



FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
FEBRUARY 23, 2021

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

The Florida International University Board of Trustees' Strategic Planning Committee meeting was called to order by Committee Chair Roger Tovar at 11:55 a.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 Strategic Planning Committee members and verified a quorum. Present were Trustees Roger Tovar, *Committee Chair and Board Vice Chair*; Cesar L. Alvarez, *Committee Vice Chair (via Zoom; joined after roll call)*; Leonard Boord; Donna J. Hrinak (*via Zoom*); Gene Prescott; Joerg Reinhold; and Alexandra Valdes.

Board Chair Dean C. Colson, Trustees Jose J. Armas, Natasha Lowell, Claudia Puig, Chanel T. Rowe, and Marc D. Sarnoff and University President Mark B. Rosenberg also were in attendance.

Committee Chair Tovar welcomed all Trustees and members of the University administration. He 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.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

Committee Chair Tovar asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee meetings held on September 9, 2020 and December 3, 2020. A motion was made and unanimously passed to approve the minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee meetings held on September 9, 2020 and December 3, 2020.

**3. Informational and Discussion Items**

**3.1 Rankings Update**

Provost and Executive Vice President Kenneth G. Furton commented that the University monitors 10 different ranking organizations, adding that FIU is ranked top-25 in CollegeNET's Social Mobility Index. He remarked that as the University continues its pursuit of achieving recognition as a top-50 public university in *U.S. News & World Report* rankings, maintaining top-50 ranking in the category of social mobility is also critical to FIU's mission of serving its students and the diverse population of South Florida. Provost Furton pointed out that despite the drop of two spots, FIU remains ranked top-50 by *U.S. News & World Report* for best online programs. He mentioned that since the Committee's last meeting, the University has nine (9) new undergraduate programs ranked top-50 by *U.S. News & World Report*. Provost Furton noted progress towards meeting the 20

strategic plan goals, except for the goals pertaining to auxiliary income and alumni giving. He explained that due to the impact of COVID-19, the University is considering new approaches aimed at improving the alumni giving rate.

Provost Furton highlighted results from the 2020 National Science Foundation (NSF) Higher Education Research and Development (HERD) Report, indicating that in terms of total research expenditures, FIU moved up nine (9) spots and that, when compared to other institutions within the State University System (SUS), FIU was the most improved. He pointed out that FIU has the most rankings improvement in the SUS for the NSF science and engineering categories, specifically for engineering, environmental research, computer science, physical sciences, and social science. Provost Furton commented that FIU is top-50 in psychology, environmental science, computer science, social science, chemistry, and physical sciences, pointing out that the University's highest ranked program is psychology. He remarked that FIU has the largest growth among the SUS in headcount of personnel supported by research grants, adding that FIU is second to the University of Florida. In terms of the non-science and engineering categories, he mentioned that FIU ranks #16 among public universities.

Provost Furton commented on significant increases in research awards and expenditures for the five-year period beginning in 2015. He mentioned that the University is on track to exceed \$400M in research expenditures by 2025. In terms of NSF total research rankings, he pointed out that FIU improved 13 spots and is now ahead of the University of Central Florida. As it relates to NSF rankings, he stated that FIU's Chemistry Department was the most improved of all the departments and is now ranked top-25 after a 33-spot increase, that the Department of Social Sciences improved 20 spots and is now ranked top-30, and that the Department of Physical Sciences moved up into top-50 with a 21-spot increase. He explained that beyond the University's impactful and transformative research and innovations, research grants provide employment opportunities for faculty, staff, and students. He commented on investments to the research infrastructure and presented a photo of a research laboratory on the Modesto A. Maidique Campus that was recently renovated.

Committee Chair Tovar indicated that at each regularly scheduled meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee, Provost Furton will highlight specific FIU schools and programs selected to advance to top-25 or top-50 rankings.

### **3.2 Strategic Hiring Plan**

Provost Furton presented the proposed plan to strategically hire 110 faculty members within five (5) years to achieve top-50 in *U.S. News & World Report* rankings. He indicated that 71 positions are incremental hires, adding that the total cost of 110 faculty positions over the next five (5) years is \$37.7M and that \$12.6M would be funded from the \$32M legislative allocation.

Provost Furton highlighted four overarching categories and their related weight, specifically noting that graduation and retention rates (35%), peer assessment score (20%), faculty resources (20%), and spending per student (10%), account for 80% of *U.S. News & World Report's* ranking. He presented an overview of the budget and related percent of the \$32M allocation for the high-level categories pertaining to learner success and institutional affinity and preeminence and research and innovation.

Also, in terms of said high level-categories, he highlighted the 2020-21 fiscal year allocations with the relative impact scores and detailed the budget, expenses, and remaining funds through December 31, 2020. He commented that only \$1.165M of the first \$15M appropriation remains unspent.

Provost Furton indicated that the University is proposing to invest in faculty hiring lines for preeminent/emerging preeminent programs and for FIU's Center for Translational Science, adding that strategic hires will be funded by Academic Affairs and by the various colleges. He remarked on initiatives aimed at maximizing the diversity of the hires, adding that said hires are projected to help the University accelerate its research growth, resulting in \$400M in research expenditures by 2025. He mentioned that the Program of Distinction in Environmental Resilience is at the core of FIU's research and that four key pillars intersect in areas relating to environment, justice, innovation, and health. Provost Furton described collaborations with Senior Vice President for External Relations, Strategic Communications and Marketing Sandra B. Gonzalez-Levy to develop compelling stories that highlight the four pillars and preeminent and emerging preeminent programs. He pointed out that the University has six (6) preeminent programs and six (6) emerging preeminent programs. He provided an overview of the distribution of faculty positions across NSF categories, targeted *U.S. News & World Report* rankings, and colleges. He further stated that the University has hired 22 faculty members and commented on plans to hire an additional 20 faculty to be funded by the legislative allocation. Provost Furton mentioned that the University has concluded the hiring process for Dr. Stephen Black, who will be based out of the FIU Center for Translation Science and has joined FIU with \$33M in transferable research grant funding.

Provost Furton remarked on strategies to raise school rankings. In terms of the College of Law, he indicated that targeted strategies will be aimed at increasing reputation scores and increasing The Law School Admission Test (LSAT) scores. Pertaining to the Robert Stempel College of Public Health and Social Work and the School of Computing and Information Sciences, he pointed out that the rankings related to said schools are purely reputational. In response to Committee Chair Tovar, Provost Furton mentioned ongoing conversations with the Dean's Advisory Council relating to raising select schools and programs to top-25 and top-50 rankings. Board Chair Dean C. Colson commented on the Board's upcoming March workshop where the discussions will center around the Program of Distinction in Environmental Resilience, the College of Law, and the Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine.

### **3.3 FIU Online Update**

Provost Furton mentioned that FIU has been a pioneer in online education for over two (2) decades. He pointed out that 63% of online students are adult learners and commented on the growth of the University's online education. He indicated that 10,000 FIU students have graduated with degrees earned completely online, adding that 60% of the University's student body was enrolled in at least one (1) online course last semester. Provost Furton commented that online student credit hours make up 37% of the University's total enrollment, stating that online enrollment now exceeds enrollment at the Biscayne Bay Campus. He remarked that FIU was ranked #1 in the nation for the most Quality Matters (QM) certified online classes, stating that QM certification is the highest level of quality designation and that the University now has over 500 courses that are QM certified courses.

Provost Furton provided an overview of online student demographics, indicating that 60% of students reside within a 50-mile radius of the University with an increasing number of students residing at a distance of 100 miles or more. He explained that the majority of online students are Florida residents and completers, adding that only five percent (5%) are first-time-in-college students. In terms of enrollment statistics, Provost Furton explained that over 11,000 students are strictly online enrollments and that approximately 34,000 students enroll in at least one (1) online course as part of their schedule. He mentioned that the University has over 100 fully online degrees.

Provost Furton presented photos of space within the Management and New Growth Opportunity (MANGO) building. He explained that the top floors provide approximately 36,000 square feet of space and house 187 students, staff, and administration, including those who provide support to the faculty who are teaching online. He described the space utilization within the Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) phase II building, indicating that the Esports Innovation lab, online live classroom, and FIU online office spaces comprise a total 12,000 square feet.

Trustee Leonard Boord commented on the need to distinguish remote education from online learning. Provost Furton explained that remote education was created under emergency circumstances, adding that the University plans to eliminate remote learning for the summer semesters whereby the only available modalities will be certified hybrid, fully online, or fully in-person. He mentioned that online live is a new approach that the University is piloting and that this could serve to replace some synchronous remote instruction.

### **3.4 Strategic Plan Reports**

There were no questions from the Committee members in terms of the CasaCuba and Strategic Marketing reports included as part of the agenda materials. Committee Chair Tovar commented on the positive strides in the area of strategic marketing and requested, for a future meeting, that the Committee review CasaCuba's fundraising progress.

### **4. New Business**

No new business was raised.

### **5. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment**

With no other business, Committee Chair Roger Tovar adjourned the meeting of the Florida International University Board of Trustees Strategic Planning Committee on Tuesday, February 23, 2021 at 12:44 p.m.