

MINUTES
STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA
BOARD OF GOVERNORS
STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH FLORIDA
March 29, 2022

*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

Chair Alan Levine convened the meeting on March 29, 2022, at 1:03 p.m. with the following members present: Governors Edge, Frost, Janvier, Jordan, Scott, Self, and Stermon. A quorum was established.

2. Minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee Meeting

Chair Levine asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the January 25, 2022 committee meeting. Governor Frost moved to approve, Governor Self seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

3. Implementation of Senate Bill 7044

Chair Levine announced that the next item on the agenda is the implementation of Senate Bill 7044, which was passed by the 2022 Legislature and is awaiting the Governor's signature. Chair Levine noted that Senate Bill 7044 establishes a new section 1008.47, Florida Statutes, Postsecondary Education Institution Accreditation. He explained that the law does the following.

- Requires the Board of Governors to identify and determine the accrediting agencies best suited to serve as an accreditor for the 12 state universities by September 1, 2022.
- Prohibits Florida's public postsecondary education institutions from being accredited by the same accrediting agency for consecutive accreditation cycles.
- Requires in the year following reaffirmation or fifth-year review by their accrediting agencies, each public postsecondary institution must seek and obtain accreditation from an accrediting agency identified by the Board of Governors or State Board of Education respectively, before its next reaffirmation or fifth-year review date.
- Requires each university to submit quarterly reports on its progress to the Board of Governors.

Chair Levine recognized the Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, Dr. Christy England, to provide a high-level overview of a work plan to implement the bill by the September 1 deadline.

Dr. England reported that the work plan identified the best-suited agencies to serve the institutions by September 1. She explained that a timeline was compiled for each university in March, showing their next reaffirmation or five-year review dates. Dr. England noted that the accrediting bodies for the Association of American University members had been reviewed as well as the nationally-ranked public institutions by U.S. News & World Report. The accreditation liaisons at each university have been identified, and the group will convene on March 23 to address key questions that will need to be worked through during this process. Dr. England said the work would continue this spring with the accreditation liaisons at each university to finalize the list of key questions, discuss the pros and cons of recommending a single body versus multiple accrediting bodies, and discuss possible impacts on students. The information will be used when meeting with the various accrediting agencies.

Dr. England announced that the Board of Governors staff would also meet with the U.S. Department of Education staff to better understand their role relative to accreditation and student financial aid requirements. Over the summer, information will be compiled and analyzed from the accrediting bodies and the U.S. Department of Education. The information will be reviewed with the accreditation liaisons, university presidents, provosts, boards of trustees, and other key constituents across the system. Dr. England explained that based on the feedback, a recommendation will be developed for the Board to consider at a special Board meeting in August to meet the September 1 deadline outlined in SB 7044.

Chair Levine commented that this would require collaboration with the universities, university leadership, and the people within the universities that coordinate the accreditation process.

Chair Levine thanked Dr. England for the presentation.

4. Pillars of Excellence, 2021-22 Quarter 2 Spending Report

Chair Levine announced that the next item on the agenda was an update on the Pillars of Excellence second-quarter spending for the 2021-22 Fiscal Year. Chair Levine noted that four institutions received funding under the Board's Pillars of Excellence framework. Both Florida Gulf Coast University and the University of North Florida were awarded funds for their Universities of Distinction proposals. At the same time, Florida State University and the University of Florida received funds for preeminence and national rankings enhancements. Chair Levine noted that at the August 31, 2021 meeting, the Board approved second-year spending plans for the 2021-22 Pillars of Excellence funds, including all recurring and carry-forward funds for these institutions.

Chair Levine recognized the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Strategic Initiatives and Economic Development, Ms. Emily Sikes, to make the presentation.

Ms. Sikes explained that this second quarter update covers activities and spending from July 1, 2021, to December 31, 2021.

Ms. Sikes noted that both Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) and the University of North Florida (UNF) were awarded \$3 M in recurring funds for their Universities of Distinction initiatives, and both Florida State University (FSU) and the University of Florida (UF) were awarded \$15 million for preeminence and national rankings.

Ms. Sikes said that first, under Universities of Distinction, was Florida Gulf Coast's Water School. She pointed out that as of December 31, 2021, FGCU spent approximately \$2.1 million or 56% of the total budget. The Water School initiatives focus on increasing research capacity, increasing research production, and educating future leaders and scholars interested in water and environmental issues.

Ms. Sikes reported that FGCU had continued its commitment to increasing research capacity through investing in faculty, new library resources, and research equipment. Currently, FGCU is interviewing for 12 faculty positions. Six of the search committees have moved on to the second round of interviews, while the other six have finalized their applicant pool for the first round of interviews. Ms. Sikes stated that FGCU had used some funds to retain current faculty. Regarding staff, FGCU has started the hiring process for the remaining research laboratory technician.

Ms. Sikes remarked that FGCU has also continued to provide financial aid and support student success. In addition to the seven graduate research assistantships awarded in the first quarter, FGCU awarded 14 undergraduate research awards.

Ms. Sikes concluded this part of her presentation by saying that FGCU's executive in residence continues to work on the Southwest Florida Regional Resiliency Compact, expanding collaborations and partnerships and facilitating opportunities for student internships.

Ms. Sikes announced that the next part of her presentation under Universities of Distinction was the University of North Florida's MedNexus initiative. As of December 31, 2021, UNF spent approximately \$2.5 million, or 39% of the total budget. Ms. Sikes explained that UNF's goal was to be national leaders in healthcare, research, and innovation while connecting healthcare providers, students, faculty, and researchers in Northeast Florida. Part of this initiative is creating facilities and expanding education programs at partner locations, including Palm Coast and Florida State College's Deerwood campus. Ms. Sikes continued by saying UNF has hired three additional clinical adjuncts, an IT coordinator, and an office assistant in addition to the hires made in the first quarter. To date, \$233,000 of the financial aid has been disbursed to nursing students. The remaining allocations will be awarded in future quarters. Lastly, Ms. Sikes shared that construction at the Deerwood facility in Jacksonville has been completed, and UNF has received a certificate of occupancy. Due to delays in furniture delivery, UNF reported that this location would be operational in February or March of 2022.

Ms. Sikes announced that first under the Preeminence and National Rankings Enhancement Pillar was Florida State University. Florida State University has focused its spending on student support initiatives, financial aid, hiring initiatives, and the

continued cost of faculty raises. Ms. Sikes noted as of December 31, 2021, FSU spent approximately \$9.6 million or 61% on student and faculty success initiatives. In addition to the progress made in the first quarter, FSU has been in the process of expanding student support services through the recruitment of 17 academic advisors and student support staff positions. Ms. Sikes explained that these investments would help support active learning in STEM courses and Engage 100, an initiative that creates engaged-learning experiences, peer mentorship opportunities, and community building during students' first year. Ms. Sikes stated that FSU seeks to expand its honors program's capacity by recruiting seven more faculty members.

Ms. Sikes shared that next under the Preeminence and National Rankings Enhancement Pillar is the University of Florida. The University of Florida has focused its spending on the continued cost of faculty raises and faculty research funding through the Moonshot program to improve the U.S. News and World Reports' metrics. Specifically, improving faculty compensation may help retain top faculty, which may ultimately impact academic reputation and educational expenditures. Ms. Sikes noted that as of December 31, 2021, UF spent approximately \$7.6 million, or 48% of the total budget. The university has also continued to support two interdisciplinary Moonshot programs for multi-year research projects. Ms. Sikes explained that one of the Moonshot programs focuses on cancer research and reducing health disparities. The second Moonshot program focuses on improving K-12 STEM education.

Chair Levine thanked Ms. Sikes for the presentation.

5. 2025 System Strategic Plan Update: Civil Discourse Recommendation

Chair Levine reported that the next item on the agenda was consideration for approval of the updated 2025 System Strategic Plan, which includes a statement on civil discourse. Chair Levine noted that the Board approved the Civil Discourse Initiative Report at the January 26, 2022, Board meeting. The report included recommendations to implement civil discourse practices throughout the State University System. Recommendation two included the addition of a specific endorsement of the Board's Statement of Free expression and a clear expectation for open-minded and tolerant civil discourse throughout each campus community in the Board's 2025 Strategic Plan.

Chair Levine recognized Governor Tim Cerio to present the recommended change to the 2025 System Strategic Plan.

Governor Cerio explained that the Civil Discourse and Recommendation report was approved at the January Board meeting and focused on four key areas: Board of Governors advocacy, review of policies and procedures at the Board of Governors and university levels, expectations or institutional leadership, and recommendations for best practices.

Governor Cerio stated that Recommendation #2 from the report focused on university accountability plans and strategic plans. He said that the recommendation asks that these university plans include an endorsement of the Board's Statement of Free

Expression and an expectation for civil discourse throughout the campus. Governor Cerio said he was bringing forward a recommendation to modify the Board's Strategic Plan for the System to include these statements. The recommended change to the System Strategic Plan includes adding a statement to the Board's guiding principles.

Chair Levine thanked Governor Cerio for the presentation.

Chair Levine asked for a motion to approve the updated State University System 2025 Strategic Plan. Governor Janvier moved to approve, Governor Frost seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

6. Financial Aid 2022 Update

Chair Levine announced that the next item on the agenda was an update on the status of financial aid in Florida and recognized Mr. Troy Miller, Deputy Chief Data Officer, to make the presentation.

Mr. Miller explained that he would be focusing on two trends: the amount of financial aid students are receiving to cover the cost of a degree and how much debt students are taking. He stated that the amount of gift aid students received increased from over \$1 million in 2016-17 to over \$1.7 million in 2020-21, representing a 74% increase over the past five years.

Mr. Miller noted that while it may be true that student loan debt is getting out of hand in some parts of the country, this is not what is happening in Florida. The percent of undergraduate students in Florida without loans has increased from 60% to 75% in five years. Mr. Miller shared that there are now two places loan data is reported for students, their families, and other stakeholders to reference. One is the Florida Scoreboard which shows annual loan amounts, and the other is the MyFloridaFuture tool which shows the average cumulative loan amounts for students earning a bachelor's degree. Both resources can be found on the www.flbog.edu website.

Mr. Miller said some other highlights worth noting included the following.

- Average loan amounts (\$1,770) by Florida resident undergraduates are down eight years in a row.
- Three in four (75%) Florida resident undergraduates are attending state universities without taking a loan.
- Bright Futures scholarships to State University System students were \$577.5 million in 2020-21, up \$400 million from 2016-17.
- Second lowest in-state tuition for public 4-year institutions in the nation.
- \$2,000 average cost of bachelor's degree per student in 2020-21 (PBF#3).

Chair Levine thanked Mr. Miller for the presentation.

Board Chair Lamb thanked the presidents, the boards of trustees, and the students who have entrusted their future to the State University System. The System has balanced high performance, access, and affordability. He said it is fantastic that 75% of the SUS

students do not have to take out loans. He said the System has a model now that is clearly working.

7. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

Having no further business, Chair Levine adjourned the meeting at 2:03 p.m.

Alan Levine, Chair

Carole Lewis
Executive Assistant