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STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA  
BY TELEPHONE CONFERENCE CALL  
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA  
MARCH 4, 2008

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The Chair, Carolyn K. Roberts, convened the meeting of the Board of Governors by telephone conference call, from Tallahassee, at 9:30 a.m., March 4, 2008, with the following members present: Sheila McDevitt, Vice Chair; Dr. Arlen Chase; Ann Duncan; Charlie Edwards; Dr. Stan Marshall; Frank Martin; Lynn Pappas; Ava Parker; Tico Perez; Gus Stavros; and Dr. Zach Zachariah.

1. Call to Order

Mrs. Roberts thanked Board members for participating in the call. She said she wanted to advise members of legislative matters, as the Legislature began its 2008 Session.

2. Legislative Update

Mrs. Roberts said the Legislature would first take up the remainder of the budget cuts for the 2007-2008 fiscal year. The budget cuts for the University System were half what was expected, but the cuts for 2008-2009 were expected to be worse. She said the House and Senate would go to conference on the budget cuts by the end of the week.

Dr. Rosenberg said the reductions totaled \$48 million for this semester, a total reduction of over \$100 million for the 2007-2008 budget year. He said the House and Senate had tried to minimize the magnitude of the cuts for this year, to encourage eligible students to graduate. He said the PECO forecast had also been reduced since November. He estimated the reduction at approximately \$50 million over three years. He said the reductions would primarily affect projects in the first year. He said staff had not yet identified specific reductions as they had only just been advised of the reductions.

Mrs. Roberts reported the filing of a Senate Joint Resolution by Senator Lisa Carlton. She said a copy had been distributed to Board members. She reviewed the key provisions of the bill. The board of governors would be established to administer the state university system, with five members appointed by the Governor and three named members, i.e., the commissioner of education, a faculty representative and a student representative. Board duties would be as prescribed by law. Boards of trustees

would be established, with duties as prescribed by law. The terms of all current trustees and members of this Board would expire on the date the amendment would take effect, July 1, 2009. The bill would create an elected Commissioner of Education, and reinstate the Cabinet, with five elected officials, as the state board of education.

Mrs. Roberts said this would effectively end the authority of the Board of Governors to act as an independent advocate for the State University System, and create a board whose authority was directly prescribed by the Legislature. She said this was not what the voters put into place in 2002. She commented that this would be the third major shake-up of higher education in less than 10 years. She said as a legislative proposal, the proposed constitutional amendment required a 3/5 majority vote in each house. There was no requirement limiting the proposal to a "single subject" nor judicial review of the ballot language.

Mrs. Roberts said more discussion of the proposal would be valuable. She said it appeared that the actions of this Board were not appreciated by Legislative Leadership. She said she had respectfully requested some slowing in the consideration of this proposal to allow the public the opportunity to comment and to have transparent discussions.

Ms. Pappas inquired about the proposed role of the Commissioner of Education. Mrs. Roberts said it appeared that the Commissioner would be responsible for all public education delivery systems, including the State University System.

Dr. Marshall said he would certainly agree to a slowing down in the process. He inquired whether the Chair had any response to her appeal for slowing down the discussion. Mrs. Roberts said she had not been successful with her efforts thus far, although she said she had great confidence in the members of the Legislature. Dr. Marshall inquired whether members of the Board should contact members of the Legislature. Mrs. Roberts said that would be a good idea, and asked staff to send "talking points." Ms. Shirley noted that there was no sunshine violation in members of the Board contacting Legislators, although Board members should not visit Legislators together.

Mr. Stavros said he had heard from parents whose children with 4.0 GPAs were being turned down from universities in the SUS. He said changing leadership made no sense at a time when universities were limiting access because of financial constraints. He said he did not understand the Legislature's problem with the Board's leadership.

Ms. Parker inquired whether there was a groundswell from the public seeking this change. Mrs. Roberts said she did not know of any broad concern; this proposal came from the Senate. Ms. Parker said that there was now some stability in the University System; she said she did not understand the purpose of a shake-up by another governmental body. Ms. Pappas said calls from individual Board members

might not be as effective as calls from those who were not viewed as “protecting” themselves. Mrs. Roberts noted that the Senate would hear the proposal on Wednesday; the hearing in the House was scheduled for Friday. There was not much time for public comment.

Dr. Rosenberg said there was not great awareness in either the House or the Senate about this initiative. He said he wanted to make sure that Board members understood the bill and its basic provisions. He said the implications of another major shake-up of higher education this decade were devastating for the System. He said this would create an opportunity for a highly politicized University System with institutions driven by political agendas. He noted that the Board of Governors had been created in the first place to ensure that universities would not be captured by the political interests of the moment. He said this was not the best way to ensure a quality education for Florida’s university students.

Mrs. Roberts said she felt that most legislators wanted to do the right thing, but that this was difficult in facing a priority issue for leadership. She said she was encouraging them to make the decision which was best for the state.

Dr. Rosenberg said Dr. Alceste Pappas, Pappas Consulting Group, was on the line. He said the consultants’ report, from the Pappas Group, had led to Forward by Design and the initiatives for the State University System, adopted by the Board in December. Dr. Pappas noted that she was not related to Board member Lynn Pappas. She said the Board of Governors was the newest system of higher education governance in the country and had just spent five years to bring vision, order and direction for the system and the students in Florida. She said that decoupling those efforts at this point was of great concern. She commented that university leaders around the country, particularly California and New York, were watching what was happening in Florida, again. She said they referred to it as a “revolving door of governance.” She said they looked at this as a chance to poach faculty and to poach presidents. She said the perception of other states would seriously impact sustained efforts to grow quality in the SUS. She said that any hope the Board had of having a system behave like a system on behalf of the needs of the people of Florida would not be achieved if this proposal passed. She commented that it took time to grow a nascent system.

Col. Mickey Presha, Chair, New College of Florida Board of Trustees, expressed concern about this proposal. He said it was important to present a unified front in support of the vision of the SUS.

Ms. McDevitt said she had already made a number of calls to legislators. She said the Chancellor should also contact the other organizations in the state which had historically supported higher education, such as the Council of 100, to elicit their support. She said it would be of greater benefit to have calls made by those who would not be viewed as self-serving by legislators. Mrs. Roberts said she had already spoken

with Mr. Marshall Criser who is the chair of the Council of 100's Committee on Higher Education. Ms. McDevitt commented that there was nothing this Board had done that warranted this action. She said the Board had exercised good governance in its decisions.

Dr. Rosenberg thanked Board members for their support, and he thanked Dr. Pappas for her remarks. He said he had received a letter from Dr. Lonnie Ingram, a faculty member with IFAS and a national hero in the field of alternative energy. He noted that Dr. Ingram was a member of the National Academy of Sciences and held 15 patents. In his letter, Dr. Ingram had said the SUS needed stability to sustain and encourage faculty creativity, and to attract and retain quality faculty. He noted that reorganization and the resulting instability created a bad climate for potential hires and led younger and mid-range faculty to leave Florida for settled institutions.

Mrs. Roberts reiterated the seriousness of the proposal. She said she had respectfully requested President Pruitt and Speaker Rubio to slow the process and allow input to the discussion. She said any decision should be made in the best interest of the citizens. Ms. McDevitt inquired whether staff had arranged for Board member attendance at any of the committee meetings. She said this might be helpful.

Mr. Stavros said the Council of 100 was very concerned about higher education, and he would recommend seeking the Council's support of the Board of Governors. He said there was no need for another change in direction; what was needed was staying the course. He said the process needed slowing so that all could fully understand the consequences of this proposal.

President Delaney said he would be interested to know the responses from all the University Trustees. He said one key was "throwing bodies" at the Legislature. Dr. Rosenberg said the proposal would make the Board of Governors little more than a "message center" and remake the Boards of Trustees into oversight boards. Mrs. Roberts encouraged members and others to make calls to Legislators. She said staff would keep Board members informed of the process.

### 3. Adjournment

Having no further business, the Chair adjourned the telephone conference call meeting of the Florida Board of Governors at 10:10 a.m., March 4, 2008.

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Carolyn K. Roberts,  
Chair

Mary-Anne Bestebreurtje,  
Corporate Secretary