



FLORIDA POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY

May 20, 2021

Mr. Sydney Kitson, Chair
Florida Board of Governors
State University System of Florida
325 W. Gaines Street, Suite 1614
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400

Re: Florida Polytechnic University President, Randy K. Avent

Dear Chair Kitson:

Dr. Randy K. Avent is the inaugural President of Florida Polytechnic University and has served as such since July 7, 2014. Dr. Avent's current term of employment expires on July 7, 2021.

Dr. Avent's dedication to the University is at the highest possible level, and his leadership of the University, especially during the extraordinary challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, has been steady, effective, and inspirational. Therefore, at its meeting on November 18, 2020, the Florida Polytechnic University Board of Trustees unanimously approved a one-year contract extension for Dr. Randy Avent, ending on July 7, 2022.

Under Dr. Avent's leadership, Florida Polytechnic University achieved new milestones this past year, including attaining its first ranking in the U.S. News and World Report "Best Colleges". In its national ranking debut, Florida Poly was listed as a top 40 public undergraduate engineering college without a doctorate. Even more impressive, WalletHub listed Florida Poly as 14th in the nation, among all universities, for student career outcomes just behind Harvard and five spots ahead of Stanford.

With the University of Distinction goal of being known as a university with top-rated undergraduate engineering programs, the University focused this year on admissions, student progression, student experience, the graduate program, advancement, and University funding.

To achieve its goals, the University transitioned from remote operations in the fall, bringing both students and student-facing employees back to campus. Several new academic delivery models were developed with the primary mode being flex, which allowed students to attend remotely or in-person through a reservation system. This model highlighted a significant problem around engagement where many freshmen were simply "tuning in and turning off". Beginning spring semester, all employees were back on campus and our delivery models were modified based on lessons learned in the fall. A more proactive advising stance, classroom tracking that required in-person attendance in at least 50% of the classes and cameras turned on, grade forgiveness linked to recovery paths, on-line scheduling of tutoring sessions and a new class on Foundations of Academic Success were created to address these critical issues. Combined with new safety measures based on CDC guidance and best practices, the University had less than 20 confirmed cases of COVID on campus last year.

Despite having a very strong year in FY 2020 followed by the pandemic, Florida Poly increased fall 2021 FTIC applications by 20% and deposits by 75%, with out-of-state applications increasing by 66% and deposits doubling for this important group. The fall 2021 incoming class strength is also

significantly above the fall 2020 incoming class results. Many efforts, including a virtual peer networking program that built strong interactions with Florida High School Calculus and Physics teachers and carefully planned personalized in-person visits contributed to this increase. To focus on improving outreach and underserved representation, three pipeline programs were created that included a summer cohort, a first-year STEM program and an innovative certification program. New concentrations and degree enhancements, including an MOU with Florida Southern College for a 4+1 STEM-to-MBA program, were also introduced.

With just six years of retention data and three years of graduation data, the University continues to refine its analytical models around persistence, retention (APR) and graduation rates to help it better understand root causes. Additionally, there is a significant effort in making sure our graduates are successful once they leave Florida Poly. With so much industry emphasis on the need for graduates with professional development skills in addition to technical skills, the University combined all leadership programs under a single umbrella that is managed centrally with strong ties to career development. Career development continues to be strong with 74.1% of our graduates obtaining jobs with an average salary of \$56,300. The number of industry partnerships that provide internships, senior capstone projects and employment have continued to grow and are now at 243.

Significant improvements were also made to campus life and the student experience by adding club sports such as men's Lacrosse, a (scatter) band, an eSports program, and a Purple Fire Robotics team that participated in several competitions, including the VexU Championship. A Nuclear Propulsion Officer Candidate (NUPOC) pipeline program for the Navy was also created and has been successful.

Additionally, the University created an Office of Diversity and Inclusion, secured legislative funds to finish construction of the Applied Research Center and received approval to proceed with construction of a building on campus for the Florida Industrial and Phosphate Research (FIPR) Institute. Florida Poly is also working to create a global innovation center for a Fortune 500 company that will provide internships, capstone projects, and jobs for our students. The University entered Performance Based Funding (PBF) for the first time in its history with 83 points, and Advancement increased scholarship funding by 93%, unrestricted funds by 121% and grew the endowment to \$3M.

Pursuant to Section 1001.706(6)(a), Florida Statutes, President Avent's reappointment is subject to confirmation by the Board of Governors. Accordingly, on behalf of the University's Board of Trustees, I respectfully request that the Board of Governors confirm President Avent's reappointment.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or the University's Office of the General Counsel if you have any questions or would like more information concerning this matter.

Sincerely,



Clifford K. Otto, Chair
Florida Polytechnic University
Board of Trustees

cc: Marshall Criser, III, Chancellor, State University System of Florida
Vikki Shirley, General Counsel, Florida Board of Governors
Dr. Randy K. Avent, President