Update from Frank T. Brogan, Chancellor
September 22, 2010

Setting Priorities
We are all appreciative for the robust dialogue that occurred at last week’s Board of Governors meeting surrounding some of the most complex issues we face – all of which, seemingly, have to do with growth. I suppose, under the heading of “Silver Linings,” we should be grateful that the System’s services are in such high demand!

The State University System is fortunate to have a Board of Governors, Boards of Trustees and university leadership who are all engaged in the issues. As the group passionately discussed several issues at the Board meeting last week, it was a true testament to the passion they share and the timeliness of those topics.

I’m reminded of something Britain’s Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher once said: “I love argument, I love debate. I don’t expect anyone just to sit there and agree…that's not their job.”

As the Board of Governors continues that fine balance between monitoring, coordinating and regulating, we are undertaking some very important and worthwhile endeavors, as we should be. Our robust portfolio of activity includes solid pursuits such as pushing forward with our New Florida Initiative; exploring greater coordination of academic delivery across the System; ensuring we demonstrate a higher level of accountability to the Legislature and the public with work plans and strategic plans; and working to enhance the degree program coordination between the System and our other education partners.

Every bit of this is vital to ensuring the success of our universities, our System and our State. These efforts also require significant resources of time, attention and energy both from the Board of Governors members, and from staff at our office and at the universities. You have heard me offer this sentiment many times: “If everything is a priority, then nothing is a priority.” To that end:

- Through regular interactions with the Trustees, Presidents, Provosts and University leadership, we will keep our finger on the pulse of the System.
- Through one-on-one conversations with each member of the Board of Governors, we will work to identify our top priorities.
- Through regular interaction with the Board Chair, we will keep her informed of our capacity to take on new challenges and initiatives, so she can provide guidance regarding priorities.
Chair Parker and I are firm believers that if we are taking on something, we have to do it well. We want to ensure our System is known for excellence – not only in the educational enterprise, but also excellence in innovation and good public policy. These are exciting times for us... one of our Presidents recently commented this well could be the “golden age” for higher education in Florida. Recognizing that, we will take every opportunity to utilize our resources in a smart, disciplined and strategic manner.

**Shaping the Future of Florida (Die Zukunft von Florida)**

Recently, I joined FAU and UF in Jupiter to welcome officials from Germany as they visited Southeast Florida. This long-anticipated gathering fulfilled our goal – to hear and share the thoughts of top leaders in Germany as their native Max Planck Society plants its first presence in North America (joining European and South American research and innovation sites). Our discussion focused on the life sciences in Bavaria and Florida, as the Max Planck Florida Institute ramps up — leveraging our investments in the emergent biotechnology industry — investments that are true cross-pollinators among government, academia and business.

It is a great partnership (partnerschaft) that will benefit our students (studenten)...as you can see, I'm picking up a bit of German along the way.

The contingent included representatives from the very highest levels of German academia and government, led by Dr. Wolfgang Heubisch, the Federal State Minister of the Bavarian State Ministry of Science, Research and Arts in Munich. He was joined by officials with the Bavarian Research Foundation, the University of Würzburg’s Rudolf Virchow Center for Experimental Biomedicine, and the Technical University of Munich along with Ms. Mechthild Ewert, Deputy Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Dr. Mary Jane Saunders, FAU President, and David Day, Director of UF’s Office of Technology Licensing, were lauded by the Max Planck officials as true partners in the commercialization projects that are on the table or in development. Considering the embryonic stage of this effort, there is such an aggressive timetable, so I am grateful to all involved for their dedication and commitment to our endless possibilities.

The Business Development Board of Palm Beach County – headed by Kelly Smallridge, President & CEO – delivered a strong message to ensure the delegation understood the unequivocal importance of Max Planck to the biotech cluster and the local economy.

… All of this made for a fine “expertgruppe” – or “brain trust,” as we say.

**Enrollment Update: College Transfers and FTICs Are Up**

Now that we are a few weeks into the new academic year, I wanted to provide a little more information regarding enrollment across the system. Please know, we are still well ahead of the official “withdrawal” date, so these figures are by no means final. Our latest figures show that enrollment is up by 2.6% compared to the same time last year, which is in-line with the growth we have seen over the past several years. You might also be interested to know that, of the new students coming into the System this year, we admitted 4.6% more “First-Time-In-College” students and 6.7% more community/state college transfers as compared to last year.
Thank you for your leadership and partnership in State University System of Florida.