

MINUTES
STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA
BOARD OF GOVERNORS
STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE
UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA
November 9, 2023

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1. Call to Order and Opening Remarks

Chair Levine convened the meeting on November 9, 2023, at 8:36 a.m. with the following members present: Governors Edge, Frost, Hitchcock, Levine, Oliva, and Phalin. A quorum was established.

2. Minutes of Strategic Planning Committee Meeting: Minutes, September 8, September 20, and October 4, 2023

Chair Levine asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee meetings held on September 8, September 20, and October 4, 2023. Governor Phalin moved to approve, Governor Frost seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

3. Programs of Strategic Emphasis: 2023 Update

Chair Levine stated that the Programs of Strategic Emphasis are one of several tools for aligning the degree production goals of the State University System with the economic and workforce needs of Florida. They are also part of the Performance-Based Funding Model. The list helps to provide highly qualified talent to support Florida's most critical workforce shortages, and it is a valuable resource to help students select a major that will ensure a positive return on investment for the time and money spent to earn a degree.

Chair Levine explained that the legislature amended section 1001.706, Florida Statutes, in recent years, requiring that the Programs of Strategic Emphasis list be reviewed every three years, use specific data sources, and follow a methodology similar to the one used by the Credentials Review Committee. The committee started this process in January, and today is the culmination of our efforts to update the methodology and program list to bring it into statutory compliance and focus it on Florida's most critical workforce needs. The committee, Board Chair, Chancellor, and staff have worked diligently to listen to and incorporate stakeholder feedback throughout the year. Board staff have now developed a final proposed program list for the committee's consideration. Chair Levine also thanked the university presidents, commenting that their feedback directly impacted the list as it went through the process.

Chair Levine recognized Ms. Emily Sikes, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Strategic Initiatives and Economic Development, to provide an update regarding the proposed methodology and the proposed 2023 list of Programs of Strategic Emphasis.

Ms. Sikes explained that the Board of Governors has been identifying academic programs with strategic significance for over twenty years. Still, the programs on the proposed list are more targeted and refined than any previous work product. The methodology and list were crafted to be data-driven to help meet Florida's most critical workforce shortages. They were created and developed in collaboration with the universities and key stakeholders across the state. She highlighted why the Programs of Strategic Emphasis are essential to the state, the universities, and our students. The list identifies fields with significant workforce gaps and provides a tool to guide institutions in delivering highly qualified talent needed in Florida for jobs with high starting wages. The net effect is a win-win for all parties since the list helps the Board achieve its strategic goals, provides a planning tool for universities, and helps students select majors that result in a positive return on investment for their degrees.

Ms. Sikes recalled that the committee and Board staff started this effort in January to update the methodology and program list to bring it into statutory compliance and focus it on Florida's most critical workforce needs. Board staff worked closely with the universities from June to September to answer questions and collect feedback and input on the draft methodology and program list. Further, Board staff developed a process comparable to what the Credentials Review Committee uses for additions to the Master Credentials List to allow university staff to recommend including additional programs or removing programs. Over the summer, universities were asked to provide relevant data to document local or regional workforce demand, emerging fields, or industry support for any program they wanted to recommend for inclusion on the list. Ms. Sikes explained that this was to get university feedback on anything that may have been missed during the review of the statewide workforce demand data and what the data was not showing that may still be critical to Florida's economy.

Ms. Sikes stated that the universities recommended 87 program additions to the list. Board staff reviewed each recommendation, evaluating whether the supporting documents met the minimum criteria and aligned with the methodology. As a result of this review, Board staff recommended adding 36 programs to the list the committee reviewed in June. There are program additions at each degree level. Twenty-nine programs were added based on additional workforce demand data such as statewide or regional unfilled job openings, starting wages, or growth rates that met the established thresholds. Four were added to provide pipelines to graduate school programs. Ms. Sikes recalled the discussion in June regarding the need for physicians in Florida as a motivation to improve access to programs that would help provide physicians in Florida. Finally, three programs were added to accommodate anticipated future workforce needs for evolving and emerging fields. Ms. Sikes explained that for the remaining 51 programs recommended by the institutions, the requested evidence was either not provided or did not fully comply with the methodology.

Ms. Sikes remarked that based on university feedback, Board staff recommended removing 59 total programs from the prior list. Most of these programs are not offered in the System. Staff recommended retaining the remaining 36 of the 95 programs recommended for removal for various reasons, including high workforce demand and evidence that other states or systems are offering the programs. The 36 programs are not currently offered in our System, but having them on the list will allow institutions to add new programs.

Ms. Sikes summarized the final count of programs, including 95 at the bachelor's level, 75 at the master's level, and 57 at the doctoral level. Ms. Sikes highlighted that this was a substantial reduction from the 871 programs on the prior approved list.

Ms. Sikes elaborated that the proposed list covers many fields, such as healthcare and information science, and areas in critical need in Florida, like education, engineering, and business. The list also reflects the feedback of our statewide partners and includes jobs needed to drive our state's economy forward. Programs like nursing, accounting, and teaching are all included since the list is designed to supply critical talent while supporting future anticipated economic growth.

Ms. Sikes described a sample timeline for implementing the new list and how it relates to Performance-Based Based Funding metrics that were initially discussed in November. Should the Board approve the list, the Budget and Finance committee would need to establish a timeline to consider any required updates and scoring adjustments to the Performance Based Funding formula.

Ms. Sikes concluded by explaining that the update complies with recent statutory changes from the legislature. This list was developed in concert with key stakeholders and the universities. The list prioritizes programs that support Florida's most critical long-term workforce shortages. The Programs of Strategic Emphasis list provides a tactical mechanism for our universities to maintain and increase our System's competitive advantages while supporting Florida's economy and talent pipeline. Finally, the list serves as a tool to help students plan their educational journey and to promote positive outcomes and long-term student success.

Governor Phalin expressed her appreciation for the efforts made by Board staff in incorporating the consultative feedback provided by faculty and administration throughout the System. Governor Edge echoed Governor Phalin's sentiments. Chair Levine remarked that the process was very data-driven, and Board staff took all input seriously. Chair Levine clarified that programs removed from the Programs of Strategic Emphasis list could still be offered by the universities and praised the efforts taken to communicate this to the universities.

Dr. Alexander Cartwright, President of the University of Central Florida, remarked that from a campus perspective, the discussions between Chancellor Rodrigues, Board staff, and the University of Central Florida were productive and vital to refining their feedback and the final list provided to the Board.

Chair Lamb asked for further feedback from the university presidents.

Dr. Moez Limayem, President of the University of North Florida, appreciated the final form of the list and the incorporation of university feedback and underscored the importance of revisiting the list periodically to remain in touch with Florida's workforce and talent needs.

Dr. Kenneth Jessell, President of Florida International University, remarked that the update process was open, deliberate, and discussed frequently by Chancellor Rodrigues. He indicated the presidents were kept informed through updates from the Chancellor and the university provosts.

Dr. Larry Robinson, President of Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, thanked Chancellor Rodrigues for prioritizing the update process in their weekly discussions.

Chair Levine added that industry feedback, in addition to university feedback, was crucial to the final form of the list. He commented that the clarity provided by the list and the visibility into the current and projected workforce shortages will help Florida remain proactive in the face of talent challenges.

Chair Levine requested a motion to approve the 2023 Programs of Strategic Emphasis methodology and list. Governor Phalin moved, Governor Frost seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

4. 2023 System Accountability Plan

Chair Levine stated that Board Regulation 2.002, University Accountability Plans, requires the Board of Governors to annually submit a State University System Accountability Plan to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. At the June 2023 meeting, the Board approved 11 of the 12 university accountability plans. The committee approved a revised version of New College's Accountability Plan at its November 8 joint meeting with the Budget and Finance Committee. Based on the data and information provided in the various institutional accountability plans, Board staff consolidated and analyzed system-level data and trends for key performance indicators.

Chair Levine recognized Ms. Sikes to present highlights of the 2023 System Accountability Plan.

Ms. Sikes presented the first metric, the percentage of bachelor's degree recipients who were employed and earning more than \$40,000 a year or enrolled in further education one year after graduation. This metric increased by four percentage points this year, demonstrating that more students are finding gainful employment or pursuing further education. These improvements have come about primarily due to the increased efforts of the universities and the career centers, which are working diligently to help students succeed beyond graduation.

Ms. Sikes stated that the next metric, the Academic Progress Rate, reflects the percentage of full-time, first-time college students who earned at least a 2.0 GPA their first year and enrolled in the fall of the following year in any State University System institution. The System improved on this metric this year, putting it within only two percentage points from the 2025 goal of 90%. Based on the universities' projections, the System is on track to achieving the Board's goal next year.

Ms. Sikes said the four-year graduation rate for the System has increased an incredible nine percentage points over the last five years. She remarked that it is the equivalent of over 5,300 more graduates completing their degrees on time. As a result, the System is now within five percentage points of the goal of 65% in the Board's 2025 Strategic Plan. She stated that the rapid rise reflects the universities' hard work and commitment to student success and timely completion, made possible by the Board's and the legislature's ongoing support. To put this in a national context, she reported that Florida has the highest graduation rate of the top ten schools in terms of undergraduate enrollment.

Ms. Sikes explained that the access rate metric reflects the challenges universities have had in recruiting Pell-eligible students. However, the Pell students who do enroll are successful at graduating. This metric is one of the Key Performance Indicators in the Board's Strategic Plan. In fall 2019, the Board approved a 2025 goal of 54% for this metric. Ms. Sikes reported that the Pell recipients' four-year graduation rate was 46% when that goal was adopted, but the current rate is up to 56%, meeting the Board's goal. In addition, the graduation rate for these students is only four percentage points below the four-year graduation rate for all students shown earlier.

Ms. Sikes clarified that the three-year graduation rate for Florida College System associate in arts (AA) transfer students is new to the Performance-Based Funding metrics but has been in the Board's Strategic Plan. When the metric was added to the Strategic Plan, the three-year AA transfer graduation rate was 57%, compared to 63% currently. The System has achieved the 2025 goal for this metric. She stated that thanks to the Board's leadership, universities are making a positive difference in the lives of AA transfer students across Florida and providing these students an access point to State University System schools.

Ms. Sikes reported that the total research expenditures of the System in 2021-22 exceeded \$2.5 billion, an increase of \$234 million over the prior year. In 2019, the Board set an aspirational goal for research of \$3 billion. State University System institutions continue to make excellent progress in this area, and faculty across the System are submitting increasing numbers of proposals for federal research dollars. Ms. Sikes credited one of the reasons for meeting this goal to the incredible collaboration among the university Vice Presidents for Research, who work across the System to leverage partnerships for more significant funding opportunities.

Ms. Sikes commented that the State University System is still on the rise and focused on excellence, demonstrating that the System is a good investment for the state and students, as shown by the metrics highlighted earlier in the presentation, such as retention, four-year graduation rates, and post-graduation student outcomes. Institutions are awarding degrees in fields critical to the state's economy, such as nursing, engineering, and accounting. The faculty of the State University System are bringing in significant research dollars to support areas that are critical to Florida and are also adding dollars to the state economy. Florida remains the number one state for higher education because of its collective commitment to student success, high-quality education, and focus on meeting the state's workforce and research needs.

Chair Levine commended the status of the metrics and the constituent universities and underscored the need to continue making strides to improve the System.

Chair Levine asked for a motion to approve the 2023 System Accountability Plan. Governor Frost moved, Governor Edge seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

5. Linking Industry to Nursing Education (LINE) 2023-24 Round Two Proposals

Chair Levine stated that the committee would next consider a second round of university proposals to receive 2023-24 LINE funds. During the 2023 session, the Florida Legislature allocated \$6 million to the State University System for the LINE Fund for Fiscal Year 2023-24. The Board of Governors is responsible for administering the LINE Fund for the System, including evaluating and approving program participation proposals. The LINE Fund is intended to incentivize collaboration between nursing education programs and healthcare partners and to meet local, regional, and state workforce demand by recruiting faculty and clinical preceptors, increasing the capacity of high-quality nursing education programs, and increasing the number of nursing education program graduates who are prepared to enter the workforce.

Chair Levine explained that subject to available funds, for every dollar a healthcare partner contributes to an institution, the fund shall provide a dollar-for-dollar match to the participating institution for approved proposals. He reported that at the September 8, 2023, meeting, the Board authorized \$4,311,003 of funds to be distributed for 22 different proposals, leaving \$1,688,997 remaining for another allocation.

Chair Levine recognized Ms. Sikes to provide an overview of the second round of LINE proposals.

Ms. Sikes explained that three institutions submitted four proposals with eligible healthcare partners totaling \$975,000 during the round two period. She stated that all four proposals were recommended for funding by staff. If the Board approves these four additional applications, she said, this would increase the additional funding available for institutions to enhance and expand nursing education in Florida and leave just over \$700,000 remaining in the fund.

Ms. Sikes indicated that Board staff had requested information regarding any challenges that institutions had encountered in utilizing the funding, and some of the most common responses were demonstrating an acceptable return on investment to the healthcare partners and a lack of assurance of continued, recurring funding. Ms. Sikes noted that the complete proposals are available in the meeting materials.

Chair Levine requested a motion to approve the 2023-24 LINE Round Two Proposals. Governor Hitchcock moved, Governor Phalin seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

6. Accreditation Update

Chair Levine reminded the committee that section 1008.47, Florida Statutes, requires the Board of Governors to identify and determine the accrediting agencies best suited to serve as accreditors for the institutions in the State University System. Each institution must also provide quarterly progress updates to the Board of Governors. Chair Levine recognized Ms. Sikes to provide an update on accreditation.

Ms. Sikes stated that two institutions have received letters from the U.S. Department of Education and have provided a response to the agency's request. At the time of the meeting, the universities had not received a response from the U.S. Department of Education.

7. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

Chair Levine concluded the meeting at 9:05 a.m.

Alan Levine, Chair

Diego Fermin,
Assistant Director, Academic & Student Affairs