

MINUTES
STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA BOARD OF GOVERNORS
Florida State University
Student Union, Ballroom E
January 24, 2024
Full Board Meeting

Video or audio archives of the meetings of the Board of Governors and its committees are accessible at:

<https://thefloridachannel.org/videos/1-24-24-board-of-governors-meeting/>

1. Call to Order

Chair Lamb called the Full Board meeting to order; Amanda Gay called the roll. All governors were in attendance except Governor Jordan. Quorum was met.

Chair Lamb recognized Florida State University Board of Trustees Chair Collins and President McCullough and thanked them for welcoming the Board to the campus. Chair Lamb then handed the floor over to Chair Collins and President McCullough.

FSU Chair Collins described the new student union, the history of the student union, and then thanked staff for the effort in hosting the Board of Governors. President McCullough presented a video on FSU and then discussed the State University System and FSU's focus on student success. He also highlighted FSU's research investments and growth, the aerospace and manufacturing grant, and the FSU Health appropriation. He thanked the Board of Governors for their leadership and support.

2. Chair's State of the System Address and Report Out

Brian Lamb, Chair of the Board of Governors, delivered his third State of the System address. He highlighted accomplishments of the State University System from 2023, including key funding for the System and the ranking as the number one higher education system in the nation for the seventh straight year. Chair Lamb then outlined four priorities for the upcoming year:

- Student Success
- Faculty Excellence
- Innovation and Research
- Good Governance and Efficient Operations

The State of the System address concluded with a request to revisit and refresh the five-year strategic plan.

Following the State of the System address, Chair Lamb turned the meeting over to Chancellor Rodrigues to provide his remarks and report.

3. Chancellor's Remarks and Report to the Board

Chancellor Ray Rodrigues thanked the Chair, the Board of Governors and FSU for hosting. The Chancellor shared a story about attending FIU's commencement ceremony and the opportunity to see the results of the State University System in action through the Quiroga family's story. They have two sons who received offers from out-of-state universities, but after hearing about all Florida has to offer both decided to attend a Florida university. One attended UCF as an aerospace engineer and fulfilled his goal of becoming a rocket scientist. The other used his passion for Esports to create a new department at FIU. Both students realized their dreams and graduated debt-free.

The Chancellor recognized Chair Lamb for his State of the System speech and promised the Chair that the Board of Governors staff stand ready to help his vision become reality.

4. Public Comment

The Chair then moved to the next item, which was public comment.

Representative Anna V. Eskamani provided the first public comment and spoke on the proposed Regulations 8.005 and 9.016.

Joe Sanders, representing Equality Florida, stated his opposition to the proposed Regulations 8.005 and 9.016.

Katrina Erwin spoke in opposition to the proposed Regulation 8.005.

Stella Nunes, representing Rethink Energy FL, spoke in opposition to the proposed Regulation 8.005.

Samantha Kaddis, representing genCLEO, spoke in opposition to the proposed Regulation 9.016.

Robert Lee spoke in opposition to the proposed Regulations 8.005 and 9.016.

Ann Barrett spoke in opposition to the proposed Regulation 8.005.

Lauren Buete, the legislative director of the First Amendment Foundation in Tallahassee, spoke in opposition to the proposed Regulation 9.016.

Christian Limon, representing genCLEO, spoke in opposition to the proposed Regulation 8.005.

Kyle Rose spoke in opposition to the proposed Regulation 8.005.

Doug Schrodt, a professor of sociology, spoke in opposition to the proposed Regulation 8.005.

Megan Skrowronski spoke in opposition to the proposed Regulation 8.005.

Irene Padavic spoke in opposition to the proposed Regulation 8.005.

Approval of Amendments to Chancellor's Employment Agreement

Chair Lamb introduced the item to the board, stating that it could be found in the meeting materials. He then called for discussion from the board. Governor Silagy stated that the

extension was for a contract that went beyond a year and asked for clarification from the chair on compensation. Chair Lamb clarified that he intended to keep the compensation at a similar level to that of the university presidents. Vice Chair Levine then brought forth more discussion to clarify and then made the motion to approve the amendments, which was properly seconded by Governor Frost. A vote was taken, with only Governor Bell Barnett opposed.¹

5. Consideration of Revisions to the Board Operating Procedures

Chair Lamb introduced the next item and turned the floor over to Amanda Gay, who provided an overview of the revisions. There was a discussion between Governors Phalin and Lamb. Governor Phalin articulated an amendment in Section 8 and made the motion to approve the amendments with that change. Vice Chair Levine seconded the motion. There was further discussion between Governor Phalin and Governor Cerio. A vote was taken; the motion passed unanimously.

6. Public Notice of Approval of Amendment to Board of Governors Regulation 8.005, General Education Core Course Options

Chair Lamb introduced the item and stated that the regulation was previously presented in November and that it was now introduced to act on the regulation. There was discussion from Chair Lamb and Governors Hitchcock, Cerio, Levine, Bell Barnett, Diaz, and Phalin.

Chair Lamb called for a motion. Governor Phalin moved that the regulation be tabled until March and upon receiving more information from the state universities. Governor Hitchcock seconded the motion. A vote was taken, with Chair Lamb and Governors Levine, Cerio, Frost, Diaz, Lydecker, Mateer, Oliva, Edge, Haddock, Jones, and Oliva opposed. The motion failed.

The original motion, the public notice of approval to amend Board of Governors Regulation 8.005, was then moved by Governor Diaz and seconded by Governor Mateer. The motion passed, with Governors Phalin, Hitchcock, and Bell Barnett were opposed.

7. Public Notice of Approval of Adoption of Board of Governors Regulation 9.016, Prohibited Expenditures

Chair Lamb introduced the next regulation that was presented in November. There was discussion among the board about the meaning of the regulation and the impact on student groups. Governor Jones made the motion, and Governor Levine seconded it. Governors Hitchcock and Phalin were opposed. The motion carried.

8. Presidential Search Report for Florida Polytechnic University

Governor Jones gave a brief overview of the presidential search taking place at Florida Polytechnic University and stated that at this point in the process, applications are still being received and reviewed.

¹ Note that later in the meeting, Governor Bell Barnett clarified that her vote on this item was to be in the affirmative.

At this point in the meeting, Governor Bell Barnett clarified for the record that she changed her vote to “yes” on the motion to amend the Chancellor’s Employment Agreement and Delegation of Authority to the Chair to Enter into Negotiations for further amendments.

9. Presidential Search Report for Florida Atlantic University

Chancellor Rodrigues stated that after receiving the results of the investigation conducted by the Inspector General, that the search was suspended.

10. Consideration of Confirmation of the Extension of Employment Agreement for FAU Interim President

Chair Lamb introduced the agenda item and handed the floor over to Chair Levine of Florida Atlantic University. Chair Levine highlighted Interim President Volnick’s achievements and the successes she facilitated for the university during her tenure as Interim President. Chancellor Rodrigues then took the floor, echoing many of the achievements and successes of Interim President Volnick. He emphasized her positive relationship with faculty and staff. Chancellor Rodrigues informed the members that a board trustee had raised concerns about not being able to see the contract before the approval motion. The BOG General Counsel was involved in researching the legality of this practice, and Chair Rodrigues detailed the process and its implications. Vice Chair Levine sought clarification on the situation and discussed the concerns raised by the board trustee. Trustee Chair Brad Levine stepped in to provide clarification. Governor Silagy joined the discussion and provided additional insights and perspectives. Discussion continued amongst the members of the Board. Governor Frost asked whether there was only one trustee who had reached out to state that they did not receive the information. Chancellor Rodrigues clarified that there were two trustees that brought up their concerns, one verbally and the other via email. Discussion continued amongst the Board members. Chair lamb called for a motion for the board to approve the confirmation as being presented. Chair Levine made a motion to not approve the extension today and direct the FAU Board of Trustees to take appropriate action to cure the potential violation of the public meeting law, and then take whatever action they deem necessary to take and bring it back to the Board of Governors so that it is positioned properly for consideration. Governor Lydecker clarified the motion. Governor Levine added to the motion that if they did not approve the confirmation on that day, that Stacy Volnick be permitted to continue as the acting president until the FAU board acts to cure the issue. Governor Silagy suggested that they approve the confirmation subject to the contract being executed, properly adopted, and then approved. Governor Diaz provided discussion. Governor Haddock echoed the sentiments of the Chair and provided further discussion. Governor Levine restated the motion, moving that the reappointment be tabled and later taken up once the FAU board acts to cure their potential violations of the Sunshine Law, and in the meantime have the standing interim president continue as the acting president until her confirmation. The motion was seconded by Governor Lydecker. The vote was taken, and all Governors voted in favor except for Governor Mateer. The motion carried.

Governor Mateer stated that Chair Levine should be removed from the Board of Trustees at Florida Atlantic University, making a motion of confidence in Chair Levine to continue on the Board of Trustees at FAU. Governor Diaz echoed Governor Mateer’s discussion.

Governor Mateer restated his motion: a vote of no confidence in Chair Levine on the Board of Trustees at Florida Atlantic University. Governor Diaz seconded the motion. Governors Silagy, Oliva, and Levine provided further discussion. Chair Lamb called for a vote on Governor Mateer's motion. A vote was taken with Governors Frost, Silagy, and Jones opposed. The motion carried.

11. Consideration of Confirmation of Reappointment of President for Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University

Chair Lamb introduced the agenda item and stated that it was a one-year extension for the contract of Larry Robinson. FAMU Board of Trustees Chair Kristin Harper, asked for approval of a one-year contract extension for President Larry Robinson to continue serving as the president of Florida A&M University and highlighted his accolades. Governor Silagy provided discussion, stating that the FAMU Law School's bar passage rates were worse than they have ever been, and asked the President to please make it an area of focus. Vice Chair Levine gave thanks to the president and echoed Governor Silagy's concerns. Chair Lamb called for a motion to confirm the reappointment of Dr. Larry Robinson as the President of Florida A&M University. The motion was moved by Governor Levine and properly seconded by Governor Diaz. There were none opposed. The motion passed.

12. Approval of Resolutions Recognizing Florida A&M University and Florida State University

Chair Lamb introduced the resolutions and asked for a motion to approve the resolutions recognizing Florida A&M University and Florida State University. The motion was moved by Governor Mateer and properly seconded by Governor Jones. There were none opposed. The motion passed.

13. Consent Agenda

Chair Lamb called for a motion for the motion to approve the consent agenda. The motion was moved by Governor Jones and seconded by Governor Phalin. None were opposed, the motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned.