



**FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
FULL BOARD MEETING  
FEBRUARY 23, 2021  
MINUTES**

**1. Call to Order and Chair's Remarks**

Board Chair Dean C. Colson convened the meeting of the Florida International University Board of Trustees at 1:38 p.m. on Tuesday, February 23, 2021 at the FIU, Modesto A. Maidique Campus, Graham Center Ballrooms and via Zoom.

General Counsel Carlos B. Castillo conducted roll call of the Florida International University Board of Trustees and verified a quorum. Present were Dean C. Colson, *Board Chair*; Roger Tovar, *Board Vice Chair*; Cesar L. Alvarez (*via Zoom*); Jose J. Armas; Leonard Boord; Donna J. Hrinak (*via Zoom*); Natasha Lowell; Gene Prescott; Claudia Puig; Joerg Reinhold; Chanel T. Rowe; Marc D. Sarnoff; and Alexandra Valdes.

Board Chair Colson welcomed Trustees and University administrators. He welcomed Trustees participating via Zoom and the University community accessing the meeting with the webcast. On behalf of the Board, he welcomed newly appointed Trustee, Chanel T. Rowe. He mentioned that upon the lifting of COVID-related restrictions on gatherings, the Board looks forward to an opportunity to recognize and thank Mr. Gerald C. Grant, Jr. and Mr. Michael G. Joseph for their service on the Board.

Board Chair Colson commented that the Board would welcome Professor Les Standiford, founder and director of FIU's Creative Writing Program, later in the meeting. Board Chair Colson mentioned two of Professor Standiford's books, *Palm Beach*, *Mar-a-Lago*, and *the Rise of America's Xanadu* and *Last Train to Paradise*, adding that he was pleased to share these autographed books with each member of the Board.

**2. Public Appearances**

*There were no public appearances.*

**3. Foundation Report**

FIU Foundation, Inc. Board of Directors Chair Humberto "Burt" Cabañas reported that the Next Horizon Campaign has, as of January 15, 2021, raised \$604M, or 81% of its \$750M goal. He described financial highlights, through the period ending December 31, 2020. He specifically noted that cash contributions are ahead of plan by \$3M, that there is favorable variance of \$38M in investment returns, that \$10.1M in program and general support to FIU is less than the budget but is primarily due to the timing of expenses, and that the favorable variance of \$1.1M in operating

expenses was a result of the continued COVID-19 impacts. Foundation Board Chair Cabañas referred to Foundation Treasurer Andre L. Teixeira's earlier report at the Board's Finance and Facilities Committee Meeting, commenting that for the first six months of the fiscal year, \$33.4M was raised, adding that \$18.7M of said philanthropy was the total for cash gifts.

Foundation Board Chair Cabañas introduced Mr. Brian Breittholz, noting that Mr. Breittholz has recently joined FIU and is serving as the University's Associate Vice President of Alumni Relations. He also commented on the recently created FIU Foundation Office of Inclusive Philanthropy (FOIP), stating that said office would focus on eradicating barriers related to inclusive philanthropy and providing funding solutions that will help to affect change for the University's diverse students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community. Foundation Board Chair Cabañas remarked on the goals of FOIP, specifically positioning the FIU Foundation, Inc. as the thought leaders of inclusive philanthropy and recruiting, increasing, and diversifying FIU's philanthropic donor base. He reported that as of January 31, 2021, the Foundation's total investment portfolio stands at approximately \$342.3M and that the Total Managed Assets returned 15.9%, noting that J.P. Morgan officially assumed management of the portfolio as of January 1, 2021 acting as the Foundation's outsourced Chief Investment Officer.

Board Chair Colson indicated that he would proceed to take the agenda out of order, specifically taking the Consent Agenda and Action Items prior to engaging in the repopulation discussion.

#### **4. President's Report**

University President Mark B. Rosenberg commented that the University's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives are on schedule. He remarked that the Ignite campaign has raised over \$30M since its inception 10 years ago, adding that he would initiate individual conversations with the Board members regarding the campaign. He indicated that City of Miami Mayor Francis X. Suarez appointed Vice President for Engagement Saif Y. Ishaq as the Mayor's Senior Advisor for Innovation and Technology. President Rosenberg highlighted the University's performance as it pertains to the latest rankings by *U.S. News & World Report*, specifically, that FIU is ranked #42 overall for online bachelor's programs among public universities, that the online master's engineering program ranked no. 39, and that the online MBA program ranked No. 41. He stated that FIU was ranked #1 in the nation for the most Quality Matters certified online classes.

President Rosenberg mentioned that the University's Wall of Wind received a \$5.62M grant for hurricane research, adding that there are only eight (8) National Science Foundation (NSF)-supported experimental facilities in the United States, and only two for wind engineering. He remarked on the \$1M jobs initiative grant from Bank of America. He stated that FIU researcher Yuk-Ching Tse-Dinh received a \$1.6M grant that will enable her to continue her work in virus and bacteria replication, particularly as it relates to COVID-19, and that a \$10.3M NSF grant enables the University to improve data sharing bandwidth from 600 to 800 gigabits per second in terms of transmission speed. President Rosenberg remarked that the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation awarded FIU \$1M to help preserve the oral history of local communities and a \$4.63M research grant that aims to help vulnerable communities prepare for and recover from disasters. He stated that a team of FIU researchers has trained detector dogs to accurately identify the COVID-19 virus.

President Rosenberg indicated that two (2) FIU alumni have received appointments under the Biden administration, noting that Gabriela Castillo will be serving as the Director of Public Affairs in the US Department of Commerce, and Juan Sabater will be serving as the Special Assistant in the Office of Water. He mentioned that Pierina Anton Lopez is FIU's first recipient of the Doland Payne International Development Fellowship. He commented that all four Miami-Dade County Public Schools (MDCPS) Teacher of the Year finalists are FIU alumni, adding that two-time FIU alumna Teresa Murphy is now MDCPS' 2022 Francisco R. Walker Teacher of the Year and that over the years, at least 12 FIU alumni have earned Teacher of the Year. President Rosenberg pointed out that alumnae Margie Stein and Nataly Neuman created a sustainable, reusable cutlery line to ease pandemic anxiety.

President Rosenberg mentioned that the Chaplin School of Hospitality and Tourism Management has partnered with the Women's Hospitality Initiative (WHI) to implement WHI's groundbreaking academic course, "From the Classroom to the Boardroom: Leadership for Women in Hospitality." He remarked that FIU's College of Business has introduced a Professional MBA Online in Sports Management developed in partnership with Real Madrid Graduate School. He commented that FIU researchers at the FIU Jorge M. Pérez Metropolitan Center developed a tool to track the local economy's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. President Rosenberg indicated that the University's Global Water for Sustainability (GLOWS) Program has been very successful in delivering clean water solutions around the world, adding that GLOWS has teams working across the globe, with projects in Ghana, Mali, Niger, Rwanda, Tanzania, Kenya, Burkina Faso, Mozambique and the country of Georgia in the South Caucasus region of Europe. He further stated that the University's new residence hall is nearly complete, that the Marine Academy of Science and Technology (MAST) building is undergoing construction at the FIU Biscayne Bay Campus, that the University broke ground on the Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) phase II building, and that significant progress is being made on the construction of the Trish and Dan Bell Chapel.

President Rosenberg presented a video clip that featured the Vice-Mayor of Miami Shores, Alice Burch, in which she discussed the importance of FIU's environmental resources. President Rosenberg referred to a slide that displayed the names of the University support staff involved in Board of Trustees meeting logistics.

## **5. Action Items – Consent Agenda**

Board Chair Colson explained that the Consent Agenda was amended to remove agenda item FF3, which pertains to the Commencement Conditions Addendum for the Hotel, Conference Center, and Alumni Center, noting that the Finance and Facilities Committee tabled the item.

A motion was made and unanimously passed to accept the amended Consent Agenda, and members of the Board unanimously approved the following actions:

- **BT1 - BT2. Minutes, October 28, 2020 and Minutes, December 3, 2020** - Approval of Minutes of the FIU Board of Trustees, Full Board meetings held on October 28, 2020 and on December 3, 2020.

- **FF1. Proposed Regulation FIU-1115 Lost/Abandoned Property** - Approve Regulation FIU-1115 Lost/Abandoned Property, 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 or as a result of the regulation-making process.
- **FF2. FDOT-FIU Locally Funded Agreement, Transfer of \$9,125,364 Settlement Funds for Design and Construction of Pedestrian Bridge and Associated Improvements** - (i) approve the Locally Funded Agreement (LFA) between FDOT and FIU, (ii) authorize the transfer in the amount of \$9,125,364 of FIU Funds to FDOT for the design and construction of the UniversityCity Prosperity Project pedestrian bridge and associated plaza, walkway and roadway improvements, and (iii) delegate to the University President, or his designee, the authority to execute the LFA and to amend the LFA to accommodate any technical changes requested by FDOT in accordance with the terms of the LFA.
- **FF4. Approval of Contract greater than or equal to 3,000,000:**
  - **PUR-00964 for Elsevier ScienceDirect Subscription Renewal, Vendor: Elsevier B.V.** - Pursuant to the Delegations of Authority from the Florida International University Board of Trustees to the University President, as reflected in the Resolution on the President's Powers and Duties approved by the Board of Trustees on March 4, 2019, (i) approve the University entering into the contract as described in the Board materials and (ii) authorize the University President or his designee to execute, on behalf of the University, the aforementioned contract.
- **AP1. Tenure as a Condition of Employment Nominations** - Approve three (3) candidates for Tenure as a Condition of Employment as specified in the Board materials.
- **AP2. Approval of Notice of Change to Approved Revised Regulation FIU-105 Sexual Harassment (Title IX) and Sexual Misconduct** - Approve the amendment of Regulation FIU-105 Sexual Harassment (Title IX) and Sexual Misconduct without a date restriction and delegate authority to the University President to approve any subsequent amendments that are based on comments to the Regulation received from the Florida Board of Governors and as a result of the regulation-making process.
- **AP3. Amendments to Regulation FIU-1103 Textbook Affordability** - Approve the amendments to Regulation FIU-1103 Textbook Affordability and delegate authority to the University President to approve any subsequent amendments that are based on comments to the Regulation received from the Florida Board of Governors and as a result of the regulation-making process.
- **AP4. New Program Proposal: Bachelor of Arts in Global Educational Studies** – Approve the Bachelor of Arts in Global Educational Studies (CIP 13.0701) new program proposal.

- **AP5. New Program Proposal: Bachelor of Arts in Global Sustainable Tourism -** Approve the Bachelor of Arts in Global Sustainable Tourism (CIP: 30.3301) new program proposal.
- **AP6. New Program Proposal: Master of Science in Research Design and Analysis -** Approve the Master of Science in Research Design and Analysis (CIP: 13.0603) new program proposal.
- **G1. Direct Support Organizations Board Appointments -** Approve the appointment of the individuals listed in the board materials to the Florida International University Foundation, Inc. Board of Directors.

## 6. Action Items

### AC1. Performance Based Funding and Emerging Preeminence Metrics

#### A. Performance Based Funding and Emerging Preeminence Status – Data Integrity Certification

#### B. Audit of Performance Based Funding and Emerging Preeminent Metrics Data Integrity

Trustee Gene Prescott, Vice Chair of the Audit and Compliance Committee, noted that the BOG requires the Board Chair and University President to execute jointly a Data Integrity Certification affirmatively certifying that the University maintains reliable systems as they relate to BOG data and reporting requirements. Additionally, he remarked that the University's Chief Audit Executive Trevor L. Williams conducted an audit of the University's processes completeness, accuracy, and timeliness. Trustee Prescott pointed out that Mr. Williams issued an opinion stating that the system, in all material respects, continues to function in a reliable manner. Trustee Prescott stated that the Audit and Compliance Committee recommended the item for Board approval.

A motion was made and unanimously passed that the FIU Board of Trustees:

1. Approve the Performance Based Funding and Emerging Preeminence Status – Data Integrity Certification to be signed by the Chair of the FIU Board of Trustees and the University President; and
2. Approve the Audit Report - Audit of the Performance Based Funding and Emerging Preeminent Metrics Data Integrity.

### AP7. Placing the Name “Knight Foundation School of Computing and Information Sciences” on a Portion of the Exterior of the Building Housing the FIU School of Computing and Information Sciences on the Modesto A. Maidique Campus

Trustee Natasha Lowell, Chair of the Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee, indicated that in light of the significant grant from the Knight Foundation, the University proposes to (i) rename the FIU School of Computing and Information Sciences as the “Knight Foundation School of Computing and Information Sciences” (the “School”) and (ii) prominently display “Knight Foundation School of Computing and Information Sciences” on the exterior of the building housing the School (the “Building”), in a manner to be mutually agreed upon by FIU and the Knight

Foundation. She added that the Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee recommended the item for Board approval.

A motion was made and unanimously passed that the FIU Board of Trustees approve the placing of the name “Knight Foundation School of Computing and Information Sciences” on a portion of the exterior of the building housing the FIU School of Computing and Information Sciences.

## **7. Status Reports, Board Committees**

### **Audit and Compliance Committee Report**

Trustee Prescott provided highlights from the Audit and Compliance Committee’s meeting earlier in the day. He indicated that Mr. Williams reported that there are eight (8) audits in various stages of completion and also provided a follow-up status report on prior audit recommendations. Trustee Prescott pointed out that Chief Compliance and Privacy Officer, Ms. Jennifer LaPorta, provided updates related to Global Risk and Foreign Influence governance activities, the University-wide three-year policy review process, and additional process improvements. He pointed out that as is mandated by the Committee’s Charter, the Committee met with senior management to discuss the audit process.

### **Finance and Facilities Committee Report**

Trustee Leonard Boord, Chair of the Finance and Facilities Committee, provided highlights from the Committee’s meeting earlier in the day. He reported that the Committee approved the lease agreement for a new location for FIU in Washington, D.C. He pointed out that the Committee approved agreements with Carrier Corporation and Salesforce.com and change orders for the purchase orders with Google and Facebook/Instagram. He commented on FIU’s Financial Statement Audit for the fiscal year ending on June 30, 2020, stating that the University received an unmodified, or unqualified, opinion. He pointed out that operating revenues were below estimates by \$30M and operating expenses were below estimates by \$32M.

### **Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee Report**

Trustee Lowell provided highlights from the Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee’s meeting earlier in the day. She commented that Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs Elizabeth M. Bejar provided an update on the University’s reaffirmation of accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). Trustee Lowell indicated that the student and faculty representatives on the Board provided updates.

### **Strategic Planning Committee Report**

Board Vice Chair Roger Tovar, Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee, provided highlights from the Committee’s meeting earlier in the day. He indicated that Provost and Executive Vice President Kenneth G. Furton provided updates on improvements in University rankings as highlighted in the 2020 National Science Foundation Higher Education Research and Development Report. He added that Provost Furton presented the proposed plan to strategically hire 110 faculty members within five years to achieve top-50 in *U.S. News & World Report* rankings and also provided an overview of FIU Online operations showcasing its current growth and plans to acquire additional space in the SIPA phase II building.

## **Governance Committee Report**

Board Chair Colson commented on plans to engage with an Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) consultant to help the Board in the process of developing goals for further enhancing the board's effectiveness.

### **4. President's Report**

#### **• Repopulation Discussion**

Board Chair Colson resumed the earlier discussion on repopulating FIU campuses, referring to the memorandum he distributed to the Trustees. He commented on weekly calls with the Board of Governors, adding that all institutions within the State University System are planning to transition to normal operations by the summer B semester with a full return to normal operations by the fall semester. He remarked that said transition is based on the continuation of positive trends and the availability of vaccines for all those that are interested in obtaining them. He indicated that he asked President Rosenberg to prepare for the possibility of returning to pre-COVID conditions, adjusted by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines, by summer A or B.

President Rosenberg commented on the University's COVID-19 testing capabilities, specifically that there are seven (7) on-campus testing sites, that the CLIA approved lab can run up to 490 specimens per day, and that the University continues its efforts relating to surveillance testing. He pointed out that currently 18 employees and 24 students are in quarantine and that current CDC guidelines require quarantine for either seven (7) days with the requirement to provide a negative RT-PCR or 10 days without the requirement to provide a negative RT-PCR. He mentioned that the University is currently administering phase two of the Moderna vaccine to the 65 or older members of the community and to all healthcare personnel who have direct patient contact.

President Rosenberg remarked that, effective March 1, 2021, all FIU employees who have a private office have been asked to return to in-person work for the full five-day cycle. He stated that employees who do not have a private office are asked to participate in a three-day rotation in order to maintain CDC distance parameters. He added that the University remains sensitive to issues that will impact faculty and staff alike in a full return to campus, further stating that said employees should address these issues directly with their supervisors. He commented that faculty are being asked to be on campus as much as possible in accordance with class schedule, office hours, student consultation, and research demands. He stated that faculty are being asked to provide assurances to students that they may safely return to campus.

President Rosenberg pointed out that for the current spring semester, the University is offering 9,000 course sections to approximately 50,000 enrolled students, stating that FIU is on track to achieve a 60% four-year graduation rate. He mentioned that the University expects to graduate around 7,000 students at the end of the current spring semester. He commented that the University has significantly reduced the number of students in remote sections and that FIU is eliminating remote instruction entirely for the summer terms, unless conditions require a transition to remote instruction. President Rosenberg remarked that the University is gradually expanding online instruction following BOG guidelines, adding that nearly 2,100 online courses are being offered in the current semester. He indicated that, for the current semester, nearly 1,800 courses are fully on-campus and another 3,000 courses offer some face-to-face on-campus interaction with faculty.

President Rosenberg commented that the University's faculty and professional staff have seamlessly fulfilled the functions of their respective roles despite very difficult conditions, adding that FIU has been able to keep its workforce intact with minimum layoffs and disruptions. He mentioned that more on-campus services will be available in the weeks to follow, adding that the University is seeking sound approaches to opening food venues on FIU campuses. He pointed out that FIU continues to require masks on campus at all times, in addition to a strict adherence to other safety protocols. President Rosenberg referred to the detailed memorandum, FIU's Continued Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, which he previously provided to the Trustees.

Trustees engaged in a robust discussion regarding the University's repopulation efforts. Trustee Joerg Reinhold commented on the Faculty Senate meeting that was simultaneously taking place. He added that faculty have expressed sentiments of frustration, confusion, and fear, and that a number of the sentiments relate to changing directives and the scheduling of in-person classes for the summer A and C semesters. He remarked that there is a greater sense of comfort from the faculty in returning to campus for the fall semester. He added that the mid-semester push to repopulate erodes trust and is not necessarily justified by a lack of productivity among the faculty and staff. Trustee Reinhold mentioned that a number of faculty members already have on-campus presence.

Board Chair Colson remarked that the University cannot wait until June to begin planning for the resumption of normal operations, adding that measures can be rolled back if it is no longer safe. Trustee Alexandra Valdes commented that while the surrounding community has returned to relative normalcy, FIU campuses have all of the necessary safety measures in place but have not yet made the same transition. Trustee Marc D. Sarnoff mentioned that Miami-Dade County's positivity rate has been descending and is currently at 5.8%, stating that he was disappointed to recently learn of the Provost's memorandum concerning faculty. Trustee Sarnoff added that while staff are required to provide a doctor's note, faculty are not required to present a document from a physician and basically can simply state that they are not comfortable in returning to campus. He stated that, at a minimum, the University should resume operations, as allowed by the CDC, by summer B with the removal of remote instruction as an option. He commented that social interactions are a critical component of the university experience.

Trustee Leonard Boord remarked that mask wearing and physical distancing is frequently not observed in social settings. He added that the sense of community that University students experienced pre-COVID is interrupted given the requirements of mask wearing and physical distancing, stating that a phased repopulation appears to be a more realistic approach. Trustee Jose J. Armas indicated that there may never be a time in the foreseeable future when mask wearing and physical distancing are not being observed. He added that the University should continue to survey the students and the faculty, as this will help the Board in its decision-making process, and that the Board should follow the recommendations on the return to in-person classes as set forth by the BOG. Trustee Claudia Puig remarked on repopulating in a progressive manner beginning with the summer A semester. Trustee Reinhold mentioned that while faculty are not insensitive to staff concerns, faculty have frequent and direct contact with students and therefore, likely to have the highest level of exposure. Trustee Reinhold commented that he opposed a return to normal operations for the summer A and C terms.



Board Chair Colson asked if there were any objections from the Board members regarding his request to the University President to begin the process of repopulating FIU campuses with increased student and faculty presence by the summer A or B terms. Trustee Donna J. Hrinak remarked that she did not object to the question, adding that within the last two (2) months, 44 million people in the United States have received the COVID vaccine and that plans should be made in light of the rapidly changing situation even if they later have to be changed. Board Chair Colson remarked on ongoing efforts that would expand the list of those allowed to receive a vaccine to include all university faculty. Board Vice Chair Tovar mentioned the most recent faculty and staff repopulation webinar that was hosted by the Division of Human Resources, noting that the steps taken by the University to maintain a safe campus were discussed at length at said webinar and that there are avenues for addressing concerns from the vulnerable members of the faculty and staff. He stated that the University's online offerings are robust for those that prefer that method of learning, but that in-person learning is essential to the University's mission.

Board Chair Colson commented that, based on his directive, President Rosenberg will provide a repopulation update to the Board's Strategic Planning Committee. Board Chair Colson remarked on the importance of providing the full higher education experience, to the extent possible, under the current CDC restrictions. Trustee Boord commented that repopulation on a full scale is unmanageable given that the University's infrastructure does not allow it under physical distancing guidelines, adding that this inevitably leads into a phased transition. Board Vice Chair Tovar remarked that University facilities account for approximately two (2) million square feet of space, commenting that space analysis work has been and continues to be performed.

In response to Trustee Sarnoff, President Rosenberg confirmed that all faculty and staff 65 years or older have either received the COVID vaccine or have the opportunity to receive the vaccine at the on-campus vaccination site. President Rosenberg commented that he and the Provost concur that there needs to be at least two (2) plans, adding that one plan would take into account the physical distancing guidelines and that the other plan not restricted by said guidelines would eliminate remote instruction while responsibly approximating the next normal. President Rosenberg remarked that the University has addressed the concerns of faculty and staff who have special circumstances.

## **8. New Business**

Board Chair Colson introduced Professor Standiford, adding that among his works is *The Man Who Invented Christmas*. Board Chair Colson remarked that the book is a reminder of how Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* came into existence, adding that a film of the same title and based on Professor Standiford's book was released in 2017 to critical acclaim. The Board welcomed Professor Standiford who discussed one his most notable Florida narratives, *Last Train to Paradise*. In response to Board Chair Colson, Professor Standiford remarked that his research for the *Last Train to Paradise* led to his most recent work, *Palm Beach, Mar-a-Lago*.

On behalf of the Board, Board Chair Colson recognized and thanked Trustee Puig for her leadership at the helm of the Board where she served for two (2) consecutive terms as Chair. Board Chair Colson presented Trustee Puig with a personalized chair.

### **9. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment**

With no other business, Board Chair Dean C. Colson adjourned the meeting of the Florida International University Board of Trustees Full Board on Tuesday, February 23, 2021 at 3:42 p.m.

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Dean C. Colson  
*Chair*  
*FIU Board of Trustees*

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Mark B. Rosenberg  
*Corporate Secretary*  
*FIU Board of Trustees*