

MINUTES
STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA
BOARD OF GOVERNORS
INNOVATION AND ONLINE COMMITTEE
March 29, 2022

1. Call to Order and Opening Remarks

Chair Edward Haddock convened the meeting at 3:12 p.m. on March 29, 2022, with the following members present: Aubrey Edge, Nastassia Janvier, Darlene Jordan, Charles Lydecker, Craig Mateer, and Dr. William Self. A quorum was established.

2. Approval of Committee Meeting Minutes

Governor Self moved that the committee approve the minutes of the meeting held on January 26, 2022. Governor Jordan seconded the motion, and the members concurred.

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

Provost Bret Danilowicz stated that the Steering Committee had 17 recommendations and selected nine to be developed over the next year. He said the committee had worked with the parties that would be responsible for implementing the nine recommendations to develop timelines for completion that would be aligned with future Board of Governors meetings. He shared the following timelines for presentations to the Innovation and Online Committee:

- June 2022: The Council for Student Affairs will develop and implement plans to allow telecounseling services to be extended to other SUS institutions in times of crisis.

In addition, the human resources directors will have discussions regarding institutional policies related to flexible work to gain alignment and consensus across the SUS where appropriate.

- September 2022: The Chief Information Officers throughout the SUS will be working on system-wide SUS purchasing of software to leverage volume contracts. They are currently focusing their efforts on Microsoft and cybersecurity products.
- November 2022: The Steering Committee will present recommendations for additional data and metrics for tracking post-pandemic changes.
- January 2023: The Council for Administrative and Financial Affairs (CAFA) will propose modifications to current carryforward guidelines.

Also, the Implementation Committee will have refined how the SUS can increase opportunities for emerging technologies, multimodal instruction, and professional development for faculty and staff system-wide, as well as create communities of practice around effective teaching with technologies in specific disciplines.

- March 2023: The Vice Presidents for Research will have catalogued existing and proposed new statewide interdisciplinary research networks in areas of importance to Florida and identified key disease categories, creating a list of experts across each SUS institution. They will create a database of research facilities across the SUS that are open to researchers for shared use.

In addition, the Distance Learning Research Consortium will have explored student learning, grades, and progression from Flex instruction into future courses and will disseminate those findings to the Implementation Committee and SUS provosts. They will make available to the SUS faculty research regarding best practices in remote and Flex instruction.

- June 2023: CAFA will have considered possible sources for funding that may be used for IT classroom and teaching lab infrastructure and will provide recommendations on lessons learned during the pandemic on IT infrastructure so universities can incorporate these considerations into their budget plans.

CAFA will also work with financial aid directors and their academic partners to identify external resources for students so they can access financial support such as employer education benefits, internships, state-funded workforce development resources, and community services external to the university. Once these resources have been identified, this information will be made available to students.

4. Ensuring Quality in Online Education in the SUS

a. University of Florida

Dr. Cummings noted that U.S. News and World Report ranked UF Online as the number one online program in the United States. She stated that UF Online reached first place by placing a steady focus on the academic core value for students and an excellent student experience, even during rapid expansion. She said the same faculty teach online courses as teach other courses, and students are engaged with both faculty and each other.

Dr. Cummings stated that UF looked at the industry standard for quality, Quality Matters, and added 17 standards on top of those. She noted that UF Online also looked beyond the classroom and developed a seven-dimensional model of college experiences, which included academic advising. Each UF Online student has a dedicated personal academic advisor.

Governor Silagy asked Dr. Cummings what makes UF Online different than other universities in the system and how has UF been able to rank so highly while other SUS universities are not. Dr. Cummings replied by stating that Florida and the SUS are leaders in online education. There has been a dedicated investment in the system to build and fortify online programs for a long time. She noted that UF had a state appropriation that helped, and the existing infrastructure at UF also benefited UF Online.

Governor Silagy asked if other universities in the system that are not ranked in the top 10 have reached out to UF Online. Dr. Cummings replied that SUS online directors talk about what each is doing and how it is being done. She said there is a friendly, collegial vibe among the directors. She added that the investment by the state put SUS institutions in a much better position than other states when the pandemic hit. Governor Silagy asked if UF Online seeks student feedback on what their experiences were like and if rankings take that into account. Dr. Cummings stated she did not believe that student satisfaction was taken into consideration in U.S. News rankings, but that UF does track student feedback. She stated that there is an annual student survey. She added that there are course evaluations at the end of each course and that faculty have been asked to do a mid-course evaluation so they know during the course what issues can be addressed right away before the course is over.

Governor Scott asked if most UF Online applicants had similar scores as those coming to UF as undergraduates. Dr. Cummings replied that all of UF's students have to meet the same admissions standards. UF Online does rolling admissions while UF residential does pool admissions. Governor Scott also asked if there was data that would allow completers of UF Online to be compared with other UF undergraduate students. Dr. Cummings replied that UF Online students have to meet the same requirements as residential students to gain their degrees.

b. University of Central Florida

Dr. Cavanagh noted that UCF Online was placed in the top 20 five years ago according to U.S. News and World Report. This year, UCF reached top 10 in all undergraduate rankings. Graduate rankings have also all improved. Dr. Cavanagh noted the four criteria that U.S. News uses in its rankings: faculty credentials & training, engagement, services & technology, and expert opinion.

Dr. Cavanagh stated that UCF's faculty training system has become an award-winning national model that contributes to the success of both its faculty and its students. The UCF Center for Distributive Learning offers basic courses, evolved courses, and specialized instruction in adaptive learning, accessibility and other emerging practices. Since 1996, UCF has taught thousands of faculty members to teach online. Once credentialed through one of UCF's faculty development programs, each faculty member is paired with an instructional designer who connects them to cutting-edge technologies and UCF experts to provide custom solutions.

Dr. Cavanagh stated that UCF has developed a wrap-around support system that combines high-tech and high-touch resources led by success coaches. In addition, he said that UCF's research team is one of the most extensively published and cited in the world. UCF has been recognized by many organizations as being a leader in digital learning.

Chair Lamb stated that he would like to hear what other universities in the SUS are doing to close the gap in terms of rankings and to see if there are particular needs that should be addressed.

c. Proposed "Focus on Quality" Committee Work Plan for 2022

Chair Haddock described the highlights of the work plan timeline:

- In June, the committee will focus on quality courses and how institutions ensure online courses have quality design.
- In September, the focus will be on faculty preparation and how institutions ensure faculty are prepared to teach online courses. Also in September will be discussions regarding academic integrity, specifically how institutions ensure there is no fraud, academic misconduct, or copyright violations.
- In November, the focus will be on research, best practices, and quality support services for students.

Governor Self moved to approve the "Focus on Quality" Committee Work Plan for 2022. Governor Mateer seconded the motion, and the members concurred.

5. 2025 Strategic Plan for Online Education (Revised)

Dr. Nancy McKee noted that at the January committee meeting she presented several revisions for the 2025 Strategic Plan for Online Education, and the committee directed her to incorporate the revisions into the plan and bring the revised plan to its next meeting for consideration of approval. In addition to incorporating those revisions, Dr. McKee stated that she had also made adjustments to the narrative regarding outdated data and references and had replaced the term "enrollment targets" with "enrollment projections" for clarification. She said none of the adjustments changed the policies in the plan.

Governor Self moved that the committee recommend to the full Board the approval of the revised 2025 Strategic Plan for Online Education. Governor Lydecker seconded the motion, and the members concurred.

6. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

Chair Haddock adjourned the meeting at 4:08 p.m.