

MINUTES
STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA
BOARD OF GOVERNORS
TASK FORCE ON ACADEMIC AND WORKFORCE ALIGNMENT
FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY
November 4, 2021

*Video or audio archives of the meetings of the Board of Governors
and its committees are accessible at <http://www.flbog.edu/>.*

1. Call to Order and Opening Remarks

Board Chair Kitson reported that one of his top priorities was workforce alignment and strengthening the State University System's relationship with the business community. He thanked Governor Silagy for leading the committee and mentioned that significant action items would occur due to the committee's work.

Chair Eric Silagy convened the meeting on November 4, 2021, at 10:40 a.m. with the following members present: Governors Cerio, Corcoran, Haddock, Huizenga, Janvier, Jones, Kitson, Lamb, Levine, Lydecker, Self, and Stermon. A quorum was established.

2. Minutes of September 1, 2021

Chair Silagy opened the meeting with a motion to approve the meeting minutes for the September 1, 2021 meeting. Chair Kitson moved to approve the minutes. Governor Lamb seconded the motion, and the motion was adopted.

3. Discussion with University Leadership: Potential Recommendations and Next Steps

Chair Silagy mentioned that the next agenda item would be to discuss the next steps and recommendations based on task force meetings over that past year. He presented a timeline, highlighting that the goal for the committee is to come back in January with recommendations. Chair Silagy also mentioned that the Board would seek input from the universities and that there may be additional recommendations going forward as the committee considers institutions' feedback.

Chair Silagy then presented a framework with three key questions.

- How can Florida's universities broaden and strengthen their ties with the private sector and key industry stakeholders?
- How can Florida's universities become more proactive in solving real-world problems Florida industries face?
- How can the university system help the state reach the goal of being a top ten global economy by 2030?

Chair Silagy presented the recommendations based on the panel discussions with representatives from various industries. The first recommendation is to create a symbiotic relationship between the State University System and Florida's business community. He noted that one of the key areas was to take the opportunity to enhance the relationship between the presidents of universities and CEOs of businesses. He acknowledged that institutions might already have these relationships but reported that there should be relationships with executive leadership on campus and CEOs that would help facilitate dialogue as economies change. He noted that this could result in the deans of various schools gaining insight into industry trends, resulting in the ability to adapt to the needs of the industry and adjust curriculum accordingly, thereby meeting the needs of customers. He mentioned that advisory councils, which institutions already have, are essential to creating and expanding business relationships. Leveraging advisory councils can ensure industry needs are met and allow institutions to look across the university system to see if there is a need. Chair Silagy also explained that this symbiotic partnership should include meeting with statewide business groups and that it is incumbent upon leaders to engage with the local community in a variety of ways. For example, deans, professors, and university leadership should become members of statewide business groups, such as the Florida Chamber of Commerce, to engage with the community. Chair Silagy noted that universities could consider making this engagement a metric for measuring their success.

Governor Lamb agreed and stated that these are best practices already employed by some institutions. He recognized that each institution is unique, and some may be in different parts of their journey in establishing business partnerships. He also noted that there are regional differences resulting in different markets for each university. Governor Lamb explained that these recommendations do not necessarily represent a linear path, but all should be considered. Governor Silagy agreed and reiterated that regional differences are important; this further necessitates regular engagement with the business community. He added that businesses plan for five to ten years down the road, including workforce needs. This insight can provide a road map of what industries need from universities and allow them to be proactive, not reactive, to critical industries in different parts of the state and focus on specialized areas.

Next, Chair Silagy presented the second recommendation of preparing students for workforce expectations. The first component of this recommendation requires students to complete profiles in Handshake or Symplicity. He stated that there is an apparent gap between students acquiring necessary skillsets on their resumes and the more programmatic elements in place to meet that requirement. He emphasized that students need to think about what is required of them from the workforce at the outset of their education. Chair Silagy also reported that centralizing internship reporting in Florida was another piece to this recommendation. He would like to explore the expansion and centralization of internship opportunities to ensure students have exposure to opportunities around the state. He stated that best practices include having an institution-wide internship advisory council that could facilitate continuous feedback, which would be helpful for students and allow universities to address any potential gaps.

Chair Silagy presented the third recommendation, a system-wide platform for internships. As part of this, he would like the Board office to work with the institutions to determine the efficiencies of moving to one platform. He also explained that the career center directors should coordinate and promote visibility with groups like the Florida Chamber Board and Florida Council of 100 to leverage those organizations.

Chair Silagy presented the final recommendation of creating system-wide guidance for establishing business and university partnerships. He reported that this could be achieved by establishing workgroups and collaborating on developing best practices for experienced-based learning for colleges and departments. He explained that establishing guidelines for partnerships and sharing best practices can help ensure programs are working, capture those programs, and share that information across the system.

Chair Silagy stated that the task force would come back in January to consider these recommendations and any others. The expectation would be that the Board would hear an update from the presidents in March, specifically on how they are working with the top five employers, their existing relationships, and new partnerships. He explained that in June and subsequent meetings, there would be updates to the Board related to business partnerships, workforce expectations, and discussion of system guidance. He stated that the Board might want to consider additional system guidance based on feedback from deans and the business community.

Chair Silagy thanked the task force members, university leaders, and members of the team for their robust dialogue. He appreciated their feedback, which he stated will make a big difference in the State University System being proactive in addressing university needs. He stated that there is a big challenge in educating students in a dynamic global economy to meet industry needs now and in the future.

Board Chair Kitson expressed excitement over the recommendations presented. He stated that the pace of change was breathtaking and that the system needs to stay at the forefront. He believes that various business groups are willing participants and would partner with universities in this effort.

4. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

Having no further business, Chair Silagy adjourned the meeting at 10:58 a.m.

Eric Silagy, Chair

Tina Young
Director, Strategic Initiatives