



FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE
MINUTES
DECEMBER 3, 2020

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 Claudia Puig at 11:22 AM on Thursday, December 3, 2020 via Zoom.

General Counsel Carlos B. Castillo conducted a roll call of the External Relations Committee members and verified a quorum. Present were Claudia Puig, *Committee Chair*; Marc D. Sarnoff, *Committee Vice Chair*; Jose J. Armas (*joined after roll call*); Leonard Boord; Gerald C. Grant, Jr.; Donna J. Hrinak; and Roger Tovar, *Board Vice Chair*.

Board Chair Dean C. Colson and Trustees Natasha Lowell, Gene Prescott, Joerg Reinhold, and Alexandra Valdes, and University President Mark B. Rosenberg also were in attendance.

2. Approval of Minutes

Committee Chair Puig asked that the Committee approve the Minutes of the meeting held on December 5, 2019. A motion was made and unanimously passed to approve the Minutes of the External Relations Committee Meeting held on December 5, 2019.

3. Information/Discussion Items

3.1 FIU in DC Update

Committee Chair Puig asked Trustees to save the date on Wednesday, March 10, 2021 for the next FIU Day. Vice President of Governmental Relations Michelle L. Palacio pointed out that the legislative session is scheduled to begin on March 2, 2021. She indicated that the State legislature continues to review the process to be followed by visitors, adding that next year's FIU Day may likely be different from prior years in that it will not include a reception and may even be held virtually.

Associate Vice President for Governmental Relations Carlos A. Becerra provided an FIU in Washington, D.C. update, commenting that the US Capital is critical to the University's pursuit of Top-50 ranking. He remarked on advocacy for the University's research priorities, adding that through its access and networks, FIU in D.C. opens doors for faculty researchers. He indicated that FIU in D.C. collaborates with the University's colleges and schools to complement the classroom by placing students in internships and by helping with job placements, upon graduation. Mr. Becerra

mentioned strategic partnerships, building reputation with benchmark institutions, and the D.C. Panther alumni network. He indicated that FIU in D.C. places students/alumni in influential and high-profile organizations, internships, and permanent hires to build reputation. He stated that FIU in D.C. also hosts tailored programs with influential audiences and positions University researchers on national panels and conferences.

Mr. Becerra referred to the survey data reported on by 160over90 at the recent ComPASS session, highlighting how the results aligned with FIU in D.C.'s mission and objectives. He indicated that FIU in D.C.'s advocacy helped to secure \$21.2M in grants and \$68.2M in appropriations bills. He mentioned that over 1,000 students took part in classes, fly-ins, or internships in Washington, D.C. Mr. Becerra pointed out that FIU in D.C. hosted over 65 events and that faculty testified at three Congressional hearings and participated in 22 other briefings. He remarked on research funding for origami antennas, the Environmental Protection Agency's water quality testing, military veterans prosthetic testing, and Cold Spray technologies.

Mr. Becerra shared images of the first 10 Hamilton scholars, adding that FIU in D.C. has helped in securing internships and providing stipends for the student group. He presented a map that highlighted student intern and alumni presence on Capitol Hill and commented on successful alumni who are currently serving as policy makers for Latin America and the Caribbean. He provided a federal update, indicating that FIU in D.C. continues to monitor fiscal year 2021 appropriations bills, for the potential of additional COVID-19 stimulus and the extension of student loan forgiveness, and any possible changes to Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). In terms of the new congress and administration, he mentioned a greater focus on minority serving institutions and research funding. Mr. Becerra commented on the review of proposals for the next location for FIU in D.C., noting that as opportunities are examined, the focus remains on locations that offer higher exposure, a dedicated classroom, and flexibility to convene executive briefings.

3.2 Marketing and Communications Update

Senior Vice President, External Relations, Strategic Communications and Marketing, Sandra B. Gonzalez-Levy indicated that the Diversity in Marketing Action Report, which was included as part of the agenda materials, responds to Trustee Leonard Board's request. She noted that the report highlights items and actions taken to ensure that the University's diverse students, faculty and staff were represented. She pointed out that the FIU Marketing Committee was established in September 2018 and continues to meet on a monthly basis, adding that Board Vice Chair Roger Tovar is a member of the committee. Sr. VP Gonzalez-Levy stated that the brand toolkit was launched, that the brand tracker went live, and that an invitation to negotiate (ITN) for media services is in progress.

Assistant Vice President for Marketing and Branding Eduardo Merille commented on the work related to brand strategy. He remarked on the key findings related to the brand perception survey, namely, that despite the COVID-19 pandemic, most brand metrics remained level and that associations with news of the 2018 bridge collapse declined significantly, with news related to rankings, programs, and COVID-19 response taking its place. Further referring to the survey findings, he pointed out that the largest gains were among faculty, who increased in likelihood to recommend and ratings for academic reputation.

Mr. Merille indicated that 160over90 conducted an academic peer study, noting that those surveyed included presidents, provosts, directors of admissions, and researchers. He summarized the main findings, noting that when asked about how academic reputation is judged, the majority of respondents identified notable research by professors, well-known faculty members, and the reputation of successful alumni. In terms of research, he stated that the majority of respondents selected public impact of research and publications in top-tier international journals. Mr. Merille provided an overview of the top four publications that the respondents selected when asked about the main sources for information about trends in higher education. He pointed out that the survey asked respondents to explain things that influenced their rating of FIU's academic reputation, adding that this question directly correlates with *U.S. News & World Report's* survey. He mentioned that the University's average academic reputation rating was a 3.2 and that respondents identified FIU's distinguished faculty and quality of education as factors that influenced their rating. He stated that the largest and most meaningful difference in ratings of FIU's academic reputation is between those with any connection and those that indicate no connection with FIU and that the difference represents a full half-point in average rating.

Mr. Merille remarked on paid media implementation, highlighting the University's media partners and the related ads that are currently running with said partners. He commented on the Greater Miami campaign and provided examples of the college/unit-level campaigns. Referring to the recent ComPASS session, he summarized best practices and key take-aways.

4. New Business

No new business was raised.

5. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

With no other business, Committee Chair Claudia Puig adjourned the meeting of the Florida International University Board of Trustees External Relations Committee on Thursday, December 3, 2020 at 12:05 PM.