For those who were not able to attend the Board of Governors meeting in Fort Myers this week, below are some highlights of discussion and action that took place during the two-day meeting. I want to the thank President Bradshaw and his team at Florida Gulf Coast University for so graciously hosting the meeting and making us all feel right at home.

Frank T. Brogan
Chancellor

Board of Governors Meeting Highlights

Marking a continued commitment to accountability, the Florida Board of Governors on Thursday took a step toward securing performance-based funding for the State University System of Florida.

In years past, the Board asked the state Legislature for funding based solely on individual universities’ enrollments or special projects. Now the Board will seek $118 million specifically tied to universities work plans, with a focus on performance in key student-success areas.

This is a very different approach. We are not just asking for more money. We are seeking to show how these dollars would be used to move the System forward in the most transparent way.

It is the Board’s expectation that the extra money would be in addition to a restoration of the $300 million one-time cut in this year’s state budget.

We are still working out exactly which metrics—such as graduation rates or post-graduation job success, for example—would be used to determine how funding is utilized at each of the System’s 12 universities. We will be reaching out to the universities for their input on this process.

Board Chair Dean Colson said the Board hoped to have that criteria, dubbed a “decision matrix,” completed before the Board hears requests for tuition differential next summer. The idea is that the matrix would not necessarily be a rigid formula, but rather would allow the Board to consider each universities’ different missions, goals and challenges individually.

This comes on the heels of our nearly two-year effort to complete the three-part accountability framework, which includes a forward-looking strategic plan for the System through 2025, an annual accountability report that details performance on key metrics, and annual work plans for each university.

Speaking of those university work plans, the Board heard an update of system-wide issues that emerged during the universities’ 2012-2013 work plan presentations at the Board’s last meeting in June. Those included a need to focus on improving graduation and retention rates, a continued effort to increase STEM degree production, concerns about student debt and an ongoing focus to identify and reduce academic program duplication.
The Board also received an addendum to Florida A&M University’s 2012-2013 work plan that includes a tighter focus on undergraduate education. The university plans to begin a new Academic Success Program that helps track and guide students through their degree programs, enhance tutorial services and peer mentoring, and hire at least 20 new faculty and academic advisers to enhance its academic quality, retention and graduation rates.

More meeting highlights:

- The Board confirmed Larry Robinson as interim president of Florida A&M University. Dr. Robinson has been FAMU’s provost and previously served as assistant secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; vice president for research and a professor in the FAMU Environmental Sciences Institute; and director of the NOAA Environmental Cooperative Science Center headquartered at FAMU. He was tapped by FAMU’s Board of Trustees following the resignation of FAMU President James Ammons in July. A search for a permanent FAMU president is underway.

- Trustees who were in attendance for the Board meeting also gathered on Thursday for our first “Trustee Networking Lunch” at which they were able to discuss common issues they face in their role as university trustees. Chair Colson, Vice Chair Hosseini and Governor Kuntz joined the group and expanded the dialogue to cover system-wide issues. It is our intention to host trustee development opportunities such as this at future board meetings.

- The Board publicly noticed regulations related to student veterans, which allow those students priority in registering for classes and acceptance of military training as college credit. Already in practice by many of the state universities, this regulation further solidifies the System’s commitment to its student veterans.

- Student Board member Cortez Whatley presented an upcoming student-driven campaign, called Aim Higher, that hopes to raise awareness about the importance of the state's investment in higher education.

- The Board heard an update on System enrollment, which has grown steadily over the past few years, now up to about 335,000 students. The number of students in STEM degrees grew as well, by 25 percent over the last five years—outpacing growth of non-STEM degrees.

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**Board of Governors Accepting Applications for 2013 Trustee Vacancies**

The Florida Board of Governors is seeking applicants for open spots on Boards of Trustees at the state’s public universities. This represents an opportunity to help shape the future of the second largest university system in the country at a time of heightened interest from stakeholders across the state. Those interested in this intensive public service opportunity must complete an application with the Board of Governors’ Trustee Nominating Committee. (Applicants do not need to live in Florida to serve.)

[Trustee Vacancy Application >]

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**NEXT BOARD MEETING**

November 7-8, 2012
Rethinking the Business Model: Responsibilities of Governing Boards

Colleges and universities are thinking strategically about their business models. Reductions in state and federal appropriations, endowment volatility, fundraising uncertainties, and limits on tuition increases are creating persistent shortfalls in operating budgets. This all comes when institutions are being called upon to enroll and graduate more students. Each college or university has its own challenges, and boards must work with administrators and faculty members to determine the strategies that best support shared governance and their institution’s mission.

Read the full article >
From Trusteeship Magazine
Association of Governing Boards