

MINUTES  
STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA BOARD OF GOVERNORS  
Via ZOOM – September 20, 2023  
Full Board Meeting

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<https://thefloridachannel.org/videos/9-20-23-florida-board-of-governors-meeting/>

**1. Opening Remarks – Full Board (Florida Channel Timestamps 1:44:13/2:23:52)**

Chair Lamb begins the Full Board Meeting by asking Rachel to call roll and establish a quorum. Governors Lamb, Silagy, Cerio, Diaz, Edge, Frost, Haddock, Hitchcock, Jones, Levine, Lydecker, Mateer, Oliva were present at the time of roll call. Quorum met.

**2. Chair’s Remarks**

Chair Lamb had a few items to address. Chair Lamb noted we have items to celebrate regarding the progress across the State University System and thanked everyone for their leadership. Additional items he mentioned were: the legislative summary reports have been mailed out; the Florida House held their first interim committee week; and Speaker-Designate, Representative Danny Perez was formally appointed to be the House Speaker for 2025. He expected that by November we will all be able to talk about how we engage in a unified way in Tallahassee, to advocate on behalf of both the University System and your individual Universities. He thought we did a fantastic job in 2023 and wants to get marginally better again in 2024. His last comment was regarding the Trustee Summit to be held on November 8<sup>th</sup>. He acknowledged Chair Martins and the President of UCF, thanked them for hosting the event in Orlando. He stated we will have a full slate of activities, great content planned on the panels, including topics on workforce and high student impact. He noted climbing the ladder and best practices we should be speaking about and plans to make that center stage.

He noted that we will have the Florida Counsel of 100 and the Florida Chamber of Commerce also joining to provide an update as well as discussion related to healthcare, artificial intelligence and cybersecurity. The Chair previewed that the Chancellor will also provide a recap on the first year with the Board, and an update on the outlook for the Board Of Governors and what to expect strategically. Chair Lamb concluded his comments and handed the floor to the Chancellor.

**3. Chancellor’s Remarks**

Chancellor Rodrigues thanked the Chair and outlined three topics – two are news items that have emerged in the area of higher education and then a short preview of the upcoming legislative session. Chancellor Rodrigues noted that after our meeting concluded in June, the Supreme Court issued a ruling that was significant for higher education in that the ruling banned affirmative action in admissions. That ruling impacted the majority of the nation—42 states utilize affirmative action in their admissions in order to achieve diversity. He noted that the ruling did not impact the State of Florida because we have not utilized affirmative action in our admissions since 1999. We have been providing students with equality of opportunity for colorblind admissions. Nationally, we see universities and states questioning whether they can achieve diversity without affirmative action, and Chancellor Rodrigues believes Florida has demonstrated that it is indeed possible to do so. According to the most recent US Department of Education data for all enrollment by race, our Florida state university system has a black

and Hispanic student enrollment of 42% - that is substantially higher than the national average of 29%. Chancellor shared that access is being achieved here in Florida, through our affordability and merit-based programs. But access is just one piece of the puzzle, success is important because the goal is to graduate our students when they enroll. If you look at the most recent IPEDS data for four-year graduation rate for students who identify as black or African American in Florida is 15 points higher than the national figure. Our four-year graduation rate for those who identify as Hispanic or Latino is 17 points higher than the national average. To put those numbers in perspective and convert them into percentages, our black and African American student 4 year graduation rate is 58% higher than the national average and our Hispanic and Latino 4 year graduation rate is 50% higher than the national average. Florida has proven that achieving diversity, maintaining equal access for everyone, and providing a high-quality, low-cost education is possible without affirmative action. And so for those other 42 states that are looking at how they are going to deal with the supreme court ruling, he suggests they look at the Florida example because he thinks we have shown them the way on that.

The Chancellor next spoke on the rankings that came out in the US News and World Report. A number of the articles that have covered this have focused on the fluctuations within the subcategories, he wants to provide a big picture perspective. If you look at the rankings, the state university system of Florida has 9 institutions that qualify for the at-large national university. Everyone that qualifies as a national university, at-large, means it includes publics and privates all in the same category.

If our 9 universities are put in that category, every single one of them improved from where they were the prior year. The Chancellor noted that, that is not the headline you're seeing, but is factually occurring. He encouraged focusing on what's important which is enabling our students to be successful.

He noted that if you look at the rankings that US News changed, there was a potential for some of the metrics in the rankings methodology that were eliminated was harmful to us. For example, there was one graduate-debt proportion in borrowing, which is what percentage of graduates that leave with debt.

That was a very great metric for our system because 77% of our students are leaving debt-free. That put the system well ahead of just about every other state and that is no longer a metric that is being considered. US News also eliminated the term of degree for faculty, which was a metric our system historically did well on. Our preeminence did particularly well with High School class standing and alumni giving which were metrics that were done away with.

However, the new metrics introduced were helpful. One of them was college graduates earning more than high school graduates, and as is known in our performance based funding, the system has been tracking the earnings of our graduates for well over a decade. The next thing that US News added was first generation students, their graduation rates and their graduation rate performance. The Chancellor stated this is a mixed bag and this is why – that should be a great metric for us because we measure first generation graduation and first-generation retention. But we measure everyone that is first generation. He noted that if you're a first generation college student in our performance based funding metrics you get picked up and measured. The data that US News and World Report uses in their methodology only picked up first generation college students who receive a Pell grant or a federal student loan.

When you have a state like Florida that has a substantial investment in merit aide and a substantial state investment in financial aide and a substantial state appropriation from the legislature, a significant portion of your first generation college students were excluded from these metrics because they are not in debt. He would hope that US News would find a way to expand their metrics to pick up all of the first generation college students because he thinks that is a metric that is worthy of being done and done accurately.

The Chancellor stated that he is very proud of our system and institutions because we are driven by student success and will continue to be driven by student success. If you look at the State University System as a whole, the system rankings that came out in May of this year were for the 7<sup>th</sup> consecutive year our system as a whole was ranked number one and our state. When you combine our PreK-12 and our Higher Education together was also number 1 this year. Florida from PreK through University Graduation is considered and ranked the number one state. We are a product that is the sum of our parts. It is our great universities that help drive our success. His message to everyone was to keep doing what you're doing and he is proud of them.

The last topic he mentioned was a brief preview of upcoming session. He mentioned the designation of Speaker Perez during the House's first committee week, and next month there will be a designation of Ben Albritton as Senate President during the Senate's first committee week. He believed that the upcoming session will be a 3 year economic forecast. While it is positive in that we have seen a projection of increased revenues, the rate of revenue growth is projected to slow. Historically, legislative leaders have been cautious in approving new spending when they see that trend line emerging. So, the Chancellor opined that we will see more reticence in improving, approving or appropriating recurring funding in that window. Still, he thought there was a great opportunity for us to continue to work on our Legislative Budget Request but we have to go in with clear expectations of what is likely to occur.

If they follow the pattern that previous legislatures have followed when these same trend lines emerge, the funding that is appropriated will be much greater on the one-time funding side than it will be in approving new recurring funding. We will have our work cut out for us in the upcoming session. He is proud of the work each university lobbyists did last session, not just for their universities but working with Tony to present a system wide effort and unified front. He feels like it paid off for everyone and would like to replicate that in the upcoming session. The Chancellor handed the floor back to Chair Lamb.

Chair Lamb thanked the Chancellor. Chair Lamb reminded the group thinking about the upcoming summit and the theme is "Better Together" and together we are number one and he thought the Chancellor laid that out well. The Chair then moved to Public Comment and asked Rachel to call on the participants.

#### **4. Public Comment**

Rachel explained that based on time we are allotting 2 minutes per person for public comment.

Jono Miller, spoke on proposed change to performance metric 2.

Shannon Ingles, spoke on New College salaries and course cancellations.

Myranda Pierce, spoke on New College Budget and sent in supplemental materials, on file with the Board of Governors.

Carly Earnshaw, spoke on New College Budget and management of school funds.

Bruce Benidt, spoke on New College of Florida Budget and concerns surrounding Richard Corcoran.

Mike Sanderson, spoke on New College of Florida Budget, salaries, NCF's accountability Plan, and concerns around Richard Corcoran.

Juliana Pare-Blagoev, spoke on the New College Budget, shared concerns about Mr. Corcoran's leadership, and individuals hired under his tenure.

Ken Barnes, spoke on the fiscal oversight at New College; shared concerns about Mr. Corcoran becoming permanent president and overall leadership.

The Chair lent the floor to the members for comment on anything said during the Public Comments portion. Governor Phalin asked the Chair if two items can be pulled from the consent agenda so that they may have a separate vote – The Public Notice of Intent to Amend Regulation 2.003 and the Public Notice of Intent to Adopt Regulation 14.010.

## **5. Consent Agenda Items**

The Chair obliged and asked Rachel to move the items from consent to the agenda. Rachel repeated the items Governor Phalin asked to be pulled from consent. First: the Public Notice of Intent to Amend Regulation 2.003, Equity and Access.

Chair Lamb opened the floor for discussion and Governor Levine asked to Motion and Vote on the remaining consent items – the Chair explained that he will move through the individual items before moving to consent to stay in order. The Chair asked for any discussion on Regulation 2.003. No further discussion. The Chair called for a motion to approve– Governor Levine moved and Governor Jones made a second. Vote taken; Phalin opposed. Motion carries.

The Chair called on Rachel for the second item pulled from consent. Rachel re-announced the full agenda item regarding the Public Notice of Intent to Adopt Regulation 14.010. The Chair opened the floor for discussion. Hearing none, the Chair called for a motion to approve. Governor Levine motioned, Governor Edge seconds. No further discussion. Vote taken; Phalin opposed. Motion carried.

Chair Lamb moved to the full consent agenda. There was a previous motion made by Governor Levine, he was invited to motions again and Governor Levine so moved, Governor Silagy made a second motion. No further discussion. Motion carries.

## **6. Closing Remarks and Adjournment**

The Chair closes by thanking everyone for being with us today and looked forward to November.