environmental Resilience, stating that the Program is designed to advance current research programs and lead to innovative solutions for enhancing local, regional, and national resilience to environmental change, including preparing the workforce needed to address these challenges.

In response to Committee Chair Lowell, Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs Elizabeth M. Bejar described active learning classrooms as physically designed to enhance the teaching and learning experience, noting that they use smartboards, have flexible seating arrangements, and can be adjusted to meet the daily or weekly group needs of any class setting. Further responding to Committee Chair Lowell, Sr. VP Bejar explained that the faculty Sandbox is an opportunity for faculty, in their professional development, to work with other faculty on

improving their pedagogical practices, as well as with instructional designers in designing state of the art objectives to improve teaching and learning. Trustee Joerg Reinhold shared his personal experience with active learning classrooms, noting positive student learning outcomes.

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 2022-2023 Legislative Budget Requests:

- Strategic Degree Implementation Plan Request: \$ 4,850,188
- Program of Distinction in Environmental Resilience Request: \$15,150,000

### **AP3. Textbook and Instructional Materials Affordability Annual Report**

Sr. VP Bejar presented the Textbook and Instructional Materials Affordability annual report for Committee review. She indicated that each year, the Board of Trustees is required to review the University's efforts towards making textbooks more affordable for students. She pointed out that the annual reporting includes the University's established practices in terms of compliance requirements by the State as well as reporting on the efficacy of new, innovative initiatives. She acknowledged Director of Academic Support Services, Birgitta Rausch Montoto, who has been leading the University's implementation effort and follow through with affordability requirements; Kenia Junco, Director of Business Services; and Nicholas (Nick) Agnone, regional manager for Barnes & Noble.

Sr. VP Bejar commented that 48% of fall 2020 sections and 47% of spring 2021 sections had no textbook costs associated with them, noting that across the fall 2020 and spring 2021 semesters, nearly 30% of course sections were considered to have low textbook costs, which she pointed out is identified by the state as less than \$20 per credit hour. She pointed out that the University met compliance, explaining that the reporting requirement is that faculty provide the list of required textbooks 45 days prior to the first day of class for each semester thereby allowing students to have ample opportunity for comparison shopping.

Sr. VP Bejar referred to the agenda materials where University initiatives designed to reduce the costs of textbooks and instructional materials are detailed. She commented on the Panther Book Pack Inclusive Affordability Pilot Program for fall 2021, noting that the program is focused on students being opted in. She added that materials are available the first day of classes, if not prior. She pointed out that students having access to materials on the first day of class is a national determinant for student success and first year retention, primarily in the university setting. Sr. VP Bejar explained that the current program is a two-year pilot for undergraduate students only and is subscription based by the semester. She commented that students that were opted in for fall 2021 had a cost of \$20 per credit hour for all of their course materials, adding that this is a negotiated flat rate in partnership with Barnes & Noble.

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 Annual Report.

#### **AP4. Proposed Amendment to Regulation FIU-2501 Student Conduct and Honor Code**

Sr. VP Bejar acknowledged the work of Michelle Horvath, Assistant Dean of Students; Brenezza (Breny) Garcia, Associate Vice President of Student Health and Wellness; and Associate General Counsel Iris Elijah. Sr. VP Bejar also acknowledged General Counsel Castillo, noting that together the team collaborated on revisions in order to ensure that the Student Conduct and Honor Code is strong, robust, and appropriate. She presented the proposed amendment to Regulation FIU-2501 Student Conduct and Honor Code for Committee review, noting that the revisions consist of formatting changes, scrivener's errors, and changes in response to the 2021 legislative session. She referred to the updated document which corrects a typo in the originally printed materials and requested an additional change consisting of the removal of the following proposed redline addition: *"If a Respondent elects to have an advisor speak on their behalf, the Respondent is endorsing the veracity (truthfulness) of all statements made by the advisor."* She provided an overview of the various requirements from Sections 1004.097 and 1006.60 of the Florida Statutes, adding that several revisions to section 1006.60, Florida Statutes, were already in practice, but the specific language was added for consistency.

Trustee Marc D. Sarnoff commended the team that was involved in the proposed amendment.

A motion was made and unanimously passed that the FIU Board of Trustees Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee recommend that the Florida International University Board of Trustees approve the revisions to Regulation FIU-2501 Student Conduct and Honor Code, and delegate 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.

#### **AP5. Florida Educational Equity Act Report, 2021 reporting year**

Committee Chair Lowell referred Trustees to the section of the Equity Report that was inadvertently not included in the originally printed board book, noting that said section has been provided to the Trustees. Emmanuele Bowles, Director, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, presented the 2021 Florida Educational Equity Act Report for Committee review. She explained that equity reports for SUS institutions will now be listed on the BOG's website, adding that the BOG is also creating an online dashboard that will include SUS equity report data. She commented on academic programs, noting increases, across gender and racial groups, in the number of Florida Community College A.A. transfers and in the retention rates of full-time First-Time-In-College (FTIC) freshmen. Dr. Bowles mentioned that the area for improvement relates to the enrollment of FTIC students. She remarked on graduation participation, specifically highlighting increases in master's degrees awarded to female and Black students, and in terms of doctoral degrees, she mentioned increases in the representation of Hispanic and Black students. She pointed out that the area for improvement relates to the representation rate of female students in doctoral programs.

Dr. Bowles explained that of the 12 required reporting elements for the athletics program, FIU only has two (2) areas for improvement, specifically the female student athlete participation rate gap as it relates to male participants and significant differences that exist between the men's baseball facilities and the women's softball facilities. She mentioned that the Report details the improvement plans that will help address the aforementioned areas for improvement. Dr. Bowles remarked on increases to the number of Black tenured faculty and Hispanic tenure track faculty members, stating that areas

for improvement pertain to increasing female faculty and minority tenured faculty representation. She pointed out that the Report includes FIU's institutional diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) goals and the departmental action plans across the University that will help to level the field and move the DEI needle forward in creating a more equitable and inclusive environment.

Trustee Marc D. Sarnoff commented on national university enrollment trends, noting that it is estimated that there will be two (2) females for every male in the university system in the next four years and inquired as to FIU's female to male enrollment ratios. Vice President for Enrollment Management and Services Kevin Coughlin, Jr. explained that FIU's female population is and historically has been approximately 57% for fall terms.

Trustee Chanel T. Rowe commented on the gap in the distribution of scholarship funds among ethnic groups, specifically referring to the Presidential Scholars, Ambassador Scholarships, and the Gold and Blue Scholarships and how Hispanics are the recipients of 70% of said scholarships, while African American students are receiving the same scholarships at rates ranging from less than 10% to less than 5%. She added that in most cases, White students are receiving more in scholarship funds than Asian or Black students and inquired as to the University's efforts relating to ensuring equity in the distribution of funds to the students with the most need. Dr. Bowles explained that the scholarships that Trustee Rowe referred to is indicative of only a subset as the Equity Report does not highlight all available scholarships, pointing out that the University aims to award scholarships in a manner that is reflective of the University's population. Dr. Bowles added that the Equity Report describes the University's efforts as it pertains to working with community-based organizations and Title I schools, noting that this collaboration helps attract a more diverse student population and allows for opportunities to provide micro-scholarships in order to ensure that there are no financial barriers to education. Also responding to Trustee Rowe, VP Coughlin remarked on the University's intentionality as it relates to academic excellence while also creating new pathways that provide access, and while, currently, most may not provide scholarship funding, new pathways associated with scholarships are being developed. Senior Vice President for Human Resources and Vice Provost for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion El pagnier K. Hudson remarked that the University is enthusiastic and equally realistic about the time that systemic change takes.

In response to Board Chair Dean C. Colson, VP Coughlin commented on the data related to FTIC, explaining that the University offers a number of pathways, including part-time enrollment, in order to ensure student access, success, and retention. Also responding to Board Chair Colson, VP Coughlin estimated that Black students represent 12% of the University's total enrollment. Provost Furton explained that personalized education pathways help students transition into higher education and help to ensure student success.

Trustee Donna J. Hrinak recommended, for future Equity Reports, that the areas for improvement also include specific metrics relating to what the University plans to accomplish along with a completion deadline. Referring to Trustee Rowe's comments, Committee Chair Lowell requested that future Equity Reports also detail the University's progress towards addressing the equity gaps in scholarship distribution. In response to Trustee Sarnoff, VP Coughlin commented on freshman data and enrollment.

A motion was made and unanimously passed that the FIU Board of Trustees Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee recommend that the Florida International University Board of Trustees approve the Florida Educational Equity Act Report for the 2021 reporting year.

#### **4. Information and Discussion Items**

##### **4.1 Knight Foundation School of Computing and Information Sciences Sublease**

Provost Furton presented a floorplan and provided an overview of the proposed staff and groups to occupy the Knight Foundation space, sectors to be impacted, and return on investment and impact to student success/career development, tech transfer, and deliverables. He referred to the 2025 strategic plan goal relating to amplifying the culture of social innovation and entrepreneurship along with increased opportunities for technology transfer, highlighting the possible advantages related to FIU occupying the space. Provost Furton commented that the space would showcase and connect startups, FIU technologies, and faculty expertise to the MiamiTech ecosystem. He added that the space would also allow the University to embed tech company partners working with FIU faculty and students as part of joint collaborations and has the potential for the recruitment of entrepreneurs for promising FIU tech startups and for attracting partners to license FIU technologies. He also referred to the 2025 strategic plan goal pertaining to supporting and continuing to grow preeminent programs, specifically that the space would showcase the University's preeminent programs, provide a unique platform to engage with companies related to centers of excellence, and conduct research and development with projects that demonstrate commercialization potential.

Provost Furton remarked that the space also would accommodate student presence and activities. He commented on projected positive impacts to metrics, specifically increasing the number of students employed after graduation and increasing the average salary of FIU graduates. He provided an overview of the profit and loss statement, noting future challenges, if the space were to be acquired, with revenue streams to cover space downtown. He remarked on the University's expectation to identify a more favorable lease arrangement within the next four and half years. There was no additional discussion by anyone.

##### **4.2 Academic Affairs Regular Reports**

There were no questions from the Committee members in terms of the Academic Affairs regular reports included as part of the agenda materials.

#### **5. Student Government Updates**

Trustee Alexander Rubido, Student Government President, commented that with the start of the fall semester, student organizations are gathering with well attended events, the Student Space Improvement (Commission) is now operational, and a funding source has been identified for the Student Lounge. He pointed out that the University has made great strides since its opening day on September 14, 1972.

#### **6. Faculty Senate Updates**

Trustee Reinhold, Faculty Senate Chair, commented on the agenda related to the Faculty Senate Meeting scheduled for later in the day, specifically the approval of a Parliamentarian and the election of members to the Faculty Senate Steering Committee. He added that the Faculty Senate Steering

Committee has representation from each University college and school, helps him as the Faculty Senate Chair develop the Faculty Senate agenda, and meets regularly with Provost Furton. He pointed out that he is termed out as Faculty Senate Chair, adding that he will conclude his second and final term on July 31, 2022. He commented that the Advisory Council of Faculty Senates (ACFS) is charged with advising the Chancellor of the SUS, BOG, the State Board of Education, the Legislature, and the Governor among others, pointing out that the ACFS has passed a Resolution opposing statewide restriction or legislation that limits public health mitigation measures in the SUS during a global pandemic.

#### **7. New Business**

No new business was raised.

#### **8. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment**

With no other business, Committee Chair Natasha Lowell adjourned the meeting of the Florida International University Board of Trustees Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee on Tuesday, September 14, 2021, at 12:39 p.m.