

MINUTES  
STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA  
BOARD OF GOVERNORS  
TASK FORCE ON ACADEMIC AND WORKFORCE ALIGNMENT  
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 Ken Jones convened the meeting on March 29, 2022, at 4:08 p.m. with the following members present: Governors Cerio, Jones, Jordan, Lamb, Mateer, Silagy, and Stermon. A quorum was established.

2. Minutes of January 25, 2022

Chair Jones opened the meeting with a motion to approve the meeting minutes for the January 25, 2022, meeting. Governor Silagy moved to approve the minutes. Governor Lamb seconded the motion, and the motion was adopted.

3. Implementation of Task Force Recommendation 1: University Presidents and Employers of Graduates

Chair Jones began the meeting by expressing gratitude for the leadership of former Board Chair Kitson, Board Chair Lamb, and Vice Board Chair Silagy for addressing the issues that are of priority to the task force. He stated the importance of the Board of Governors and university leadership in aligning the outcomes of students with the employers who ultimately hire them. Chair Jones also highlighted the importance of engaging with stakeholders such as statewide economic groups and public and private sector employers to foster collaboration, communication, and consistency to ensure successful outcomes.

Chair Jones explained the next item on the agenda was to discuss the implementation of recommendation one from the Task Force recommendations approved by the Board in January.

He described the first recommendation to create a symbiotic partnership between state universities and Florida businesses, with a goal to improve engagement with university leadership and Florida's business community. He clarified that this action item requires each university president to maintain a relationship with the chief executive officer (CEO) of the five largest employers for the institution. Chair Jones called on President Michael Martin of Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) to discuss his strategies for engaging with CEOs and businesses in the community to ensure consistent collaboration and communication.

President Martin explained that they have worked on building relationships with employers for a long time and that currently, their most successful relationship is with Arthrex in Naples. He stated that FCGU has an ongoing micro-credential program with this company that helped secure employment for their students. President Martin noted that they are expanding the program to other employers in the area, such as Neogenomics, Gardiner, Chico's, Hertz, Scotland, and U.S. Sugar. He described a president's advisory circle established three years ago to discuss workforce and economic development. He explained that the group works quarterly to discuss program development and the dynamics of the economy in the region that the group can address. President Martin also described two degree programs offered by the university: FCGU Complete, for students who have some college credit and would like to graduate, and Return to the Nest, for FCGU students who have stopped out and would like to return on a path to graduation. He described their approach to working with sectors instead of individual employers, such as the hospitality industry, hospitals, and school districts.

Chair Jones expressed appreciation for President Martin's engagement with stakeholders in the city. He encouraged other presidents to discuss who they are engaging with within companies and have relationships with, such as the CEO, human resources director, or chief operating officer.

Interim President Ken Jessell continued the discussion by describing Florida International University's (FIU) work with sectors in their community, primarily education, government, and healthcare. He explained that FIU serves as a significant supplier of teachers in Broward and Miami-Dade Counties, Miami-Dade County employees, and healthcare workers in Baptist Memorial Health and Nicholas Children's Hospital. He also highlighted FIU's partnerships with other partners, such as Florida Power and Light and Next Era Energy, who work with their Solar Research Center located on their engineering campus. He explained that students have access to major research initiatives as a result of this partnership. President Jessell then described a partnership with Royal Caribbean Cruiselines, which provides opportunities for students studying architecture, fine arts, business, and hospitality to work closely with professionals in the cruise line industry on internships and in the classroom. He stated that these employers also serve on their advisory board. He concluded by describing the advisory boards that work with all the universities that offer multiple pathways for students to work within the hundreds of companies they represent.

Next, University of Central Florida (UCF) President Alexander Cartwright gave the example of Lockheed Martin, which supports 600-700 interns a year from the institution, and employs many UCF graduates in the Orlando region. President Cartwright explained that they work directly with the leaders within the company to ensure a successful partnership. He continued by describing their partnership with local providers in the healthcare industry, such as Orlando Health, HCA Healthcare, and Advent Health, which meet to discuss how to address needs such as the nursing shortage. President Cartwright also shared that their board of trustees meetings include discussions led by leaders from various employers, such as Disney, EA Sports, or Lockheed Martin. He explained that these representatives inform university leadership

of their current needs and insight into what future degrees may look like. President Cartwright added that the top levels of university leadership interact with CEOs while the deans interact with people within each organization. He stated that this two-pronged approach allows the university to move quickly to address the needs of various employers.

President Randy Avent informed the committee that Florida Polytechnic University's relationships primarily consist of small and medium-sized businesses, especially considering their small size. He stated that their graduates are spread across a wide array of employers. He explained that it is difficult to form relationships with the CEOs of large, global companies they work with, so their efforts are focused on developing relationships with local representatives from those companies. President Avent shared that these relationships follow the rules of engagement from the employer; for example, the career center director typically works with the human resources director to coordinate career fairs, recruiting events, and lectures. He provided another example of department leaders working with advisory councils which advise curriculum changes.

Chair Jones complimented this approach, noting that small businesses create so many employment opportunities and that the task force needs to look at not only large employers.

President Avent added that employees of small and medium-sized companies often stay in Florida. He explained that Florida Polytechnic University offers traditional engineering programs that teach theory and fundamentals but offer concentrations that teach application engineering relevant to today's technology. He stated that this approach ensures that students are employable for the long-term and allows the university to adjust its curriculum to industries' current needs quickly.

Governor Levine noted that the presidents are doing good outreach to businesses, but due to inflation and labor cost, Florida is facing labor shortage challenges. He asked the presidents what they could do to accelerate the development of people through degree programs to speed up the pipeline to help ease labor shortages. Chair Jones agreed with this point, adding that his business currently has 5,300 open positions in manufacturing.

President Pamela Chally of the University of North Florida stated that working with the chamber of commerce is one way to address this concern. She explained that this setting allows other employers and educational institutions to collaborate to address shortages in areas such as nursing.

President Larry Robinson described Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University's approach to partnering businesses with their newly reinstated Industry Cluster, comprising 33 companies. He explained that those companies work closely with colleges and departments, serve on advisory councils, and provide internships, philanthropic contributions, and opportunities for faculty research. He stated that about one-third are Florida-based companies, while others, such as JP Morgan Chase, are national companies with a significant footprint in Florida. President Robinson explained

that their approach to connecting with companies might vary, including him contacting CEOs directly or vice versa or a dean or vice president working with someone within a company. He stated that no matter the approach, the goal is to understand what employers need and encourage internship opportunities for students.

President Martha Saunders from the University of West Florida addressed accelerating pipelines by using an upskilling or cross-skilling approach with students who may already have degrees or are employed within a company but need to gain additional skills to advance. President Saunders described the Cyber for All Program at UWF that takes this approach.

President Kent Fuchs stated that the University of Florida has about two thousand companies that interview students, including top companies such as JP Morgan Chase, American Express, and Amazon. He shared that one of their best practices was using a Career Connection Center. Students connect with companies early in their education to discuss career paths, internships, and co-op opportunities. He stated that the Career Connection Center connects companies with faculty to engage in research and feedback on curricula. President Fuchs shared another best practice where companies employ an executive in charge of relationships with the university, usually someone who is an alumnus. He concluded by describing a new office at the University of Florida, responsible for coordinating relationships between companies and relevant faculty and staff on campus.

President Rhea Law from the University of South Florida (USF) commented on the importance of knowing the community and businesses each university interacts with, and she was pleased with the robust partnerships in place when she came to USF. She explained that the university has an Office of External Partnerships that serves as a single point of contact for businesses with multiple needs across the institution. She noted that this approach facilitates easy connections between companies and relevant campus contacts. President Law also described USF's new Bellini Center for Talent Development, where students can meet with businesses and employers could run workshops to maintain relationships with USF's talent pipeline moving forward. She highlighted the importance of forming partnerships with economic development councils so that they can meet students and advise on the curriculum. She concluded by building on President Saunderson's point of upskilling, which has been a source of additional partnerships with USF and businesses.

President Patricia Okker from New College reiterated the importance of working with the local chamber of commerce and economic development council, which has been an avenue through which she can highlight the institution's strengths to businesses. President Okker emphasized that because New College is a small institution, it can provide personalized attention to employers, allowing them to connect with students while pursuing their degrees; she stated that this newer approach addresses the pipeline issues discussed earlier. President Okker shared that she will reach out to businesses in the area early on to help fulfill their workforce needs using personalized strategies, allowing employers to shape the talent to hire in the future.

President John Kelly from Florida Atlantic University expressed the importance of allowing university presidents to travel, which can help recruit companies to the area. He shared that previous trips to places like Israel led to companies moving their operations to Florida. President Kelly also explained that two of their largest employers include healthcare facilities and school districts, which the university partners with to provide internships for students. He stated that many of those are first-generation college students, and the internships allow them to learn skills on the job and prepare for the workforce.

Chair Jones thanked the presidents for discussing their outreach efforts and challenged them to think unconventionally as they continue to build these relationships.

Governor Mateer mentioned that the Board could leverage their business experience and knowledge to think of ways to provide institutions with the ability to address their individual areas of growth, such as commercialization or research and development.

Governor Edge added that while the System is doing wonderful things to build relationships with business partners, inconsistencies remain in how career centers respond to people. He explained that an initial encounter with an executive at an institution could determine how they will engage with them moving forward. He also suggested that they look at their prescreening processes to ensure students represent their institutions well. Governor Jones agreed and reminded the task force that they should work toward consistency.

Vice Chair Silagy noted that the private sector should also proactively engage with universities. He also encouraged university presidents to actively engage with the leadership at career centers to ensure they understand the importance of serving as one of the institution's primary contacts for businesses, reiterating Governor Edge's point that first impressions are critical.

Governor Janvier remarked that institutions should support students as they prepare to engage with employers. She clarified that this includes helping students articulate their strengths and stand out to potential employers or funding opportunities with internships.

Governor Stermon added that universities should work to screen employers and prioritize who they interact with build the partnerships that are most advantageous for the university.

Governor Jones concluded the meeting by expressing appreciation for the engaging discussion and encouraging presidents to continue making personal connections with employers and working with their career centers that engage with businesses.

4. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

Having no further business, Chair Jones adjourned the meeting at 4:53 p.m.

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Ken Jones, Chair

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Tina Young  
Director, Strategic Initiatives