



**FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
SPECIAL MEETING
MARCH 25, 2020
MINUTES**

1. Call to Order and Chair's Remarks

Board Chair Claudia Puig convened the online Special Meeting of the Florida International University Board of Trustees at 4:09 p.m. on Wednesday, March 25, 2020.

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

Chair Puig welcomed all Trustees and members of the University community. She explained that in response to the growing concerns over the COVID-19 pandemic, at the February 26, 2020 Board of Trustees meetings, the Board engaged in a discussion on potential impacts and academic continuity of operations. She pointed out that the purpose of the Special Meeting was to receive further updates and to continue the discussion on the COVID-19 pandemic with University President Mark B. Rosenberg and members of the administration.

Chair Puig indicated that the Board's Bylaws, namely, section 6.3, provide that the Board may hold special meetings and that the Corporate Secretary shall send written notice of such special meetings to all Trustees, along with a statement of the purpose of the meeting, at least 48 hours in advance and that only matters included in the Chair's call of the meeting may be considered at a special meeting, except that a new matter may be added by an affirmative vote of a majority of the Trustees at the meeting.

2. Discussion Item

President Rosenberg commended the work, dedication, and perseverance of the University's students, faculty, and staff despite the pressures and challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic. President Rosenberg recognized Trustee and President of the Student Government Council at the Modesto A. Maidique Campus Sabrina L. Rosell; Trustee and Faculty Senate Chair Joerg Reinhold; President of the United Faculty of Florida-FIU Chapter Daniel Saunders; and members of the professional staff, namely, Professor and Clinical Lab Director of FIU Health Dr. Aileen Marty; Professor and CEO of the FIU Health Care Network Dr. Eneida Roldan; Asst. Director of Emergency Management Bridget A. Pelaez; Asst. Vice President of Operations and

Safety Amy B. Aiken; and Vice President of Operations and Safety and Chief of Staff Javier I. Marques.

AVP Aiken reported on the number of COVID-19 positive cases at the global, national, and local level. She explained that on March 1, 2020, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis signed an Executive Order directing the State Health Officer and Surgeon General, Dr. Scott Rivkees, to declare a public health emergency in the State of Florida. She indicated that on March 9, 2020, Governor DeSantis issued an Executive Order declaring a state of emergency for the entire State of Florida and that since that time, the Governor has signed an additional six Executive Orders designed to limit the spread of COVID-19. She commented that on March 12, 2020, Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos A. Gimenez declared a local State of Emergency, noting that since that date, the Mayor has signed 17 emergency orders and amendments also aimed at limiting the spread of COVID-19. She pointed out that certain cities within Miami -Dade County have issued Stay-at-Home Orders for their residents. In terms of the University's Emergency Operations Center (EOC), AVP Aiken explained that a tabletop exercise was held on March 3, 2020 in order to identify issues and questions for the policy group and to begin the discussion on next steps. She pointed out that situation reports began to be issued on March 4, 2020 and that on March 10, 2020, the EOC went to a level two partial activation and that since this date, there have been daily EOC conference calls.

Provost and Executive Vice President Kenneth G. Furton provided an update on the transition to remote learning, explaining that over a year earlier, all University faculty were requested to have a Canvas shell for their courses, at the minimum a Canvas shell to house the course's syllabus. He pointed out that on March 12, 2020, University faculty were asked to transition to remote learning, noting that at the time, 1,678 courses were already fully online and that of the 5,565 courses that were taught in either face-to-face or hybrid platforms, 4,678 or 84% have successfully transitioned to remote learning to-date. He commented that 667 courses or 12% are in the process of finalizing the transition to a remote learning platform. In terms of the remaining 222 courses or 4% that consist primarily of wet labs, experiment courses, internships, and clinical placements, he noted that further guidance from the appropriate deans, department chairs, and in certain instances accrediting agencies is being sought in order to determine the best course of action.

Provost Furton reported that on March 24, 2020, the Faculty Senate approved changes to the grading system for the Spring 2020 semester and that these changes offer students two additional grade options that will not be factored into their GPAs, a "Pass" and a "No Credit Earned". He pointed out that once grades have been posted, students will have 10 days to select an alternative grade of "No Credit Earned" for failed courses (F) or "Pass" for others and that in order to avoid unintended consequences, these choices must be discussed with their advisor.

Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs Elizabeth M. Bejar commented on the various avenues in which communication is being maintained with University students. She indicated that the University has transitioned to virtual advising and tutoring sessions, that the laptop loaner program has been expanded, and that the counseling and psychological services teams continue to provide individual and group therapy sessions via telephone or web-based services. In terms of housing and residential life, she pointed out that reduction efforts began on March 12, 2020

and that to-date housing operations were reduced by over 80%. She explained that the University continues to provide dining services for the housing students that have remained on campus, stating that recreational services have been closed and that all social gathering spaces have been locked down for the safety and welfare of the community. Sr. VP Bejar stated that, in consultation with the Florida Board of Governors and the University's Chief Financial Officer, the University is in the process of establishing a procedure for providing refunds for the students that have moved out of on-campus housing.

Vice President for Human Resources El pagnier K. Hudson reported that currently 97 employees are self-quarantined, 47 employees have been cleared to return to work, and there has been only one (1) confirmed case among the employee population. She stated that on March 16, 2020, the University temporarily transitioned to a Remote Work/Work from Home Program and that this action significantly reduced the number of faculty and staff on campus. She indicated that 80% of the University's workforce, based on duties, is able to work remotely and that to better understand the needs of faculty and staff who are working remotely and evaluate the program's effectiveness, an assessment has been developed. She added that the assessment will help in determining how many are working remotely, the tools being used and needed, communication efforts to stay connected, and individual employee experience with the Remote Work Program. VP Hudson further stated that in compliance with Florida statutes on telework, faculty and staff working remotely must complete a Telework Agreement. She commented on weekly meetings with HR VP counterparts across the State University System (SUS) and on the University's efforts in maintaining the listing of COVID-19 essential personnel.

Senior Vice President for Administration and Chief Financial Officer Kenneth A. Jessell delineated the fiscal impact in terms of immediate costs, potential impact to revenue, and uncertainties surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. He explained that immediate costs relate to housing and food/meal refunds and the acquisition of on-line proctoring software, personal protection supplies, and computers. He pointed out that potential impacts to revenue pertained to reductions in state funding and tuition and fees for the University and Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine (HWCOC), reduction in housing revenue, reductions in athletics tickets sales and rental revenue, and reductions in academic auxiliaries and other auxiliary revenues. He indicated that the uncertainties refer to the duration of COVID-19 and the impact on global, state, and local economies, international and out-of-state student enrollment, and the federal stimulus program.

Senior Vice President, Division of External Relations, Strategic Communications and Marketing, Sandra B. Gonzalez-Levy provided an update on strategic and crisis communication, noting that to-date 21 messages have been disseminated to the University community. She commented on the dedicated COVID-19 website, adding that the page is a source for news, FAQs, and other resources. She explained that since the February 27, 2020 launch, the website has received over 120,000 visits with an average visit time of four minutes and seven seconds. She indicated that traffic to the FIU news site has nearly tripled in the last four weeks and that FIU news has also produced a variety of content to help the community, namely, parent guides, staying connected with the elderly, and coping with stress and social distancing. She explained that all on and off-campus events have been cancelled through May 10, 2020 and that while a virtual spring commencement ceremony is being

planned, graduates would be extended the option of participating in traditional ceremonies in the summer or fall. She added that HWCAM Match Day was able to proceed utilizing a drive-through protocol and that FIU news featured a video, *FIU Insights: Dr. Eneida Roldan answers your questions on coronavirus*. Sr. VP Gonzalez-Levy highlighted the video message from Trustee Rosell to spring graduates and the billboard on the intersection of SW 107 Avenue and 8th Street.

Vice President for Research and Economic Development Andres G. Gil indicated that during this period of remote work, the Office of Research and Economic Development and the University Graduate School remain fully operational, with the ability to submit, receive, and manage research grants. He explained that research awards are on track to experience a 15% growth as compared to the prior year, noting that a decrease in research awards is not expected. He pointed out that the University's Research office has established a dedicated COVID-19 webpage in order to provide continuing guidance to the FIU research community. He stated that while research expenditures are also trending up, some decrease is expected and in terms of the University's Graduate School, lower international student enrollment is anticipated. VP Gil added that the Office of Research has started virtual town hall meetings to keep the FIU community abreast of all changes associated with COVID-19, as well as research funding opportunities.

In response to Trustee Leonard Boord, Provost Furton explained that remote learning may not be the ideal platform for the 12% of courses in the process of finalizing the transition and that face-to-face instruction options for Summer B are being explored for the 4% of courses that are not able to transition to remote learning, namely, wet labs, experiment courses, internships, and clinical placements. Provost Furton added that very few course drops have occurred and that the recently approved changes to the grading system for the Spring 2020 semester have provided students with additional options to work through the challenges that are currently being faced. Sr. VP Bejar commented on the national conversation regarding courses that are not either transferred easily or cannot be supported through remote instruction.

In response to Trustee Boord, Sr. VP and CFO Jessell indicated that carryforward plans are being analyzed in order to avoid drawing upon the University's statutory reserve. Trustee Dean C. Colson commended the legislative delegation and the University's Governmental Relations team on a positive highlight resulting from the 2020 legislative session, noting that the \$17M in new funding in recurring operational support is combined with the prior year's increase of \$15M. In response to Trustee Rosell, Provost Furton explained that the SUS will continue remote instruction for the Summer A and Summer C terms, with limited face-to-face instruction in Summer B for those courses that cannot support remote learning. In response to Trustee Rosell, Sr. VP and CFO Jessell explained that because of fixed operating and debt service costs, student fees will not be refunded, but refunds for instructional materials that were not consumed that can be placed back into inventory, can be considered on an individual basis.

3. New Business

No new business was raised.

4. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

With no other business, Board Chair Claudia Puig adjourned the Special Meeting of the Florida International University Board of Trustees on Wednesday, March 25, 2020 at 5:09 p.m.

Claudia Puig
Chair
FIU Board of Trustees

Mark B. Rosenberg
Corporate Secretary
FIU Board of Trustees