

MINUTES
STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA
BOARD OF GOVERNORS
TASK FORCE ON ACADEMIC AND WORKFORCE ALIGNMENT
FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
January 25, 2023

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1. Call to Order and Opening Remarks

Chair Jones convened the committee meeting on January 25, 2023, at 8:40 a.m., with the following members present: Governor Mateer, Cerio, Jordan, Lamb, and Silagy. A quorum was established.

2. Minutes of Committee Meeting

Chair Jones asked for a motion to approve the September 22, 2022, committee meeting minutes. Governor Mateer motioned to approve, Governor Lamb seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

3. Business Leader Panel

Chair Jones stated that the committee has heard from university leadership on their partnerships with the business community. He noted that those discussions helped the Board learn how institutions partner with industries to prepare graduates for the workforce. Chair Jones explained that this meeting would focus on hearing from business leaders regarding current workforce needs and economic changes that impact workforce development for Florida's future. Chair Jones recognized Mr. Keith Koenig, CEO and owner of CITY Furniture, Ms. Liz Miller, Regional President of the East for CareBridge Health, and Mr. Mario Murgado, President and CEO of Murgado Automotive Group, Inc., for a panel discussion about Florida's workforce needs.

Chair Jones asked the panelists how the pandemic changed business operations and whether those changes were permanent or temporary. Ms. Miller responded that the pandemic resulted in a more hybrid approach to work, noting that few in her circle are in the office five days a week. She clarified that most meetings are in-person, while employees complete independent work remotely. She predicted that this arrangement is where the workforce is trending.

Mr. Murgado emphasized the importance of newer, younger employees maintaining an in-office presence to grow professionally, communicate with colleagues, and receive mentoring opportunities. He continued that more mature employees can benefit from the flexibility of working from home as they are more established within the company. Mr. Murgado highly recommended that all employees work in the office at least three

times per week to keep abreast of what is going on but acknowledged that hybrid work is here to stay and that employees can still be productive and happy with that arrangement.

Chair Jones asked if Mr. Murgado has seen a difference in productivity with hybrid work versus working in the office full-time. Mr. Murgado believes that productivity has increased and stated that his company makes investments, such as education, in their employees, so he wants to ensure they are happy and satisfied. Mr. Koenig echoed the other panelists' assessment of where the workforce is with remote work and reported that his company has been able to recruit top talent outside of Florida with unique skill sets because of remote work capabilities.

Chair Jones transitioned the discussion to businesses from other states that relocated to Florida and asked the panel how the State University System (SUS) can help ensure that the state retains those businesses. Mr. Murgado stated that the System must understand businesses' needs to ensure the state maintains a workforce that can fulfill the recently relocated industries' demands. Mr. Koenig recognized that the System is number one in the country with the most affordable education. He also emphasized that the emerging trends of AI and data analytics should permeate everything. He further stated that lean management is critical to meeting industries' needs and that his company would hire any graduate with a strong background in this area.

Ms. Miller mentioned that the Task Force recommended that the System strengthen connectivity with businesses in Florida. She recounted that in her experience, connectivity with the University of South Florida (USF) usually resulted from internship programs. She described her company's loyalty toward USF's School of Public Health because of her positive experience with interns from their programs. Mr. Koenig added that these efforts at connectivity between SUS institutions and Florida businesses, including employer advisory councils, make a lot of sense.

University of South Florida President Law reiterated the importance of communicating with the business community, citing the example of industry advisory councils which advise on program curriculum and provide internship and mentorship opportunities to help keep students in Florida.

Florida Gulf Coast University Board of Trustees Vice Chair Morton stated that workforce alignment was one of the principal focuses of Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) in his experience there. He described FGCU's partnership with Arthrex, IBM, Bloomberg, and others to offer internship and mentorship programs and micro-credentialing, which helps secure students' employment with industry partners. He concluded that this example of workforce alignment has been successful at FGCU and is paying dividends locally and nationally.

President Jessell from Florida International University (FIU) added that partnerships with employers should focus on securing internships for students early on in their education. He explained internships help improve the communication process, inform

students' career options, and assist departments with aligning curricula to industry needs.

Florida Atlantic University Interim President Volnick asked the panel to identify any soft skills employers would like to see graduates develop. Ms. Miller stated that language skills are highly desirable and that students' employability increases if they know a second language. She continued that data management is an essential skill for students of all majors and integral to tasks such as developing communication plans or understanding workforce trends pertinent to a company's hiring function. Mr. Koenig expressed satisfaction with the graduate pool of the State University System.

New College of Florida President Okker reported increasing faculty involvement in career education, including investing in faculty development and integrating career outcomes into the classroom. She provided an example of faculty at New College who took students on field trips to various employers and incorporated what they learned into the classroom. She emphasized the importance of universities, employers, faculty, career centers, and students working together to achieve effective academic and workforce alignment.

President Cartwright from the University of Central Florida thanked the panel and described the institution's strategic partnerships in the Orlando area. He highlighted the importance of anticipating future workforce needs so that SUS graduates can continue to drive Florida's economy. President Martin from Florida Gulf Coast University added that graduates' ability to learn new skills and adapt over time is vitally important, enabling them to keep up with their respective industries as they evolve.

Chair Jones concluded with a reminder of the emphasis on Florida's workforce needs from the governor's office, the legislature, and the Board and thanked the panelists and presidents for the discussion.

4. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

Having no further business, Chair Jones adjourned the meeting at 9:09 a.m.

Ken Jones, Chair

Tina Young, Director for Strategic Initiatives