Ava Parker elected chair of Board of Governors; Dean Colson elected vice-chair

TALLAHASSEE – The members of the Board of Governors of the State University System today elected Ava L. Parker of Jacksonville as chair and Dean Colson of Coral Gables as vice-chair.

Parker and Colson were elected on a unanimous vote by the board members as they met via conference call.

“I am deeply honored to be chosen to lead the Board of Governors,” said Parker, who previously served as vice-chair. “The State University System plays a vital role in our state. We have more than 300,000 students pursuing the dream of a college education, and we graduate many thousands of new degrees every year. I am thrilled to be a part of that experience. I look forward to guiding the system as we seek to build a stronger foundation in the knowledge economy. I know that with help from the Legislature and the Governor, our universities can continue to be the catalyst for our state’s economic revitalization.”

Colson, a new member appointed by Governor Charlie Crist in January, said he looked forward to continuing his work on higher education. “I am excited to support Ava Parker’s leadership and to work with Chancellor Frank Brogan on ways to strengthen our 11 universities and to foster greater coordination among all the institutions of the State University System.”

Chancellor Frank T. Brogan applauded the board for its wise choice in leadership. “Ava Parker is someone with great experience and no small measure of wisdom,” Brogan said. “She has the ability to listen to others, to give everyone a voice, all the while moving decisions forward in a strategic way. Dean Colson has been a great friend of the State University System – he has worked quietly behind the scenes to build support for our New Florida plan for the future. This is an outstanding leadership team.”
Ava L. Parker is the president of Linking Solutions Inc. and a practicing attorney at Lawrence & Parker P.A. Parker is also currently serving on the Jacksonville Transportation Authority, on the Judicial Nominating Commission of the Fourth Judicial Circuit of Florida and on the advisory board for Broadband for America, an Internet advocacy organization. Previously, she served on the University of Central Florida Board of Trustees. She received her bachelor’s degree in journalism and her law degree from the University of Florida.

Dean Colson has been a partner with the Law Firm of Colson Hicks Eidson since 1981. He also currently serves as a special advisor on higher education to Governor Charlie Crist. Colson was a member of the University of Miami Board of Trustees from 1991 to 2009. He also served on the Florida Supreme Court Judicial Nominating Committee from 2002 to 2006. In addition, Colson served as law clerk to the Honorable Peter T. Fay in the United States Court of Appeals, Fifth Circuit, and Justice William Rehnquist of the U.S. Supreme Court. He received his bachelor’s degree from Princeton University and his law degree from the University of Miami.

*The Board of Governors is the constitutional body created by voters in 2002 to guide the State University System of Florida.*

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