April 2015

As we reach the midpoint of the 2015 Legislative session, the Board of Governors continues to promote the priorities of the State University System of Florida to our elected officials. Board of Trustee members, students, administrators, faculty and presidents are also taking part in that effort, as they travel to Tallahassee to showcase the accomplishments of their respective universities. It is always a pleasure to see our universities at work this time of year and to see everyone working together for the betterment of our system. I applaud you for your commitment to our students and to the system as a whole.

Keep up the good work.

Marshall M. Criser III
Chancellor

Board Meeting

Florida A&M University was a terrific host for the March Board of Governors meeting in Tallahassee. The meeting included several developments for the State University System, including big gains from universities across the System in the performance funding metrics. From graduation and retention rates to career success for recent alumni several universities showed significant gains. In particular, the University of West Florida increased 16 points, Florida Atlantic University increased 13 points and New College of Florida increased 10 points.

On March 18th the Audit and Compliance Committee hosted an Audit Committees Workshop bringing together the Board of Trustees Audit Committee chairs and university Chief Audit Executives. The 2 ½ hour Workshop included discussion of compliance and ethics; audit coverage; risk management; fraud; and investigations matters. The workshop culminated in a discussion of proposed regulation development for four Board of Governors regulations addressing compliance, audit and investigations.

The Board of Governor’s Task Force on Strategic Planning for Online Education, chaired by UCF President John Hitt, is crafting a strategic plan to be considered by the Board at its November meeting. The Task Force, whose membership consists of several university presidents and provosts, the chair of the Florida College System’s Council of Presidents, a student, a faculty member who is also a member of FGCU’s Board of Trustees, and the director of UWF’s Innovation Institute, is focusing on access, affordability and quality of online education.

At the direction of the Board’s Innovation and Online Committee, I am working with university leadership to pursue a system membership in the Unizin Consortium. The University of Florida was one of the founding members of the consortium, whose purpose is to “exert greater control and influence over the digital learning landscape. It enables each institution, its faculty, and students to draw on an evolving set of tools to support digital learning for residential, flipped classroom, online courses/degrees, badged experiences for Alumni, or
even Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), if desired.” Because UF is on the Board of Directors, our entire system has the opportunity to join an elite group of institutions in this endeavor (eight of the ten founding members are AAU institutions) for a fraction of the price paid by the founding members.

**FAMU-FSU College of Engineering**

The FAMU-FSU College of Engineering Governance Council held its first official meeting on March 23. This was an organizational meeting and the first step on the path to enhance the contribution of the Joint College to Florida’s students.

**President Thrasher Investiture**

Please join me in congratulating President John Thrasher as the 15th President of Florida State University. Chair Hosseini and I had the pleasure of participating in President Thrasher’s investiture on March 17, officially welcoming him to the State University System. One of the highlights of the event was a speech by Governor Rick Scott, who praised Thrasher’s commitment to FSU and focus on raising the institution to a Top 25 Public University.

**University Days**

Students from across the state have visited Tallahassee during the legislative session, donning colors for their respective universities and demonstrating to lawmakers that the State University System is a great return on investment. University Days provide an excellent opportunity for students to engage in the political process and bring their contagious energy to Florida’s Capitol. I have had the pleasure of joining several universities last month during their university day activities and have enjoyed meeting with their Trustees, students and others who came to Tallahassee for this festive event.

### Upcoming Board Meetings

- **May 7**
  - Conference Call

- **June 16-18**
  - University of South Florida, Tampa

### Trustee Topics

Mark your calendars for the 2015 Trustee Summit, which will be held November 4-5. The summit is an opportunity for trustees, new and experienced, to meet and share best practices and hear from top experts in higher education. This year’s special guests will include a legal expert in university issues, the leader of one of our nation’s largest university systems and prominent research innovators.

I will be sending out the full Board of Governors calendar, along with details for the Trustee Summit, in the near future. I wanted to ensure that you are aware of this special event.