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 STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA  
 BOARD OF GOVERNORS  
 UNIVERSITY OF NORTH FLORIDA  
 JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA  
 March 30, 2022

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1. Call to Order

On March 30, 2022, Chair Brian Lamb convened the meeting at 10:05 a.m. with the following members present and answering roll call: Vice Chair Eric Silagy; Tim Cerio; Aubrey Edge; Patricia Frost; Ed Haddock; Nastassia Janvier; Ken Jones; Darlene Jordan; Alan Levine; Charles Lydecker; Craig Mateer; Steven Scott; William Self and Kent Stermon.

2. Chair's Report to the Board of Governors and Remarks on the State of the System

Chair Lamb recognized UNF for celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and thanked Interim President Pamela Chally and UNF Board of Trustees Chair Kevin Hyde for the warm welcome.

Chair Hyde recognized Interim President Chally for her outstanding work to date and thanked Governors Stermon and Edge for their support and shared interest in UNF. He noted UNF is growing and trying to determine what they want to look like in the next 50 years. He reported UNF was recently gifted a large piece of land that will allow it to expand its footprint and continue to be a presence in Northeast Florida.

Interim President Chally welcomed everyone and remarked on how UNF has grown over the last 50 years into an institution that holds great promise for the future. She recalled in previous years, many of the faculty were recent graduates, sometimes younger than the students, and they brought a sense of commitment and support to the students that continues to this day. She then introduced Student Body President, Selma Besirevic, who commented briefly on her experiences at UNF and introduced a video highlighting student success at UNF. Mr. Edge said Jacksonville was proud of UNF and how they represent the city. Chair Lamb echoed Mr. Edge's comments, acknowledging the progress being made at UNF, especially under the leadership of Interim President Chally, who he thanked for stepping into the position.

Chair Lamb provided a brief update on the progress being made around the priorities he laid out at the January meeting. First, much progress was made on enhancing the State University System budget as evidenced by it being a record year for state investment during the 2022 legislative session. He emphasized that the Board listened to the university chairs and presidents about the need for deferred capital maintenance funding and with their support, was able to obtain funding to meet some of those critical needs.

Shifting to policy, he spoke about accreditation in January and stressed this is a journey the System will be taking together. He assured trustees and presidents their voices will be heard in shaping a long term strategy, which will be led by Mr. Levine. Next, Chair Lamb discussed the opportunity to refine the regulations in place at the Board level. He reported university staff has already submitted information that is being assessed and he expects Chancellor Criser to bring recommendations to the Board on regulatory improvements and efficiencies by the end of the year.

In January, Chair Lamb broached the topic of tenure but said the System should be focusing on faculty excellence. He encouraged members and university leadership to discuss ways to support and invest in faculty. He noted a lot of the budget will go to various faculty initiatives already in place at the universities, but he encouraged trustees and presidents to keep faculty excellence front and center. With regard to tenure and the Board's response to the new legislation on post-tenure review, he said Mr. Cerio will provide thoughtful updates to the Board over the summer.

On a broader level, Chair Lamb remarked that when this level of leadership is brought together at Board meetings, he wants more dialogue. He pledged to work with Chancellor Criser, Board staff, and committee chairs to foster more dialogue, but he also asked university leadership, especially the presidents, to feel empowered to chime in on topics that are important to them. He emphasized their voices are very important, and he felt they had done a better job during the committee meetings the day before.

Lastly, Chair Lamb thanked his fellow board members for leaning in on topics that revolve around his priorities. He commended members for their engagement in the budget process and embracing their new committee assignments, noting there is much policy work to be done. He encouraged university presidents, chairs, and Board members to bring their expertise to the table.

### 3. Recognition of Outgoing Governor H. Wayne Huizenga, Jr.

Chair Lamb remarked on Mr. Huizenga's contributions to the Board of Governors during his many years of service and called on Ms. Shirley to read the resolution honoring his dedication and service to the Board and the State University System.

Mr. Levine noted he was appointed to the Board at the same time and felt Mr. Huizenga brought a sense of integrity and consistency to his work on the Board. Mr. Levine moved the adoption of the resolution honoring Mr. H. Wayne Huizenga, Jr. Mr. Lydecker seconded the motion and the members concurred unanimously.

### 4. Chancellor's Report

Chancellor Criser thanked Governor DeSantis and the Florida Legislature for their support and investment in Florida's students. He noted Florida is ranked number one in the United States for post-secondary education, thanks to the Legislature's investments in students.

Chancellor Criser reported the Presidential Search Bill was recently signed into law by Governor DeSantis. He stated early discussions reflect positive feedback from executive search consultants and a heightened interest in the presidential searches currently underway.

The Board Office has started reviewing the Board's regulations and has received input from all 12 universities. Staff is organizing the input by subject matter to see if there is a consensus on regulations that could be simplified. He thanked the universities for their input and emphasized this is just the beginning of the process

Chancellor Criser indicated the State University System is on the verge of releasing its freedom of expression survey to all students, faculty, and staff. The survey will open at 12:01 a.m. on April 4, 2022.

Chancellor Criser updated the Board on a previous discussion about workforce development. He has now met with all economic development leagues from all 12 universities, along with the Florida Chamber of Commerce and Florida Council of 100. He also met with an economic development specialist and will continue meeting with leaders to explore more economic development opportunities for students.

Chancellor Criser announced Ms. Kristin Whitaker, the Assistant Vice Chancellor of Public Policy and Advocacy, is leaving the Board of Governors for a new employment opportunity. He congratulated Ms. Whitaker on her new position and thanked her for her dedication and service to the Board. Chair Lamb echoed Chancellor Criser's comments and wished her the best.

Chancellor Criser thanked Chair Lamb, Vice Chair Silagy, and the members of the Board who worked to support the State University System during the legislative session and Governor DeSantis and the Legislature for being receptive to the conversation about what post-secondary education looks like in the state of Florida.

#### 5. Public Comment

There were no requests for public comment.

#### 6. Confirmation of Appointment of the President for the University of South Florida

Chair Lamb called on Mr. Will Weatherford, University of South Florida Board of Trustees Chair, to present Ms. Rhea Law for confirmation. Mr. Weatherford thanked Mr. Ken Jones for serving on the Presidential Search Committee and expressed his excitement to present USF's eighth president, Ms. Rhea Law, to the Board for confirmation. He said they arrived at their selection after a thorough process. Mr. Mike Griffin, the USF Board of Trustees Vice Chair, chaired the Presidential Search Committee, which engaged hundreds of stakeholders in listening sessions and received input from over a thousand people who participated in their survey.

The Presidential Search Committee recommended two candidates who participated in town hall meetings on all three campuses and subsequently interviewed with the USF Board of Trustees. He explained it was not their intention at the beginning of the process to make Interim President Law the president, but that view changed three months into her leadership when he observed her uncanny ability to lead USF. After taking the reins as Interim President, Ms. Law had a significant impact on the culture, the people, and all things important to the institution. Mr. Weatherford described Ms. Law's impressive background; including her service as the CEO of a large law firm in Tampa and her community engagement with the Tampa Bay area. He noted Ms. Law will be the first president who is an alumnus of USF. He then discussed the terms of the presidential contract, including compensation and the annual presidential evaluation.

Chair Lamb called on Mr. Jones who was the Board's designee for the USF Presidential Search Committee. Mr. Jones indicated the process worked the way it was intended. Dozens of applicants were reviewed and USF received over 2,500 responses from the community. Mr. Jones stated the process took about 8 months to complete and produced a great result. He pointed to Ms. Law's engagement with numerous community organizations in the Tampa Bay area, where she functioned not only as a member but as a leader. He emphasized her true and

authentic passion for the institution and that she possesses the intangible quality of being a great leader.

Chair Lamb opened the floor for Board member questions. Mr. Stermon noted the importance of freedom of expression and civil discourse on university campuses and inquired about her position on those topics. Ms. Law said freedom of expression and civil discourse are extremely important to her and the University of South Florida. During the university's recent Board of Trustees meeting, they reaffirmed their commitment to the System's Freedom of Expression statement and board committees are working on implementing the recommendations in the Board of Governors' Civil Discourse report. She said the USF General Counsel presented a segment on freedom of expression and civil discourse to incoming students at orientation and it was well-received. This was intended to assure incoming students that USF is a place they can speak freely and be heard in a civil manner. USF is also working on a website that will include information on the Freedom of Expression statement and First Amendment principles. She said there is still much work to be done, but she is looking forward to continuing these efforts. Mr. Stermon congratulated Ms. Law, saying she will be an asset to the System and the Board of Governors.

Mr. Levine said USF is the fastest growing university in the country and asked Ms. Law if she is willing to work with the Board of Trustees to establish goals around rankings. She replied USF has a five-year strategic plan with mechanisms in place to reach the top 25 and become AAU eligible. She explained there are a number of metrics and criteria that go into the strategic plan and they are actively working on them. Mr. Levine echoed Mr. Stermon's remarks and said it warmed his heart knowing someone so passionate about their university will be coming back to lead it.

Chair Lamb acknowledged Ms. Law's exemplary work at USF and said she will be an outstanding president for USF. He reiterated Mr. Jones's comments on the integrity of the presidential search process. He thanked Chair Weatherford and the USF Board of Trustees for their work. He then called on Ms. Law to make comments.

Ms. Law said there is so much promise at the University of South Florida, especially with regard to its connections with community and business leaders. She has already received great results from initiatives started just 7 months ago and she'd like to see those initiatives through to fruition. Her goal is for USF to become a Top 25 institution, be AAU eligible, and be recognized as a force in the state of Florida for achieving economic development and economic security. With the System continuing to be ranked No. 1, she is optimistic about what it can become if universities linked arms on different issues. She is looking forward to this experience and thanked the Board for the opportunity.

Mr. Jones moved to confirm the appointment of Ms. Rhea Law as the President of the University of South Florida. Mr. Levine seconded the motion, and the members concurred unanimously.

Chair Lamb congratulated Ms. Law on her appointment and welcomed her as the new President of USF.

#### 7. Florida State Representative, Sam Garrison

Chair Lamb welcomed Representative Garrison and thanked him for being a supporter of the Board of Governors. Chair Lamb noted Representative Garrison was elected to the House of Representatives in 2020 and will be the Speaker Designate in 2026. He received a bachelor's degree from Samford University and a Juris Doctor degree from the University of Illinois College of Law. He also sponsored House Bill 703, the Executive Search bill, that provides for a more competitive approach to recruitment during the presidential search process.

Representative Garrison thanked Chair Lamb and said it was an honor to welcome the Board to Northeast Florida. He thanked the Board, Presidents, and Trustee Chairs for their work and support during the past legislative session, and for what they are doing for the System. He appreciated hearing there has been positive feedback as a result of the Executive Search bill, along with an increase in the number of applicants who are applying. He thanked the Board for setting the mark and continuing to be the No. 1 System in the nation. He shared a personal story and remarked how Florida public institutions provide students an opportunity to graduate with a better financial outcome as compared to private institutions. That students are able to graduate without debt is a testament to the work that has been done in the System as well as the value placed on higher education in Florida.

Chair Lamb thanked Representative Garrison for his time and for playing such a large role in helping the System advance. Mr. Self thanked Representative Garrison for his support and remarked on the importance of state financial aid. While other colleges and universities are struggling with enrollment, he indicated that is not the case in Florida thanks to state funding for the Bright Futures Florida Academic Scholars and Medallion Scholars awards. Mr. Self thanked Representative Garrison for his continued support.

Mr. Silagy thanked Representative Garrison for his leadership in the House, especially as someone who has served on a presidential search committee. He noted it was very difficult to get applicants to put their names forward under the previous guidelines. He understands the controversy that surrounded this legislation but believes the new law will make a lasting impact on the System.

#### 8. Confirmation of Reappointment of the President for the Florida Polytechnic University

Chair Lamb stated on November 17, 2021, the Board of Trustees at Florida Polytechnic University approved an amendment to Dr. Avent's employment contract, unanimously reappointing Dr. Avent to continue his service as president of Florida Polytechnic University. The reappointment extends the term of Dr. Avent's contract through July 6, 2023. Chair Lamb called on Florida Polytechnic University Board of Trustees Chair, Mr. Cliff Otto, to present Dr. Avent for reappointment.

Mr. Otto said President Avent's commitment to the university remains at the highest level despite the significant and continuing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. The university has flourished under Dr. Avent's leadership, achieving several significant milestones. For example, Florida Polytechnic rose 19 spots in U.S. News & World Report's ranking of undergraduate engineering colleges without a doctorate ranking, to No. 26. Other key rankings include a No. 3 ranking in the State University System for top performance at low cost and a No. 14 ranking in best career outcomes for students among all universities nationally.

He said the university recognized the potential negative impact of COVID-19 on student recruitment and responded with several innovative efforts. As a result, Florida Polytechnic saw a significant increase in its incoming class at 625, resulting in the institution's largest student body to date at 1,575. Even with the increase in student admissions, the quality remained high, with small increases in the SAT and ACT scores, and GPA. Mr. Otto said 87% of incoming students were calculus-ready and 38% were in the top 10% of their high school graduating class.

To improve student diversity, he explained Florida Polytechnic developed a separate certificate program. The "stackable micro-credential" certificate summer program includes a pathway into

the university. This program was successful and brought the university 133 new students, half of whom are from underrepresented groups. Black/African American students now represent 11.7% of the university's students, Latino representation is at 26.7%, and females make up 18.3% of the student population.

The university also improved its analytical models of persistence, Academic Progress Rate, and 4-year graduation rates, and a Quality Enhancement Plan was developed as part of Florida Polytechnic's SACSCOC reaffirmation that focuses on retention through peer learning. The university hired faculty and department chairs in critical gateway subjects and created a new Foundations of Academic Success class for students who were struggling. The administration adjusted the grade forgiveness policy and created recovery paths that included summer courses to help students get back on track.

He indicated that their focus on the industry remains strong with over 300 collaborations and nearly 250 of those providing internships, careers, or sponsoring senior capstone projects. Last year, 74% of graduates found jobs and the median salary was \$56,300.

Mr. Otto said this was Florida Polytechnic's first year in Performance-Based Funding and the university was awarded nearly \$4.3M in performance funds. The Applied Research Center was fully funded through PECO at \$14.8M, and the university received "back-of-the-bill" authorization to build a new Engineering building on campus using the remainder of its carry forward funds. Florida Polytechnic successfully completed an Invitation to Negotiate process that resulted in International Flavors & Fragrances, Inc. being selected to build their global innovation center on campus. Mr. Otto stated the Board of Trustees is confident that under Dr. Avent's leadership, Florida Polytechnic University will continue towards realizing its vision of becoming one of the premier STEM universities in the nation.

Chair Lamb thanked Mr. Otto for his leadership and remarked on the tremendous progress the university has made under Dr. Avent's tenure. He then called on Dr. Avent for remarks. Dr. Avent thanked Chair Lamb and stated he was honored to help build Florida Polytechnic. He indicated there is so much potential for the institution, and thanked the Board of Governors for what has been accomplished to date.

Ms. Frost moved to confirm the reappointment of Dr. Avent as President of Florida Polytechnic University. Mr. Levine seconded the motion, and the members concurred unanimously.

## 9. Presidential Search Update

### A. Florida Gulf Coast University

Chair Lamb called on Mr. Blake Gable, Florida Gulf Coast University Board of Trustees Chair, to provide an update on the presidential search. Mr. Gable reported they are about to kick off the presidential search and plan to select a candidate by the end of the year. University staff has interviewed a number of executive search firms and will make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees on April 12. Mr. Gable said he has assembled a diverse and qualified search committee that will meet on April 13 and has asked former Board of Governors Member and FGCU Vice Chair, Mr. Ed Morton, to lead the Committee.

### B. Florida International University

Chair Lamb called on Mr. Dean Colson, Florida International University Board of Trustees Chair, to provide an update on the presidential search. Mr. Colson said their Governance Committee met two weeks prior and selected an executive search firm. He has completed the selection of individuals for the FIU Presidential Search Committee and submitted the list to Chancellor Criser and Chair Lamb for their approval. Mr. Colson said the search will be chaired by FIU Board of Trustees Vice Chair, Roger Tovar, who will kick off a town-hall meeting on April 13.

### C. University of Florida

Chair Lamb called on Mr. Mori Hosseini, University of Florida Board of Trustees Chair, to provide an update on the presidential search for the University of Florida. Mr. Hosseini stated the presidential search process has started and they have retained an executive search firm. On March 29<sup>th</sup>, the Search Committee was finalized with Mr. Lydecker serving as the Board's designee, and Trustee Rahul Patel serving as the Chair of the committee.

Chair Lamb thanked Mr. Gable, Mr. Colson, and Mr. Hosseini for their reports and for their work.

### 10. Consent Agenda Items

Mr. Jones moved approval of the slate of items on the Consent Agenda. Mr. Silagy seconded the motion, and the members concurred unanimously.

### 11. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

Chair Lamb announced that a Board conference call is scheduled for May 10, 2022, and the next in-person meeting is scheduled for June 28-30, 2022, at the University of Central Florida. Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:22 a.m. on March 30, 2022.

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Brian Lamb, Chair

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Vikki Shirley,  
Corporate Secretary