

MINUTES
STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA
BOARD OF GOVERNORS
INNOVATION AND ONLINE COMMITTEE
January 26, 2022

1. Call to Order and Opening Remarks

Chair Kent Stermon convened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. on January 26, 2022, with the following members present: Timothy Cerio, Edward Haddock, Nastassia Janvier, Charles Lydecker, and Dr. William Self. A quorum was established.

2. Approval of Committee Meeting Minutes

Governor Haddock moved that the committee approve the minutes of the meeting held on November 4, 2021. Governor Janvier seconded the motion, and the members concurred.

3. Preparing for a Post-Pandemic World in the State University System

Chair Stermon announced that because of the number of recommendations in the report being presented by Provost Danilowicz, the Committee would receive, rather than approve, the report. He said that after the report was presented and the Committee discussed it, he will ask Chancellor Criser and Dr. Nancy McKee to work with the Steering Committee to determine next steps, based on Committee discussions during the meeting. He said the Committee would receive an update at its next meeting in March.

Provost Bret Danilowicz presented the report and its recommendations on *Preparing for a Post-Pandemic World in the State University System*.

Chair Stermon stated that he thinks the Board would agree that a higher percentage of students with health insurance would be better for students and for the system. He said that as this issue is explored, though, members should be hypersensitive to not creating additional hardships on students who can least afford it.

Governor Self said he appreciated the opportunity to give feedback to the Chancellor and Board staff from the Advisory Council of Faculty Senates. He said this effort was critical for instruction, how faculty design curriculum, how they oversee staff, advising, and what students expect in the classroom and on campus. He suggested the Committee also look at long-term academic resiliency.

Governor Lamb suggested the Committee look at data needed to make decisions. He said he appreciated that there were specific recommendations

around efficiencies, such as bringing in software and technology into the shared services effort. He suggested that a few recommendations be selected to pursue from an efficiencies standpoint in the next 6-12 months.

Governor Haddock said that in the process of going forward, maybe best practices that evolved at an institution could be shared across the system.

Governor Stermon said the Committee would continue its discussion in March and he would turn it over to the Chancellor and Dr. McKee for further work leading up to that meeting.

4. Proposed Revisions to the 2025 Strategic Plan for Online Education

Dr. McKee said that a mid-term review of the 2025 Strategic Plan for Online Education was conducted. She said that both the Steering Committee and the Implementation Committee were engaged in the review and agreed with the proposed revisions to the Plan that she presented.

Governor Lamb asked if the enrollment projections meant that 34% of graduate students would be taking at least one distance learning class in 2025, and Dr. McKee clarified that these projections were for FTE, which are calculated from student credit hours. They were not projections for student headcount. She said that on average, 34% of graduate student credit hours are anticipated being taken in distance learning courses in 2025.

Governor Silagy asked if the expectation for Florida Polytechnic and New College is that 34% of their student credit hours in 2025 would be in distance learning. Chancellor Criser said no, that he viewed this projection as beginning with asking where the market was going, and then making sure we were prepared when we got there, that we had the technology, skills, and training needed. He said it is a dynamic model and each year we get a better idea of the adoption of distance learning and where the demand will be. He said we were not in a situation where we were going to force institutions to increase their offerings in distance learning courses, but if a student desires and chooses to take courses online, that we do not tell them to go elsewhere and potentially bypass what we are able to offer to them. Governor Silagy stated that it was an interesting circumstance: Were students taking courses online because they are interested in taking them online or because those are the only courses available?

Governor Levine said the goal really is not a number, but rather are we being responsive to the market. Maybe the goal should be how to measure the quality of the programs we are offering and what is the satisfaction of students as to the quality of the programs.

Governor Lamb stated that he would like to focus on quality at the next meeting. He said that the U.S. News and World Report designated UF Online as the top

online bachelors program in the country. He said the next evolution of this discussion should be on outcomes, not just inputs.

President Fuchs said that some of their colleagues had risen a lot in the rankings, too, with the University of Central Florida being ranked as #7 in the nation. Embry-Riddle tied with UF Online as #1 in the state. He said that online degrees can be an effective way of scaling, but also an effective way of supplementing in-person courses. He said he thought we were blessed as a system because we had started investing in online education long before the pandemic. President Fuchs said there was something special for many students about being in class, in person, with their faculty and classmates. Excellence in online is important, and the discussion is even more important course-by-course than for the system. Deciding how much should be in-person and how much should be supplemented with technology is important for higher education, broadly.

President Cartwright said UCF's online bachelor's program has risen from #15 in the nation to #7. He agreed with President Fuchs that this is about how we can provide services to augment what is happening in-person. Those are valuable tools that can be used with in-person classes.

Chair Stermon said he supported measuring the success of the program, but he wanted to be careful that we not base success solely on student satisfaction, because in this case satisfaction may revolve around convenience rather than quality or the overall experience.

Governor Self said that new modalities had emerged during the pandemic and asked if the distance learning courses in the Plan were offered fully online. Dr. McKee stated that data is captured for both fully online and primarily online, with the difference being that primarily online courses had a small component that required face-to-face interaction. She said both fully and primarily online courses meet the statutory definition of "distance learning course." Governor Self said that one of the recommendations in the post-pandemic report is to review our modalities – and professional development around that - so we can land in a place where it is clearer across the system. Governor Self stated that the definition of online is broad and what students are looking for is also broad.

Governor Stermon directed Dr. McKee to make revisions to the Plan as presented, incorporate anything she had learned during the discussion, and bring it to the Committee for approval in March.

5. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

Chair Stermon adjourned the meeting at 9:56 a.m.

Kent Stermon, Chair

Nancy C. McKee, Ph.D.
Associate Vice Chancellor