

MINUTES
STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA
BOARD OF GOVERNORS
TASK FORCE ON ACADEMIC AND WORKFORCE ALIGNMENT
UNIVERSITY OF WEST FLORIDA
September 13, 2022

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1. Call to Order and Opening Remarks

Chair Jones convened the committee meeting on September 13, 2022, at 12:08 p.m., with the following members present: Governor Cerio, Mateer, Silagy, and Stermon. A quorum was established.

2. Minutes of Committee Meeting

Chair Jones asked for a motion to approve the June 29, 2022, committee meeting minutes. Governor Mateer motioned to approve, Governor Silagy seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

3. Recommendation 1: Deans' Partnerships with Employers

Chair Jones introduced the next topic for discussion, the implementation of recommendation one from the Task Force recommendations approved by the Board in January, which are intended to strengthen the relationships between the State University System and the business community. Chair Jones reminded the committee of the panel discussion held by university presidents on the first Task Force Recommendation to create a symbiotic partnership between the state universities and Florida businesses. He stated that presidents from throughout the State University System provided insight into how they collaborate with employers who frequently hire their graduates. Chair Jones noted that the committee would continue exploring this topic from the perspective of deans within the colleges at the institutions. He explained that other action items within the first task force recommendation suggest that college deans maintain relationships with the CEO or c-suite executive of the five largest employers of graduates from their college and review the industry advisory councils for individual departments. The recommendation further encourages departments without advisory councils to develop a plan for establishing one.

Chair Jones explained that the committee's supporting document summarizes deans' employer relationships at the colleges at every institution and that the meeting would highlight three deans to share their experiences of working with their top employers. Chair Jones recognized the panelists, Dr. Jaromy Kuhl, Dean of the Hal Marcus College of Science and Engineering at the University of West Florida (UWF); Dr. Curt Lox, Dean

of the Brooks College of Health at the University of North Florida (UNF); and Dr. Youcheng Wang, Dean of the Rosen College of Hospitality Management at the University of Central Florida (UCF).

The panelists began the discussion by providing background on employer partnerships. Dr. Kuhl from UWF stated his college's top employers include the Navy Federal Credit Union, General Electric Renewable Energy, Institute for Human and Machine Cognition, Air Force Civilian Careers in STEM at Eglin Air Force Base, Eglin Air Force Research Lab, Aplex Technologies, and Florida Power & Light. Dr. Kuhl noted that he engages with individuals within these companies through the college advisory boards. He explained that his approach to engaging with these employers is always student-focused, which is twofold. While the college aims to prepare students for the workforce adequately, it also encourages employers to provide experiences that make students more marketable.

Dr. Lox from UNF explained that his top five employers are focused on healthcare systems in the Jacksonville area, including Baptist Health, UF Health, Mayo Clinic, and Ascension Health, as well as larger insurance companies such as Florida Blue and Humana. He stated that he regularly communicates with the CEOs of these companies via phone, email, and through his advisory councils. Dr. Lox noted that nearly 50 community partners, including CEOs of these employers, will participate in a healthcare symposium hosted by the college. He emphasized the importance of holding annual events and meetings where the college and its employer partners can mutually attend and support one another.

Next, Dr. Wong from UCF described his employer partnerships with the hospital and tourism industry, which he noted was impacted by the pandemic. He stated that despite that challenge, the program remains strong with over 3,000 students, making it the nation's largest program of its kind. He mentioned that UCF's location in Orlando allows them to work with many industry partners and position themselves to engage with industry leaders and serve as a strong arm of the industry. While the college works with over 800 industry partners nationally and internationally, its top five employers are Disney, Universal, Marriott, Rosen Hotels and Resorts, and Entertainment Technology Partners. He stated that these partnerships were integral to creating the Rosen College of Hospitality Management, which supports learning facilities and labs, student internships, scholarships, and recruitment. He explained that industry support helped grow the program's enrollment, faculty, and degree programs.

Chair Jones asked the panel if there were opportunities to engage with new employer partners. Dr. Kuhl mentioned that his college is trying to engage with a manufacturing sector within the Pensacola/Ft. Walton Beach area. He gave the example of Arco Marine, which manufactures boating engine parts, as a potential partner for the college. He stated the college is working on a testing bed initiative for alternators involving students and faculty. Dr. Kuhl mentioned that the college is always looking for those opportunities and is open to partnering with more employers. Dr. Lox stated that his

college typically partners with larger hospitals but would like to expand its partnerships with smaller clinics and not-for-profit agencies. He clarified that the college worked with employers of all sizes and types, with about 750 agreements in place at any given time.

Chair Jones noted that there are statewide organizations institutions can partner with, such as the Council of 100 or the Florida Chamber of Commerce. He emphasized that these organizations provide a source of companies predisposed to engage with institutions and further stated that the Board will work with them to explore those opportunities.

Chair Jones asked Dr. Wong if he is engaged with CEOs or c-suite executives within the companies his college is partnered with, noting the importance of involving the top levels of businesses to form effective partnerships. Dr. Wong explained that industries in the surrounding area understand that they benefit from maintaining a strong partnership with the college because it serves as a pipeline for their workforce. He indicated that, as a result, his relationships are with those at the executive level, who are highly involved with the college and serve on the dean's advisory board. Dr. Wong informed the committee of additional advisory boards for each department within his college. He emphasized that these interactions with employers help their programs evolve with the industry.

Dr. Lox echoed Dr. Wong's statement about being heavily involved with the c-suite within companies. He stated that they are also trying to develop relationships with individuals below the c-suite because they may have more insight into how respective industries operate on the front line. He clarified the importance of having buy-in from senior executives within the companies with whom they collaborate but noted that a broader approach to engaging with people at all levels of these organizations is also necessary.

Chair Jones asked the panel to expand on the role of advisory boards, specifically if feedback from these boards helps them to adjust academic programs to prepare students for the workforce and respond to employer needs. Dr. Kuhl confirmed that this is a crucial component of these advisory councils. He provided an example of a predictive analyst from Navy Federal who coordinated meetings with their analytics team and the college advisory board. The advisory board's feedback resulted in the creation of a data science certificate for students. He commented that while this kind of feedback occurs at the college level, the department-level advisory boards are a better format that allows for curricular changes. Dr. Wong added that these advisory councils also create opportunities for students.

Governor Mateer commented that he has worked closely with the Rosen College of Hospitality Management and praised their connection with the business community and their meaningful discussions around pay. He cited this relationship as one that should be studied and can serve as a model.

Governor Silagy thanked Chair Jones and the deans for embracing this topic. He reiterated that partnering with the private sector ensures that institutions provide students with the training needed as industries evolve.

Chair Jones agreed with Governor Silagy's comments and thanked former Board Chair Kitson for putting these issues at the forefront of their discussions to ensure that the State University System is integrating private, public, and philanthropic employers to ensure alignment between academic standards and training with the workforce. He then thanked the deans and university presidents for the great discussion. He mentioned that he looked forward to continuing the conversations about how the State University System can strengthen partnerships with employers.

4. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

Having no further business, Chair Jones adjourned the meeting at 12:39 p.m.

Ken Jones, Chair

Tina Young, Director for Strategic Initiatives