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 STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA
 BOARD OF GOVERNORS
 FLORIDA AGRICULTURAL & MECHANICAL UNIVERSITY
 TALLAHASSEE, FL
 MARCH 23, 2021

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1. Appearance by Senate President Wilton Simpson

During the Facilities Committee, President Simpson appeared before the Board via Zoom. He remarked on Florida being recognized again by U.S. News and World Report as the No. 1 State for Higher Education, but felt Florida's status as the number one state is not widely known. He commented on pending legislation that would adjust the Bright Futures scholarship program to ensure anyone who goes to a university would leave with a degree that leads to a career, although he wasn't sure where the legislation would end up given the push back the Legislature has received on the bill.

President Simpson asked the Board of Governors to create a list of opportunities that do not lead to jobs because he believes high school students should see what such a list looks like. The earlier students think about their careers, the better the outcome will be. If students decide to go into a degree where there isn't a job at the end of the program, it should be acknowledged so they are fully aware of what they are doing. President Simpson said the Legislature wants to be helpful and partner with the Board of Governors to continue to have the best system of higher education. He asked the Board to look at the Texas university performance-based funding model and indicated there would be adjustments to Florida's performance-based funding in the near future. President Simpson said he respects the Board and would like to hear what opportunities would look like for Florida to match the educational system to the realities of the dynamic world we live in.

Chair Kitson thanked President Simpson for taking the time to address the Board during the legislative session. He provided assurance that the Board will continue to work on the challenges before it and acknowledge there is room for improvement. Above all, he emphasized that the Board wants to achieve the best outcomes for the students, the faculty, and the universities, which will lead the Board in the right direction.

Mr. Levine thanked President Simpson, noting that the work done by the Legislature has made a large difference. One area that has not been discussed much is the power of research. The Board's goal is to produce \$1 billion a year in research expenditures. Mr. Levine thanked the Legislature for the State's investments in higher education. He encouraged the Legislature to continue those

efforts and recognize how impactful the universities have been to Florida's workforce.

2. Call to Order

On March 23, 2021, Chair Sydney Kitson convened the meeting at 2:28 p.m. with the following members present and answering roll call: Vice Chair Brian Lamb; Tim Cerio; Richard Corcoran; Aubrey Edge; Patricia Frost; Ed Haddock; H. Wayne Huizenga, Jr.; Ken Jones; Darlene Jordan; Charles Lydecker; Ally Schneider; William Self; Eric Silagy and Kent Stermon.

3. Chair's Report to the Board of Governors

Chair Kitson thanked President Robinson, Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University Board of Trustee Chair Lawson, and the FAMU staff for hosting the meeting. He commended the leadership and staff at FAMU for stepping forward to meet the needs of the surrounding communities by hosting a COVID-19 testing site during the past year, and now for hosting a vaccination site on campus. Chair Kitson touted these initiatives as great examples of how universities have been reaching out to their communities and providing a public service to the state.

Chair Lawson welcomed Chair Kitson, Chancellor Criser, members of the Board, presidents, and chairs to FAMU. He reaffirmed FAMU's continuing commitment to driving the university's performance within the framework of the performance funding model. He expressed excitement about the partnerships they have built, not only with the Board of Governors, but with each of the other peer institutions. He specially thanked Chair Kitson for his leadership during such challenging times, and for demonstrating how to effectively reopen the universities during a pandemic.

Provost Maurice Edington remarked on the infrastructure and activity enhancements occurring over the last year and their impact on improving student success. He also noted the university's improvement in its public school ranking, moving up to 117 overall. President Robinson reiterated the importance of rankings and said they are proud to be a part of the No. 1 ranked System.

Chair Kitson opened his remarks by acknowledging we have entered the second year of battling the COVID-19 virus. University leaders, faculty, staff, and students have performed extremely well and should be proud of their accomplishments. He attributed this success to the countless hours of preparation, extensive planning, and buy-in throughout the year. Each university implemented campus health and safety policies and procedures that were unique to their circumstances, and in alignment with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and State guidance, all of which emphasized the need for personal responsibility for a positive and healthy academic experience. He added that we continue to rely heavily on the expert guidance of Surgeon General Scott Rivkees, who provides weekly updates on the status of the

virus and the latest guidance from the State and the CDC. Chair Kitson thanked Dr. Rivkees for his careful guidance and expertise.

During the past year, despite the pandemic, the System has continued to prepare thousands of students to enter the workforce. In addition to preparing for summer and fall classes, the work of the Legislature has taken center stage. Chair Kitson said legislative members are asking challenging questions about the effectiveness of our universities in meeting Florida's workforce needs – a top priority of the Board. Last year, the Academic and Workforce Alignment Task Force was created to address these very issues. And while the inquiries from the legislators are instructive, he believes the universities are continuing to be responsive to Florida's workforce needs. For example, in the last five years, the number of degrees awarded in areas of critical emphasis has increased and, more importantly, are directly aligned with Florida's current and future workforce needs.

We have also significantly increased partnerships and collaboration opportunities with businesses and industry stakeholders. Such relationships enable employers to better identify, recruit, and employ talented graduates. Moreover, universities enjoy ongoing working relationships with the Department of Economic Opportunity, Enterprise Florida, the Council of 100, the Chamber of Commerce, and Space Florida. While we are proud of our rank as the No.1 State for postsecondary education by *U.S. News & World Report*, to stay number one and provide our students with the best opportunity to be successful after graduation, we need to continue to evolve and improve.

University research initiatives likewise continue to be productive and remain a top priority of the Board. He stated universities are committed to protecting their research from undue foreign influence, along with ensuring there are significant safeguards in place to protect research findings, innovations, and new discoveries.

Chair Kitson applauded the smooth and efficient operation of the campuses during the spring semester. Foremost on the minds of the presidents has been planning for the spring semester commencements and for the summer and fall 2021 academic semesters. Similar to the fall 2020 reopening, Board staff provided a Blueprint for Spring Semester 2021 Commencements. This Blueprint identifies critical elements to guide each university as it develops an individualized plan for spring graduation. Chair Kitson said he was pleased to say that each university is working hard to provide a meaningful graduation ceremony for students and their families while adhering to current CDC and state health and safety guidelines. All of the universities have announced they are planning to provide an "in-person" component to their commencement activities, based on their facilities, staffing, and resources. Additionally, presidents and provosts have been planning a full slate of "face-to-face" classes for next fall. This planning involved a great deal of faculty effort and is being balanced by the continuing student demand for online classes.

He was also pleased to report the universities are actively responding to Vice Chair Lamb's crucially important report on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. System-wide councils have engaged in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion activities on a daily basis to collaborate and develop meaningful initiatives and services for students, staff, faculty, administrators, and community partners. In addition to planning an annual system-wide convening of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion personnel, universities are revising diversity plans, partnering with more campuses within the SUS, and considering ways to make the Equity Report more instructive.

He anticipates the Innovation and Online Committee, chaired by Governor Stermon, will be looking for big ideas during the coming year, as it considers the delivery of university academic programs and student support services, as well as administrative services, post COVID-19. The Committee will continue to work with university leaders to review lessons learned, opportunities, and best practices, together with exploring new activities promoting student and faculty success.

Chair Kitson said he is looking forward to the work related to the Strategic Planning Committee's Civil Discourse Initiative, under the leadership of Governor Cerio. Chair Kitson shared his concern regarding the steady decline in respectful discourse among those with differing viewpoints and strongly believes that the universities can provide the leadership and foundation for understanding, learning, and growth in this area. He emphasized the need to identify ways to promote understanding and compassion for different viewpoints and a willingness to learn and grow through listening and open dialogue. The work of the Strategic Planning Committee will provide critical guidance to the universities and he looks forward to significant engagement by the faculty, staff, and students on the issues during the coming year.

Chair Kitson then addressed a longstanding concern of the Board - deferred maintenance. The System has over 107 million gross square feet, with 10 of the 12 universities being 50 years or older. The need to maintain the basic infrastructure and mechanical systems of the buildings presents an ongoing struggle. In addition, the need to modernize the older facilities becomes more important every year. Without additional resources, the State's investment in the facilities will continue to decline. Chair Kitson referenced a 2017 Sightlines report previously reviewed by the Board that indicated the System has over \$1 billion in crucial deferred maintenance needs, with an additional \$2 billion projected over the next 10 years. Since that report, universities have been given the flexibility to use carryforward for maintenance, which is good news, but that flexibility has been hindered by the lack of PECO maintenance funds for the last few years. Although the universities have been doing their best to solve deferred maintenance issues on their own, there is a dire need for additional resources.

Chair Kitson expressed appreciation for President Simpson for taking time out of his schedule to join the Board meeting in the morning. He emphasized that President Simpson's comments reaffirm the Board's commitment to ensure students understand the importance and implications of their degree choice. He then asked

Chancellor Criser to work with the universities to develop a plan to leverage the information we collectively have on connecting degrees to outcomes and to ensure that all students have access to the information and understand how to effectively use it to their benefit. Chair Kitson asked Chancellor Criser to bring the plan back to the Board at the next meeting. He then thanked Governor DeSantis for his support of the System, along with President Simpson, Speaker Sprowls, and the Legislature for working closely with the System to make Florida the best place in the nation for higher education.

Finally, Chair Kitson noted that treatment methods for the virus are improving and the availability of vaccines is increasing. He continues to be encouraged by the resilience and resolve of university leaders who are working every day to keep the virus under control. He is confident that we are on our way back to a more traditional educational experience on the campuses, including mostly in-person instruction, as well as on-site research, additional extracurricular programs, and active public service. He also expressed certainty that the State University System will help lead the economic rebound in a post-COVID Florida.

4. Chancellor's Report

Chancellor Criser thanked Chair Kitson and members of the Board. He stated that we are expected to know more about the House and Senate proposals on the budget in the following few days and will keep the Board updated. Board staff has been sending a Friday report on legislation that we are following, and if anyone had questions, he would be happy to provide more details.

Chancellor Criser announced that Florida has been ranked number one in higher education for the past five years, according to *U.S. News & World Report*. He said it was an honor that we have held collectively as a group since the first inaugural publishing of the rankings. He affirmed we would continue to work hard to stay at the top.

Inaugural Board of Governors Challenge Coins were distributed; Chancellor Criser then briefly discussed the etiquette of the challenge coins.

5. Public Comment

No requests for public comment were received.

6. Board Self-Evaluation

Chancellor Criser presented the Board Self-Evaluation results. He announced that there were 17 out of 17 responses to the survey, and he shared his appreciation for Board Members for doing their part. He stated that all of the respondents agreed or

strongly agreed that: the Board is knowledgeable about the mission and purpose of each SUS institution, the Board monitors the effectiveness of institutions in fulfilling the missions through the accountability and strategic plans, and the Board adheres to a code of ethics. All respondents agreed or strongly agreed that: the Board avoids conflicts of interest and the perception of conflicts of interest, the Board recognizes the positive accomplishments of SUS institutions, and the Board advocates SUS interests to state agencies and legislatures.

Chancellor Criser said that based on the feedback provided, the areas of improvement are: that we should increase discussion on key issues, improve transparency in the budgeting process, and the need to increase the engagement of all Board Members. Individual and group recommendations were made that we continue to ensure current and future workforce needs are met. Additionally, we should focus on cost-effectiveness at each institution, respond in a positive and supportive way to post-COVID teaching and learning environment, 775 continue to improve the academic/research level nationally of all the universities, and we should continue to elevate universities in the national rankings and maintain our top national ranking as a System.

7. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Update

Vice Chair Lamb reported briefly on discussions that started in 2020 regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. University leaders are working diligently on these initiatives, with the expectation that real progress in these areas will be measured by the trustees and university leadership. He noted a memo was recently distributed to the universities providing guidance on how to measure the success of the outcomes of these initiatives. He then introduced Dr. Traki Taylor, the Board's Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer, to provide additional information.

Dr. Taylor explained she began her work by assessing institutional, state-level, and national initiatives to identify best practices in the fields of diversity, equity, and inclusion, to consider for implementation across the System. As part of this process, Dr. Taylor honed in on best practices already in place on campuses and in the region. She explained members will be receiving a report that provides a snapshot of the current best practices on each of the campuses. Additionally, once a year, Board of Governors Regulation 2.003 on Equity and Access requires each campus to submit an Equity Report. Dr. Taylor indicated the campuses have completed their respective reports and submitted them to the Board office. Meetings with campus representatives are currently in progress to discuss findings in the Equity Reports and to explore matters that may need to be changed or added for future reports.

Dr. Taylor reported many of the campuses already have diversity and equity plans in place and the few that do not are planning to create them. Recently, the SUS gained system-level membership in the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education. Membership allows the System to immediately have access to national

conversations around matters that impact diversity, equity, and inclusion. It also allows us to participate in national-level policies that will impact our work. Dr. Taylor stated she recently participated in discussions with colleagues across the United States and other countries during the Association's virtual annual meeting. The meeting provided a valuable networking opportunity to learn from other System-level administrators and to share the work that is being done around Florida.

Dr. Taylor reported the SUS Council on Equal Opportunity and Diversity has reconvened with Ms. Michelle Douglas, Florida State University's Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Office and Chief Diversity Officer as Chair. And that Mr. Rick Maxey, Assistant and Vice President for the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Florida Polytechnic University, spearheaded the Council of Diversity and Inclusion Officers, which he chairs. The two Councils are comprised of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion personnel at all 12 institutions, and allow for productive conversations and planning. As the next steps, the councils have started the process of charting productivity and success on their campuses as it pertains to the final report for the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion workgroup.

Dr. Taylor also reported that a climate study is being created to administer to the Board of Governors' staff. After the results of the climate study are analyzed, workgroups will be created to address any needs that arise as a result of the study. Later in the year, the System will sponsor an annual meeting of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion personnel to collaborate, plan, and discuss best practices. Additionally, combined quarterly meetings of both councils will begin later this month. With the assistance of the Board's Office of Data Analytics staff, work has begun to create a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion dashboard for the System. More information on this will be shared during the June Board Meeting.

8. Agnes Peebles Memorial Scholarship Trust

Chair Kitson called on Ms. Vikki Shirley, General Counsel, to discuss the agenda item related to the Agnes Peebles Memorial Scholarship Trust. She explained the trust was created in 1953 in honor of Agnes Peebles. The original objective of the trust was to establish a scholarship fund for students who graduated from Indian River High School and were going to attend the University of Florida. The Board of Control, the former governing body for the SUS at the time, was named as the trustee and was responsible for administering the trust. Eventually, the scholarship was expanded to all universities but the name of the trustee was not changed. In addition, the trust agreement restricts the ability of the trustee to sell and reinvest the securities that form the corpus of the trust unless there are insufficient funds for the scholarships.

The School District of Indian River County, which is responsible for selecting the students who may receive the scholarships, is requesting the Board to seek a judicial modification of the trust agreement to allow the trustee and investment

manager to further diversify the portfolio to generate additional funds. Additionally, the name of the trustee needs to be changed to reflect the Florida Board of Governors Foundation, Inc., since the Foundation administers similar scholarships. Ms. Shirley asked for the Board's approval to retain the firm of Gould, Cooksey, and Fennell, LLC, for the purpose of seeking a judicial modification of the terms of the Agnes Peebles Memorial Scholarship Trust Agreement.

Ms. Frost moved approval, which was seconded by Mr. Lamb, and the members concurred unanimously.

9. Amendments to the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of the FAU Clinical Practice Organization, Inc.

Chair Kitson called on Ms. Shirley to discuss the amendments to the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of the FAU Clinical Practice Organization, Inc. Ms. Shirley explained the FAU Clinical Practice Organization, Inc. is FAU's clinical faculty practice plan. A faculty practice plan is established at universities with medical schools and colleges of nursing. The corporation is responsible for billing and collection for the clinical services provided by the faculty. The FAU Board of Trustees recently met to certify the FAU Clinical Practice Organization as a direct support organization of the university. To accomplish this change in structure, the corporation had to amend its Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. Additional changes were also made to the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws to make align the corporate structure with the regulatory and statutory requirements for direct support organizations.

Mr. Self moved approval of the amendments to the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of the FAU Clinical Practice Organization. Mr. Lamb seconded the motion, and the members concurred unanimously.

10. Presidential Search Update

A. Florida State University

Chair Kitson asked Mr. Silagy to provide an update on the presidential search for Florida State University. Mr. Silagy stated that the search for a new president is progressing. The executive search firm worked with stakeholders to identify the key attributes that a new president of Florida State University should possess. Based on those conversations, those characteristics have been identified and the search for appropriate candidates both within and external to the SUS and from the private sector has begun. The recruiting phase is expected to take about two months. Mr. Silagy additionally addressed rumors that a local candidate was running who had an inside track with the president. Mr. Silagy stated the rumors were false and affirmed that the committee has worked hard to put together a robust, transparent,

national search. He said he was going to do his best to make sure the process considers candidates with very diverse backgrounds. Florida State University is a nationally recognized institution and therefore deserves nothing less but to consider every possible candidate who is at the highest levels.

B. New College of Florida

Mr. Levine provided an update on the presidential search at New College of Florida. He commended New College Board of Trustees Chair, Mary Ruiz, who has professionally managed the process, and noted that an aggressive timeline was established for the search. He believes they are on target for presenting a president designee prepared to the Board of Governors at the June meeting. Mr. Levine said that typically, universities rely heavily on assistance from an outside search firm to engage and help manage the search. In the case of New College, the process has been conducted in a public manner, having reviewed more than 30 highly qualified candidates at a public meeting. He reported the committee conducted interviews over a four-day period and he was pleased to announce that five highly qualified candidates have been selected to bring to the campus for final interviews with the Board of Trustees. Based on the diligence and work done to date, he said any of the five would be exceptional, however, that assessment could change based on the interview process. He concluded by commending the faculty and the students on the search committee for being extraordinary and for their hard work.

Chair Kitson thanked Mr. Silagy and Mr. Levine for their time and effort being put into these important processes.

11. Consent Agenda Items

Ms. Schneider moved approval of the slate of items on the Consent Agenda. Ms. Frost seconded the motion, and the members concurred unanimously.

12. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

Chair Kitson announced the next meeting of the Board will be held on May 11, 2021, via conference call, and the next in-person meeting is scheduled for June 22-24 at the University of South Florida, St. Petersburg. The plan is for the meeting to be conducted in-person and for members who are unable to attend in-person to use a virtual platform, with more information to follow. Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:12 p.m. on March 23, 2021.

Sydney Kitson, Chair

Vikki Shirley,
Corporate Secretary