MINUTES

STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Teleconference Meeting

March 16, 2023

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1. **Call to Order**

Chair Lamb called the meeting to order. The following members of the Board of Governors were present: Lamb, Silagy, Frost, Haddock, Michael, Scott. A quorum was not met nor required for purposes of this meeting. The meeting began approximately at 9:01 am.

1. **Discussion on Presidential Search and Selection**

Chair Lamb opened the meeting noting that the nomination and governance committee will be taking up this topic in more detail. Chair Lamb commented that Governor Oliva and Governor Scott raised good questions on the process of how we back fill presidential searches and complete president contracts. These are the areas of improvement that prompted the discussion.

Governor Scott noted that there have been substantial and recent turn over with university presidents, and it was unclear when a presidential search starts verses when an interim president is selected. He also asked for clarification as to the process for appointing a Board of Governors member to a presidential search committee, as he had previously expressed interest in serving on a committee but did not hear back on his request.

Chair Lamb shared an overview of what customarily happens for vacancies with university presidents: 1.) A president announces retirement and stays until a replacement is found, or 2.) A president leaves or moves into a different role before a permanent president is selected and the Board of Trustees (BOT) find an interim president, but contemporaneously initiate a national search.

Rachel Kamoutsas shared an overview of Regulation 1.001(5)(d) and confirmed the regulation is silent on lengths of service or terms for interim presidents. Governor Scott indicated it may be a good idea to have a term limit for interim presidents. Governor Frost agreed with Chair Lamb’s summary of the two typical paths for presidential searches and noted that sometimes searches take longer than a few months—it varies. Establishing a time limit might be difficult. Chair Lamb agreed and added that different schools have difference scenarios in their presidential search process, but any governor can always contact the Board Chair to be updated on the search status.

Governor Scott asked who selects the Board representative that serves on the search committee. Chair Lamb confirmed that he is responsible to make that selection taking into consideration who is a good fit, proximity to the university, the university’s mission and strategies, relationships, and input from the BOT Chair. Chair Lamb committed to seriously considering appointing Governor Scott to a search committee, in the future.

Governor Scott emphasized the importance of AAU rankings, invited the consideration of academic credentials in job descriptions for presidential searches and whether that should be more impressed on the BOTs. Governor Frost added that the Board of Governors appointee on the search committee has influence on how the search goes and shaping the job description. Also, the interim president must come before the Board of Governors, and if there are concerns or questions they can be raised at that time.

Chair Lamb highlighted, to Governor Frost’s point, that the Board of Governors representative has a voice as a member of the search committee as they shape the job description. He agreed that the search committee and BOTs should be challenged to hire the best and brightest but that can amount to more than just AAU standards and include consideration of strategic plans and missions that have been approved by the Board of Governors.

Governor Silagy recognized Governor Scott’s concerns and acknowledged that the Board of Governors’ appointee has an important role to represent the Board and engage in the process of the search committee. Governor Silagy also noted that the BOT has a vital role of deciding who to select, subject to the final review of the Board of Trustee’s decision, but there should be a deference to the university BOT’s local governance in carrying out their functions, as they were designed to do.

Chair Lamb recapped that the Board has been asked to refresh our process and thinking on this topic, but agreed with Governor Silagy’s point to not supplant the BOT’s authority and overreach. Chair Lamb called for data on this issue, specifically consider the last 2 years, number of interim presidents, number of president changes, an estimate on how long interim presidents have been in place to offer that as pre-read material for the Board of Governors, not as a presentation item.

Chari Lamb noted that separately, Governor Oliva raised concerns over key elements in presidential contracts and what role the Board of Governors should play with those. Chair Lamb is cognizant of presidential searches that are in process now and wants to have guidance as expeditiously as possible.

Governor Scott reiterated that we should consider academic credentials in the job description as a requirement.

1. **Public Comment**

Public comment was initially called for near the beginning of the meeting and at that time no public comments had been submitted. After the discussion was underway, Andrew Gothard by email, expressed interest in sharing a comment. Andrew Gothard provided a public comment on the importance of presidential selection to employees in the state university systems. Mr. Gothard shared that he consistently hears is the quality of presidents will be directly connected to post-tenure review and academic freedom. If we can protect these rights in higher education in a way that makes senses for everyone we think we are going to recruit and retain high quality presidents, but if we are not careful, presidential turn over will continue.

1. **Concluding Remarks and Adjournment**

Chair Lamb thanked members for their comments and adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:42 a.m.