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STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA  
BY TELEPHONE CONFERENCE CALL  
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA  
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The Chair, Carolyn K. Roberts, convened the special meeting of the Board of Governors, by telephone conference call, at 9:00 a.m., April 19, 2007, with the following members present: Sheila McDevitt, Vice Chair; Jorgé Arrizurieta; Commissioner Jeanine Blomberg; John Dasburg; Ann Duncan; Dr. Stanley Marshall; Ava Parker; Tico Perez; Gus Stavros; John Temple; and Dr. Zach Zachariah.

1. Call to Order and Chair's Report

Mrs. Roberts thanked members of the Board for their participation in this special meeting. She said that the shootings at Virginia Tech earlier this week were truly horrific, a tragedy that nobody could have expected. She said the reactions everywhere were of shock and great sadness. She asked for a moment of silence to honor the students and faculty members who died on April 16, 2007.

She noted that all the Presidents and their Boards of Trustees had emergency management plans in place, and did, as a matter of routine and practice, prepare for emergencies of all types. She said it was important to focus on how well prepared the universities were to respond to this or any other crisis.

She said the universities were responsible for the safety and well-being of some 350,000 students, faculty and staff. She said the universities had plans in place to secure their campuses, but this terrible tragedy gave the Board an opportunity to assess the universities' vulnerabilities and determine how to be even more prepared. She said that after Monday, this week was different from last week; notification procedures and responses must be different. She said that over the past several days, staff had been working with vice presidents of administrative affairs, budget officers, police chiefs and the vice presidents of student affairs to assess how the universities would be able to respond to a similar emergency. They had been asked for recommendations about what the Board could and should raise to the attention of the Legislature this Session.

2. Chancellor's Comments and Recommendations regarding SUS Response to the Events of April 16, 2007; Budget Request; Policy Initiatives

Chancellor Rosenberg said the universities stood ready and prepared to respond to the unspeakable tragedy. He noted that a systemwide Emergency Management Task

Force had presented a set of recommendations for approaches to improve the universities' responses to disaster, whether natural or man-made. He said that each university had emergency management guidelines and standard operating procedures - most predicated on weather, water, or wind events. These allowed for advance planning. He said the tragic events of April 16, 2007, revealed that universities were fragile environments that could be disrupted on a moments notice. While it was not possible to foresee what might happen, and it was difficult to prevent something that might be only hypothetical, the universities had an obligation to provide assurances to students, their families, and the citizenry of the state that they were doing what they could to protect their students, faculty and staff.

He said he expected the universities to set the example in training, staffing and technology to prevent or mitigate the possibility of a calamity. He said he had consulted over the previous two days with the Presidents, Student Government leadership, the Vice Presidents of Student Affairs, the Chiefs of Police and the Vice Presidents for Administration and Finance. He proposed the following:

1. That the Board approve the development of a multiyear review, development and implementation of a comprehensive emergency management plan that provides training, staffing and technology at each of the universities to provide the highest level of response capability possible; and
2. that the Board consider two specific initiatives, a budget request and the development of policy initiatives.

Dr. Rosenberg said that on the recommendation of all the universities, he had identified top priorities for a funding request which would be submitted to the Legislature, provided the Board concurred. He explained the priorities: expanding the number of police on each campus and improving their training and preparedness; and accelerating the installation of emergency communications systems improvements, to include equipment and training. He recommended that the Board approve a one-time request of \$1.5 million so all the universities could develop or complete the development of an emergency alert system and related training that would provide immediate notification to students and staff through a reverse 911 system, instant messaging, email, sirens or any device appropriate to each campus. He said the system should be redundant; no single source notification system was sufficient.

He said the campuses also needed more uniformed officers and lower response time to situations requiring a police presence, and additional training. Further, if sufficient funds were available, he recommended additional lines for mental health advisers and counselors. In addition to the \$1.5 million for the additional instant notification equipment, he recommended a request of \$2 million in recurring funds as

the first phase of a multiyear initiative to increase the number of police and mental health counselors on the campuses.

Dr. Rosenberg explained the policy initiatives. He said that at a future Board meeting, the Board should receive a review of best practices in policies and procedures for the early identification of – and intervention with – distressed students and students exhibiting behavior of concern to the university community. He requested that the universities review policies on involuntary medical dismissal to ensure that these were adequate in light of lessons learned on April 16, 2007. He said he would recommend to those institutions which had not adopted such a policy that they consider recommending one to their Boards of Trustees. He suggested that it was better to err on the side of protecting the many against the few who were demonstrably incapable of coping with a complex world.

Mr. Stavros said he was confident that in the past, the University Presidents were cognizant of the many problems which might occur. He said he remembered some incidents at USF which required careful action by the President. He said he appreciated and approved the Chancellor's recommendations. He moved that the Board approve the Chancellor's recommended actions on the budget request and the policy initiatives, as presented. Ms. Duncan seconded the motion.

Dr. Marshall inquired whether university representatives had been involved in making these recommendations. Dr. Rosenberg said they had been active participants and continued to be involved. He added that this would also serve as a reminder to the Trustees that they needed to be involved in these discussions.

Mrs. Roberts noted that the recommendation was not intended as a limit on the use of the additional funds being requested. Some universities were further along in the implementation of emergency notification systems. Ms. Parker said she hoped that the Board would adopt a systemwide expectation as to the minimum baseline standards each university should have in place.

There were no further comments, and members concurred in the motion.

Chancellor Rosenberg thanked the Presidents and the many Vice Presidents for their timely assistance in developing these recommendations. He said there had been intense discussions over the past two days. He said these were prudent recommendations for consideration by the Legislature. The recommendations were student-focused and represented a meaningful beginning for the discussions.

Mr. Ed Poppell, Vice President for Administration and Finance at the University of Florida, reported on an incident at UF the previous evening. A student had reported being a witness of another student with a handgun in a dormitory. The University had activated the emergency procedures for a police event. The police had been fortunate in

identifying the suspect through contacts in the dormitory, and were able to verify that the student possessed a non-lethal gun, an "airsoft airgun." The student was arrested and was being held in the Alachua County Detention Center.

Mr. Poppell said he was pleased that the young woman who had seen this situation was aware and responsive. She had communicated in the proper way. He added that the student who had been arrested had also been cooperative with the authorities.

Mrs. Roberts said that she would appoint a committee, to be chaired by Mr. Tico Perez, to recommend policies and procedures regarding campus security and safety appropriate for the State University System. She said the committee would also recommend that the University Boards of Trustees develop campus policies and procedures. She recommended that this committee report its findings to the Student Affairs Committee in August or September. She said the first priority of all the universities was clearly the safety of its students and faculty members.

3. Adjournment

Having no further business, the Chair adjourned the special meeting of the Board of Governors, State University System of Florida, at 9:30 a.m., April 19, 2007.

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Carolyn K. Roberts,  
Chair

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Mary-Anne Bestebreurtje,  
Corporate Secretary