

MINUTES
STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA
BOARD OF GOVERNORS
TASK FORCE ON ACADEMIC AND WORKFORCE ALIGNMENT
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 Eric Silagy convened the meeting on January 25, 2022, at 3:54 p.m. with the following members present: Governors Cerio, Jones, Jordan, Lamb, and Stermon. A quorum was established.

2. Minutes of November 4, 2021

Chair Silagy opened the meeting with a motion to approve the meeting minutes for the November 4, 2021, meeting. Governor Jones moved to approve the minutes. Governor Jordan seconded the motion, and the motion was adopted.

3. Recommendations and Next Steps

Chair Silagy mentioned that the next agenda item is to finalize the recommendations and next steps based on the discussion with university leadership at the last Board meeting. He introduced the topic by stating that the primary goal is to create stronger partnerships between State University System institutions and Florida's industries. He also reviewed the three questions that served as the driving force behind these recommendations.

- 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 faced by Florida industries?
- How can the university system help the state reach the goal of being a top ten global economy by 2030?

Chair Silagy described the first recommendation to create a symbiotic relationship between the state universities and Florida businesses. He noted that the overall goal of this recommendation is to improve engagement with university leadership and Florida's business community. Chair Silagy explained that the action items aim to help university presidents, deans, and other senior university leadership establish and build upon existing relationships with businesses in the state and statewide business groups, such as the Florida Chamber of Commerce and the Florida Council of 100. He added that the goals of strengthening these partnerships are to ensure that the curriculum offered

by each college is relevant to their respective industries and to facilitate research, programs, and internship opportunities.

Chair Silagy then explained the next recommendation to better prepare State University System graduates for the expectations of the 21st-century workforce. The committee recommended the following actions.

- Universities must require students to fully complete profiles and create and maintain resumes in Handshake or Symplicity. Chair Silagy reminded the committee that university career centers currently use these platforms to connect students to employers and internship programs.
- Board staff will also collect information about internship reporting from each university and identify best practices for utilizing institution-wide internship advisory councils.
- Universities will work to implement a continuous feedback loop on internships from employers.

Chair Silagy reminded the committee that business leaders consistently cited internships as a critical component of identifying, attracting, and retaining new talent at the panel discussions held over the past year. Board Chair Lamb highlighted that this recommendation also connects with the requirement for students to view the MyFloridaFuture dashboard.

Chair Silagy then presented the next recommendation to develop a System-wide platform for posting internships and employment opportunities. He stated that this would allow employers to look at the potential talent pipeline across the entire university system in a central location. He explained that this recommendation intends to address feedback from business leaders who expressed that the current system was disjointed and that they may only have relationships with some institutions, making it more challenging to identify where opportunities exist. Chair Silagy stated that the first step to implement this recommendation would be that the Board staff would work with the institutions to explore the pros and cons of moving to one platform. Chair Silagy explained that the career center directors would present the current employment platforms to the Florida Chamber Board and Florida Council of 100 to familiarize them with what institutions are currently using and receive feedback on whether one is more compelling than the other.

Governor Jones commented that Handshake and Symplicity are valuable tools for employers to recruit candidates from almost all 50 states. He further explained that using these platforms at State University System institutions will help make the relationships between institutions and the business community more symbiotic, providing a mutually beneficial avenue toward employment opportunities for employers and prospective employees.

Chair Silagy presented the final recommendation of developing System-wide guidance to ensure the utilization of best practices across the System. The expectation is that these guidelines would be developed jointly by Board staff and the institutions with

feedback from business groups. He explained that the guidance would include the following areas.

- System-wide definitions of experiential learning that recognize the vast array of experiences that students may utilize to develop skills to help them succeed in the workplace, such as research, community service, clinicals, creative works, and civic engagement.
- Best practices for advisory councils for colleges and departments.
- Guidelines for universities to develop effective partnerships with businesses.

Chair Silagy concluded that the next step is for the Board to consider approving these recommendations, and if approved, the universities would begin implementation. He stated that he would like the presidents to update the Board on the first recommendation in March, specifically how they are working with their university's five largest employers. He explained that in June and subsequent meetings, there would be updates to the Board related to business partnerships, graduate 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. He also said that the Board might also want to consider further recommendations based on information collected related to internships.

Chair Silagy asked for a motion to approve the Taskforce on Academic and Workforce Alignment's recommendations and next steps. Governor Jones moved to approve the recommendations. Governor Jordan seconded the motion, and the motion was adopted.

Chair Silagy thanked the task force members and university leaders for a robust and productive dialogue and emphasized the critical importance of their work in helping to set students up for success.

4. Discussion with the Florida Council of 100 and the Florida Chamber of Commerce

Chair Silagy recognized Bob Ward, President and CEO of the Florida Council of 100, and Mark Wilson, President and CEO of the Florida Chamber of Commerce, to give a brief presentation.

Mr. Wilson began the presentation by affirming the three goals that Chair Silagy mentioned during his presentation of the Task Force recommendations. He emphasized that the business community is fully aligned with all three goals. Mr. Wilson explained that according to the latest workforce data, the state has 550,000 open jobs, but only 466,000 people seeking those positions, making this discussion timely. He mentioned that he would like to broaden the discussion from workforce talent to the future of Florida in a post-pandemic environment. Mr. Wilson explained that he and Mr. Ward would like to present information on a post-pandemic economic strategy for Florida while simultaneously working toward growing and diversifying the economy. He shared that the Florida Council of 100 and the Florida Chamber Foundation compiled recent reports to forecast where the state needs to be in a post-pandemic

environment. Mr. Wilson stated that Florida needed to build on previous efforts of business groups, positioning the state as the leading economic engine for the nation and that this presents an opportunity for state universities to participate in that economic growth.

Mr. Wilson explained that the business community is focused on four specific areas and would like to partner with universities to address them. The areas include marketing, infrastructure, key talent, and supersectors. Mr. Wilson said there needs to be a focused marketing initiative to market Florida as a state of innovation, research and development, and business. For example, Florida leads the country in new business start-ups, is the number one state for higher education, the global hub of modeling and simulation, a leading state for advanced manufacturing, and the top state for aerospace.

Mr. Wilson continued to the next area of infrastructure. He explained that Florida's population would grow by four million residents and fifty million more annual visitors in the next eight years. He stated there is an opportunity to use the expertise within the university system to partner with the business community to address this issue by advancing the state's infrastructure.

Next, Mr. Ward mentioned the need to deepen innovation and commercialization in future growth sectors. He explained that while Florida is a great global leader in industries with relatively low wages in areas such as tourism and hospitality, the state is active in sectors with high wages, such as aerospace, defense, and computer simulation. However, Florida participates at a lower rate in these sectors, which drives the economy into the future. He shared that the United States is projected to drive 50% of the total GDP growth between now and 2030 in five industries: internet, software, and media, pharmaceutical and medical products, professional services, financial services, and real estate. Mr. Ward explained that Florida needs to focus on these new projected growth sectors to help the state's economy become more resilient and avoid being susceptible to economic downturns. He presented that the National Science Foundation ranks Florida at a low level for corporate research spending for these superstar sectors at \$2.6 billion versus states like California and Washington, which spend \$74 billion and \$18 billion, respectively. He mentioned that there is an opportunity for universities and businesses to partner in this effort.

Mr. Ward continued to the final topic of finding talent in key sectors and acknowledged that this had been a primary focus for the Board for some time. He explained that the employee work readiness has improved based on employer surveys conducted by the Florida Council of 100 and the Florida Chamber of Commerce. He gave the following metrics demonstrating this improvement.

- In 2018, half of the states' employers had difficulty finding qualified graduates; this number is now reduced to 38%. Mr. Ward mentioned that while there is still room for improvement, this trend is encouraging.
- Mr. Ward also stated that employers are finding more workers in Florida. In 2018, 14% reported that they had to find workers outside of the state, and that number has fallen to 8%.

- In 2018, 31% of employers reported deficiencies in the technical skills of graduates, and that metric has improved to 22%.
- Finally, employers report that new hires are more ready for the workforce. In 2018, almost 50% of employers reported using internal funds to develop employees' skills unmet in their educational experience; this metric has improved to one-third of employers.

Mr. Ward stated that while the state has made strides in addressing workforce education, labor market shortages persist. For example, STEM graduates are leaving the state to work elsewhere, and there are shortages of hourly workers and vacant positions in other areas critical for economic growth.

Mr. Ward presented the proposed next steps. He said that the first recommendation is that the Board of Governors should organize university leaders to lead an initiative to engage business and education stakeholders to create a strong targeted effort for regional hubs for innovation and commercialization. He acknowledged that every region is different and that some universities are already engaging in this type of activity but suggested that these efforts could be more robust and should continue to include everyone at the table.

Mr. Ward stated that another recommendation is to assemble an infrastructure planning commission to address growth in areas such as the state's transportation systems, the expansion of ports, affordable housing for the workforce, and water and sewer policy.

Finally, Mr. Ward concluded with the recommendation of increasing the availability of talent in the workforce for all sectors. He mentioned that the State University System has several strengths, including experience collaborating in research, a strong talent pipeline, and relationships that could be expanded.

Chair Silagy thanked the presenters and emphasized that while the state has endured dynamic and systemic changes recently due to the pandemic, Florida is positioned to emerge stronger due to the state's strong financial position, business-friendly environment, and number one ranked university system. He noted that the issues discussed during the meeting were not new, but there is an opportunity to truly address these challenges by leveraging the strengths of the university system.

Board Chair Lamb thanked Mr. Ward and Mr. Wilson for presenting this research. He stated that the task force could consider exploring the State University System's role in implementing the recommendations discussed. He noted the importance of engaging with the university presidents and boards of trustee chairs as they move forward and clarify the role of the System and actionable steps in addressing the recommendations.

Chair Silagy mentioned that the report from Mr. Ward and Mr. Wilson contains specific recommendations, such as creating a clearinghouse, that the task force can explore implementing.

5. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

Having no further business, Chair Silagy adjourned the meeting at 4:33 p.m.

Eric Silagy, Chair

Tina Young
Director, Strategic Initiatives