



**FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
ACADEMIC POLICY AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
DECEMBER 3, 2020**

**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 Thursday, December 3, 2020 at 9:55 AM via Zoom.

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, *Chair*; Donna J Hrinak, *Vice Chair*; Jose J. Armas, *Health Affairs Liaison*; Dean C. Colson, *Board Chair*; Joerg Reinhold; Marc D. Sarnoff; Roger Tovar, *Board Vice Chair and Athletics Liaison*; and Alexandra Valdes.

Trustee Cesar L. Alvarez was excused.

Trustees Leonard Boord, Gerald C. Grant, Jr., Gene Prescott, and Claudia Puig, and University President Mark B. Rosenberg were also in attendance.

Committee Chair Lowell welcomed Trustees and University administrators participating via the virtual environment and explained that the University community and general public were accessing the meeting via the FIU webcast.

At the request of Committee Chair Lowell, Trustee Marc D. Sarnoff provided an update on the ongoing discussions and work that he has been spearheading with the administration on the University's Title IX (105) and Student Code of Conduct (2501) Regulations, particularly as it pertains to due process inclusive of the ability to have some form of cross-examination. He pointed out that he has been working with the administration in order to closely examine the processes afforded by both of the revised Regulations, adding that based on the joint review, he was satisfied with the due process rights afforded by the revised Title IX Regulation that was approved by the Board of Trustees. Trustee Sarnoff indicated that focus now has shifted to the Student Code of Conduct, stating that later in the month, he and members of the administration will be running through a mock scenario/case study, which should help in the assessment of the Student Code. He commented that professional schools are his main focus given the considerable investments that are made in order to pursue degrees in the medical and legal fields.

Trustee Sarnoff extended his apologies to Committee Chair Lowell and Board Chair Dean C. Colson, commenting that he had not realized that the revised Title IX Regulation afforded a cross examination procedure. He mentioned that he would have supported the revised Title IX Regulation as revised. He commended Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs Elizabeth M. Bejar and General Counsel Castillo for dedicating their time and effort in working with him to identify where there may be the possibility of cross examination. Chair Colson conveyed his appreciation of Trustee Sarnoff's work.

## **2. Approval of Minutes**

Committee Chair Lowell asked that the Committee approve the Minutes of the meetings held on August 12, 2020 and September 9, 2020. A motion was made and unanimously passed to approve the minutes of the Academic Policy and Student Affairs Committee meetings held on August 12, 2020 and September 9, 2020.

## **3. Action Item**

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

Provost and Executive Vice President Kenneth G. Furton presented the Tenure as a Condition of Employment (TACOE) nominations for Committee review, noting that TACOE is reserved for individuals who are under recruitment by FIU and have achieved highly prestigious academic careers at other institutions. He explained that the TACOE candidates either already have achieved tenure or are eligible for tenure at comparable institutions at the time of hire, adding that TACOE candidates understand that they will be hired with tenure pending a review by the department, the College, the Provost, the President, and finally, the Board of Trustees. Provost Furton 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 four (4) candidates for Tenure as a Condition of Employment (TACOE) as specified in the Board materials.

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

### **4.1 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 Alexandra Valdes, President of the Student Government Council at the Modesto A. Maidique Campus, commended student government leaders for playing a critical role in promoting a healthy campus environment. She remarked on student government's priority of creating innovative and exciting initiatives to make remote learning a memorable experience. She mentioned the establishment of a women empowerment series, adding that said series will showcase women all over the country, specifically FIU alumni and their paths to success while providing University students the opportunity to engage and create new relationships to enhance their professional development. Trustee Valdes indicated that student government also created a virtual program, SGA Speaks, focused on engagement, with the purpose of bringing together a community to speak on

education and advocacy grassroot opportunities, highlighting student success, and creating overall affinity. She stated that student government, in collaboration with the Center for Leadership and Service, launched an awareness campaign for the University's food pantry. She noted that she signed an executive order establishing three new cabinet positions, a secretary of diversity and inclusion, secretary of international student affairs, and secretary of online and remote learning. She stated that student senators passed momentous legislation, including the establishment of Juneteenth as a commemoration date by FIU, a resolution to redesign the student perceptions of teaching surveys, and a resolution supporting the unification of the FIU student government councils.

## **6. Faculty Senate Updates**

Trustee Reinhold, Faculty Senate Chair, commented on the Faculty Senate's September 29, 2020 meeting where the Faculty Senate approved a temporary policy regarding the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) requirement for graduate admissions. He explained that said temporary policy affords programs the option of waiving their GRE requirement, without further Senate review. He commented that peer institutions have already waived the GRE requirement and that the temporary policy responded to how the health and safety concerns stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic have affected access to GRE testing in many countries. Trustee Reinhold remarked that, at its October 13, 2020 meeting, the Faculty Senate removed "spring break" from the 2020-2021 Academic Calendar and, that, as a result of a comprehensive review, the Faculty Senate also approved the deletion of several courses from the University's core curriculum. He mentioned that, at its October 27, 2020 meeting, the Faculty Senate continued to review proposed changes to the Tenure and Promotion Manual, adding that the revised Manual was approved at the November 17, 2020 Meeting.

## **7. New Business**

Sr. VP Bejar commented that the University is currently undergoing the comprehensive 10-year review of accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). She explained that a reaffirmation process is a multi-step process with an off-site review, adding that the off-site review occurred during the months of October and November and that FIU's 10-year review culminates with an on-site review scheduled for March 2021. She indicated that the University has recently received preliminary findings resulting from the comprehensive off-site review, stating that while said review was successful, there were several findings and the University has a brief window of opportunity to respond to the findings in writing before the scheduled on-site review.

Sr. VP Bejar pointed out that the preliminary off-site report from the SACSCOC Reaffirmation Committee found that FIU's Mission Statement is clearly defined, comprehensive, and appropriate for higher education and in compliance with SACSCOC Standard 2.1: Mission. She remarked that the preliminary report also found that there was insufficient documentation with respect to SACSCOC Standard 4.2.a: Mission Review, which requires that the Board of Trustees ensure the regular review of the University's Mission Statement. She highlighted examples of the Board's affirmation of the Mission over the last year via the strategic planning process that is memorialized in Minutes of meetings, as well as the University's Accountability Plan. Sr. VP Bejar mentioned that in order to comply with this finding of the preliminary report and to provide sufficient documentation, the University is seeking the reaffirmation of the Mission Statement.

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 reaffirm the Florida International University Mission Statement.

#### **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 Thursday, December 3, 2020 at 10:20 AM.

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