

MINUTES
STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA
BOARD OF GOVERNORS
INNOVATION AND ONLINE COMMITTEE
FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
MIAMI, FLORIDA
JANUARY 31, 2019

1. Call to Order

Chair Ed Morton convened the meeting at 8:00 a.m. on January 31, 2019, with the following members present: Governors Tim Cerio, Shawn Felton, Wayne Huizenga, Darlene Jordan, Sydney Kitson, Jay Patel, Jalisa White, and Zach Zachariah. A quorum was established.

2. Approval of Committee Meeting Minutes

Governor Cerio moved that the committee approve the minutes of the November 8, 2018 meeting, as presented. Governor Patel seconded the motion, and the members concurred.

3. OER Part Two: Student and University Survey Findings on Textbook Affordability Issues

Dr. Pam Northrup, UWF Vice President for Research andped Innovation, presented the findings of a Florida Student Textbook and Instructional Survey conducted bi-annually by the Florida Virtual Campus. The survey was administered to students in the state's public universities and state colleges (21,000 respondents) and focused on the amount of money that students are spending to purchase textbooks and instructional materials as well as the impact of these costs on student behavior.

She said that survey results revealed that, for the first time since the 2012 survey, students are spending less overall for their textbooks. Students reported that to reduce costs they are buying more used books, buying from sources other than the campus bookstore, and renting digital textbooks. Addressing the impact of textbook costs, students reported that they have taken fewer courses, avoided specific courses, dropped/withdrew from a course, and not purchased the required textbook. Dr. Northrup reported that annually over 50% of respondents continue to report that they have not purchased a required textbook to reduce their semester costs. Governor Patel expressed concern with the pressures that are facing students to reduce costs and urged all universities to work to develop a model for the system to target textbook cost reduction. He added that a subscription service may be an appropriate option. Dr. Northrup responded that there

are numerous open resource initiatives throughout the SUS that are designed to reduce student costs with free or low cost alternatives.

Students also reported on courses in which required textbooks are purchased, but not used in the class. Governor White said that she is alarmed by the reported incidents that students are purchasing a required textbook, but are not using the book in the class, and identified this issue as a significant problem.

Dr. Northrup concluded by stating that students are increasingly using cost reduction strategies offered through the campus bookstore and through external sources, but textbook costs continue to negatively impact student academic progress. Governor Morton stated that he is pleased that universities are using online and electronic resources to address textbook costs and emphasized that these costs are continuing to negatively impact students' ability to learn.

Dr. Jon Rogers summarized the Textbook and Instructional Materials Affordability Report that is statutorily required for the State University System. The annual report summarizes each university's textbook and instructional materials adoption process and specific actions and initiatives to reduce student costs. Dr. Rogers explained that to increase access for students to information on academic course requirements, deadlines, and textbook costs, the law requires universities to post a hyperlink on their websites to lists of textbooks and instructional materials for at least 95 percent of all courses and course sections at least 45 days prior to the start of classes. The 2018 report found that 97 percent of all course sections across the SUS met the posting requirement for Spring 2018, up from 94 percent for Fall 2017.

The SUS report also identifies university and faculty initiatives that are designed to reduce student costs. University initiatives include affordability initiatives that are reducing course materials, grant programs that faculty for offering low cost or free materials, expansion of E-book availability, and campus book loan and rental programs. Initiatives among SUS faculty include increased availability of free or low cost course materials, course re-design activities to identify reduced course materials, and increased collaboration among discipline faculty to rewrite courses with high quality, free or low cost course materials. Dr. Rogers reported on significant cost reductions for students at a number of state universities due to increasing use of E-textbooks. Responding to a question from Governor Patel, USF Provost Ralph Wilcox said that universities are being proactive and negotiating directly with publishers to reduce textbook costs. Governor Patel restated his concern with the impact to students of textbook costs and identified the need for all universities to become involved in development of a pricing model for the system. Governor Morton added that the SUS can provide leverage to negotiate lower costs and aid in the transition to the greater use of electronic textbooks.

Dr. Rogers concluded by stating that SUS faculty, administrators, and student governments are continuing to explore ways to reduce student costs for textbooks and instructional materials.

4. UF Online 2019-2024 Comprehensive Business Plan

At its October 2018 meeting, the UF Online Advisory Board, chaired by Governor Morton, reviewed and approved a new comprehensive business plan for UF Online for 2019-2024. Ms. Evie Cummings, Assistant Provost and Director of UF Online, provided an overview of the 2019-2024 UF Online Business Plan to the Committee.

Ms. Cummings reported that since its 2013 enabling legislation, UF Online has experienced strategic development and expansion and now offers 20 fully online bachelor's degree programs and 36 pathways to earn a degree. She announced that UF Online was recently ranked by the US News and World Report in its 2019 "Best Online Bachelor's Programs" as the 5th nationally rated program.

Demand for the UF Online programs continues to increase. UF Online is now enrolling approximately 3,000 undergraduate students, while not eroding the university's standard admissions requirements. Responding to a question by Governor Kitson, Ms. Cummings reported that a majority of students bring college credits in to a UF Online program which accelerates their time to graduation. Since its inception, over 1,700 students have graduated from UF Online programs.

Ms. Cummings discussed priorities for the next five years which include specific goals, high quality values, core management practices, and nimble and sound academic strategies. Goals include: Robust student learning, smart design and program delivery, enriching and supported online student experiences, strategic marketing and recruitment, and smart growth via data-driven operations. By 2024, the plan is to offer 30 fully online degree programs and enroll over 8,000 students.

With a focus on the student experience, each online student has a dedicated advisor to ensure flexible, custom pathways and the learning pathways are nested in the "UF Plaza," a student virtual campus, with campus-based support and out-reaching connections programs for all students. A key goal is to double the number of academic advisors that are available to work with online students.

Ms. Cummings concluded by stating that UF Online is now expanding its emphasis on STEM degree programs and is also responding to an emerging national trend for employers to add educational benefits to employee compensation and is partnering with national corporations to provide online undergraduate degree programs for the corporation's employees. In the coming years, program priorities will include: expanding degree programs to meet workforce needs, enhancing academic and student support

services, investing in and empowering exemplary faculty, expanding the employer pathway program, and maintaining relentless cost containment in all areas.

5. Recognition of Exemplary Online Student

To enable the Innovation and Online Committee to continue to recognize exemplary online students in the State University System, Dr. Rogers introduced Mrs. Lauren Apodaca who achieved a bachelor's degree in early childhood education through the FIU Online program. Mrs. Apodaca described her educational journey to enroll in and complete the FIU Online program despite an ongoing battle with Guillain-Barre' Syndrome, a severe immune system disorder. She discussed and was appreciative of the steadfast accommodation, support, and encouragement provided by the FIU faculty and administrators. Mrs. Apodaca is currently a fifth grade teacher and attributes much of her success to the FIU Online program.

6. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

Governor Morton provided an update on the implementation of a Student Services Scorecard which directed universities to conduct a self-study of the support services provided to online students to ensure that online students are receiving the equivalent services as on-campus students. Governor Morton announced that as a result of this work, the State University System received a 2018 "Best in Practice" Award for Student Support Services from the national Online Learning Consortium.

Chair Morton adjourned the meeting at 8:50 a.m.

Edward Morton, Chair

Jon Rogers