

MINUTES
STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA
BOARD OF GOVERNORS
ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH EXCELLENCE COMMITTEE
FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
January 25, 2022

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and its committees are accessible at <http://www.flbog.edu/>.*

1. Call to Order and Opening Remarks

Chair Alan Levine convened the meeting on January 25, 2022, at 10:00 a.m., with the following members present: Governors Jones, Jordan, Lydecker, Scott, and Stermon. A quorum was established.

2. Minutes of the November 4, 2021, Committee Meeting

Chair Levine asked for a motion to approve the November 4, 2021, committee meeting minutes. Governor Jordan moved to approve, Governor Lydecker seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

3. Update on Implementation of House Bill 7017, Foreign Influence

Chair Levine said the next item on the agenda was an update on the implementation of House Bill 7017, Foreign Influence. House Bill 7017 passed during the 2021 legislative session and went into effect July 1. Chair Levine noted that this legislation changed how state universities address foreign influence.

Chair Levine stated that this was the subject of much discussion in the legislature and the Board of Governors due to some straightforward consequences occurring in some state universities and other institutions affected by influence from foreign countries, particularly China. Chair Levine commended Speaker Sprowls, who led this effort in the legislature.

Chair Levine noted that the State University System (SUS) institutions are committed to continuing to implement the following requirements as outlined in the law.

- Establish a research integrity office.
- Screen foreign researchers associated with countries of concern; foreign researchers include graduate or undergraduate students who may be U.S. citizens or permanent residents who have or continue to have an affiliation with a foreign country of concern.
- Establish an international travel approval program.
 - University audit executives will have the responsibility for screening researchers and international travel requirements.

- International cultural agreements that constrain the freedom of contract of a public entity allow control of curriculum or values and promote an agenda that is detrimental or compromises the security of the U.S. or its citizens are prohibited by the new legislation and regulation.

Chair Levine stated that during the Audit and Compliance Committee meeting later in the day, there would be an update from the Inspector General, Ms. Julie Leftheris, relative to the compliance and monitoring requirements that her office is responsible for overseeing. Chair Levine noted that staff had done a great job of implementation, and the Board has taken it very seriously to ensure consistency with the statute and regulations.

4. World Class Faculty and Scholars Program

Chair Levine reported that Section 1004.6497, Florida Statutes, requires that the Board of Governors submit a report on the World Class Faculty and Scholar Program to the legislature by March 15 of each year. The legislature provided \$90.5 million in 2020-21 to support the efforts of the State University System institutions to recruit and retain exemplary faculty and research scholars.

Chair Levine recognized Ms. Emily Sikes, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Strategic Initiatives and Economic Development, to provide an overview of the 2022 report.

Ms. Sikes reported that the World Class Faculty and Scholars Program was established in statute in March of 2018. She stated that the report provides high-level information on how the System spent funds from this program during 2020-21. The information included in the report is from a combination of institutional reports to the Board office and the Office of Data Analytics.

Ms. Sikes explained that the program was established to fund and support the efforts of state universities to recruit and retain exemplary faculty and research scholars and secure additional research funding, with the intent being to elevate the national competitiveness of the State University System.

Ms. Sikes stated in terms of program expenditures for the 2020-21 year; the System has devoted almost all of the funds to faculty recruitment, retention, and research. Some examples of faculty recruitment and retention efforts include: research-centric cluster hires, awards for outstanding faculty performance, professional development for faculty, and overall hiring/retention of faculty.

Examples of research efforts include instruction and research infrastructure enhancements, student research initiatives, and funding for postdoctoral fellowships.

Ms. Sikes shared that funding for the World Class Faculty and Scholar Program has allowed institutions to realize a positive return on investment to the state. Since the program's inception, institutions have received multiple years of support, contributing to the System's ability to attract new research awards.

Ms. Sikes reported that these increased research awards had spurred innovation that allows institutions to engage in local and regional economic development activities. The program has also spurred student research, enhancing students' academic experience and positioning them to enter the workforce with applied knowledge and skills. She noted that prepared students provide a long-term strategic and competitive benefit to the state.

Ms. Sikes noted that the institutions had improved their faculty-student ratios, which helps faculty engage students in active learning and create opportunities for discussion. Together, these program benefits strengthen the quality of education offered by SUS institutions, which help attract highly competitive, new students, faculty, and businesses to the state of Florida. She also stated that expenditures associated with these research awards contribute to the state's economy and often result in a positive economic return.

Finally, Ms. Sikes shared a few specific data points from this year's report.

- Institutions reported recruiting 106 faculty (FTE) and retaining over 3,000 faculty (FTE).
- The faculty turnover rate of faculty hired through this program was lower than those not hired through these funds.
- The percent of classes with fewer than 50 students has also improved over time.
- The Board of Governors is required in statute to track this metric each year. Over the past five years, the percentage rate has risen to 87%
- Faculty from WCS have transferred approximately \$27.1 million in research funding to the institutions and have more than \$384 million in research proposals under development or review.

Ms. Sikes concluded by stating that if these trends continue, this program will continue to increase the research profile and national ranking of the SUS.

Chair Levine noted that the research dollars have a very high return on investment for the state.

Board Chair Lamb commented it's essential to invest in the faculty in order to support the Board's commitments to student success. Board Chair Lamb pointed out that showcasing the best and brightest in the classrooms, research labs, and the places where intellectual capital is created is critical.

Governor Self commented that a program like this is vital to the System. The recruitment and retention of faculty is the heartbeat of the System. This program has had a lot of excellent outcomes.

5. Professional and Graduate Degree Excellence Report

Chair Levine stated that Section 1004.6498, Florida Statutes, requires that the Board of Governors submit a report on the Professional and Graduate Degree Excellence Program to the Legislature by March 15 of each year. The legislature provided \$60 million in 2020-

21 to State University System institutions to enhance the quality and excellence of professional and graduate schools and degree programs in medicine, law, and business.

Chair Levine recognized Ms. Sikes to make the presentation.

Ms. Sikes stated that similar to the World Class Faculty and Scholar program, the Professional and Graduate Degree Excellence Program was established in statute in March 2018.

Ms. Sikes reported that the State University System includes six medical schools, four law schools, and ten institutions with graduate-level business programs. Ms. Sikes went on to say that these institutions received funding based on prior performance on indicators such as licensure exam pass rates, employment outcomes, and the number of graduates. In 2020-21, the SUS awarded 729 medical degrees, 780 law degrees, and over 5,000 graduate-level business degrees.

Ms. Sikes said it is important to note that New College and Florida Poly do not receive funds from this program.

Ms. Sikes continued by saying the legislature provided recurring funding of \$60 million to the SUS institutions in 2020-21 to support the program. Most of the Professional and Graduate Degree Excellence Program funds were used to recruit and retain faculty and support student success initiatives. She reported that 61% was used to recruit and retain faculty, including supporting faculty salaries and investments to support faculty scholarship. Twenty-three percent supported students through assistantships, scholarships, fellowships, internships, advisors, and mental health counseling.

Ms. Sikes noted that student support expenditures included spending on recruitment, financial aid, licensure examination preparation, and advising.

Ms. Sikes said when examining the funds across the program areas of medicine, law, and business, the majority of the funds supported faculty and students. Ms. Sikes provided an overview of how the funds were spent or obligated in 2020-21.

Business: SUS institutions spent approximately \$24.4 million on graduate business education. Most of these funds (90%) were spent on faculty and students. The remaining funds were spent on other graduate student initiatives, such as improving and enhancing the university's infrastructure that supports student success initiatives, recruitment, rankings, and research.

Medicine: SUS institutions spent approximately \$20.9 million to support graduate education in medicine. Most of the funds (75%) supported faculty or students, 15% supported medical research efforts, and 5% supported other initiatives such as improving passage rates on the medical licensure examinations, IT enhancements, and increasing student practical experiences.

Law: SUS institutions spent approximately \$14.8 million on law schools, with the majority (88%) of those funds spent on faculty and students, while the remaining funds were devoted to efforts such as improving national rankings, elevating market awareness of the

programs, improving classroom technology, and enhancing instructional delivery mechanisms.

Ms. Sikes reported that through the Professional and Graduate Degree Excellent Program, institutions have enhanced their graduate programs, continued to grow enrollment, and hired additional graduate-level faculty. By building the capacity to serve more students, graduate programs can produce more graduates in industries necessary for Florida's economic well-being.

Ms. Sikes stated that institutions have also reported utilizing funding from this program to invest in graduate-level student scholarships, attract new talent to attend graduate school in Florida, reduce the cost of education to students, and lower student debt.

Ms. Sikes reported that funding for this program has contributed to scientific research and discoveries that translate from institutions to the marketplace, improving the lives of Florida residents.

Ms. Sikes shared some key takeaways from the report.

- This program continues to enhance and support graduate programs in medicine, law, and business programs.
- Since 2018, the System has increased the total number of graduate-level completers in medicine, law, and business.
- There have been significant advancements in national rankings for graduate and professional programs. Ms. Sikes noted that UF and FIU law schools improved, and UCF, UF, & USF medical schools all advanced in the rankings.

Ms. Sikes reported that the Board of Governors must also report on licensure pass rates in medicine and law. That information is consistent with the information included in the 2021 accountability plan.

Ms. Sikes explained that while the full effects of the program are not fully yet known, the program has provided an opportunity for SUS institutions to support and enhance professional and graduate education in the state.

Chair Levine remarked on the importance of striving for 100% pass rates on licensure exams.

New College of Florida, Board of Trustees Chair Ms. Mary Ruiz commented that first-generation students might not be as prepared and cautioned the Board about closing doors to those folks who may or may not make it.

Governor Haddock commented that the goal should never be less than 100%.

Board Chair Lamb pointed out that there is a benchmark for all three categories; business, law, and medicine, and noted that across the board, the SUS is at or above that benchmark.

Governor Stermon asked if the SUS has done exhaustive research on why students do not pass the exams.

Governor Lydecker agreed that the goal should be 100%.

Chair Levine reiterated the importance of understanding why some students do not pass the licensure exams.

6. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

Having no further business, Chair Levine adjourned the meeting at 10:33 a.m.

Alan Levine, Chair

Carole Lewis
Executive Assistant