

MINUTES
STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA
BOARD OF GOVERNORS
ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH EXCELLENCE COMMITTEE
January 28, 2026

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<https://thefloridachannel.org/videos/11-20-24-board-of-governors-meeting/>

1. Call to Order and Opening Remarks

Chair Good convened the meeting at 3:00 p.m. with the following Governors present: Governors Good, Dunn, Bell Barnett, Cerio, Dale, Jones, Lukis, and Okaty. A quorum was established.

2. Minutes of Committee Meeting

Chair Good requested a motion to approve the committee meeting minutes for November 6, 2025. Governor Dunn moved to approve, Governor Dale seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

3. World Class Faculty and Scholar Program Report

Chair Good stated the next item on the agenda was the World Class Faculty and Scholar Program Report. He explained that Florida Statute requires the Board of Governors to submit a report on the World Class Faculty and Scholar Program to the legislature by March 15 of each year. Chair Good recognized Dr. Lynn Nelson, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Innovation, to present an overview of the 2026 report.

Dr. Nelson reported that the Florida Legislature established the World Class Faculty and Scholar Program in 2018 to support universities' efforts to recruit and retain excellent faculty and research scholars, and to secure additional research funding to help elevate the System's national competitiveness.

Dr. Nelson explained that most program expenditures in the 2024-25 Fiscal Year were used for faculty recruitment, retention, and research. She cited examples, including research-centric cluster initiatives, awards for outstanding performance, and professional development. Dr. Nelson stated that there was also significant funding for research, which included infrastructure enhancements, faculty research and commercialization efforts, and postdoctoral fellowships. She noted that universities with carry-forward funding reported the funding would be used for student financial aid, faculty salaries, and research support in the next fiscal year.

Dr. Nelson shared highlights from the year's report, including institutions recruiting 93 new faculty and retaining over 1,200 faculty throughout the year. Additionally, faculty supported through the World Class Faculty and Scholar Program secured over \$70 million in research funding, representing a notable increase from the nearly \$43 million secured the previous year. Dr. Nelson also reported that faculty recruited through this program have transferred over \$57 million in research funding to the institutions, with nearly \$543 million in research proposals under development or review, both figures more than double those of the previous year.

Chair Good entertained a motion to approve the 2026 World Class Faculty and Scholar Program Report. Governor Jones moved to approve the report, and Governor Cerio seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

4. Professional and Graduate Degree Excellence Program Report

Chair Good introduced the next item on the agenda, the Professional and Graduate Degree Excellence Program Report. He explained that Florida Statute requires that the Board of Governors submit the Professional and Graduate Degree Excellence Program Report to the legislature by March 15 of each year. Chair Good recognized Dr. Nelson to present an overview of the report.

Dr. Nelson reported that the System includes six medical schools, four law schools, and ten institutions with graduate-level business programs. She highlighted that in 2024-25, state universities awarded over 600 law degrees, over 700 medical degrees, and over 5,300 graduate-level business degrees.

Dr. Nelson reported that the legislature provided recurring funding of \$60 million to the System in 2024-25 to support the program. She noted that universities reported spending over \$36 million to recruit and retain top faculty and over \$14 million on student success initiatives, including scholarships and assistantships. Additionally, funding has supported scientific research and discoveries that translate into the marketplace. Dr. Nelson highlighted the success of graduate programs, noting that three law schools rank in the top 100 by U.S. News & World Report, and that one graduate business program ranks in the top 100.

Chair Good entertained a motion to approve the Professional and Graduate Degree Excellence Program Report. Governor Cerio moved to approve, and Governor Jones seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

5. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

Chair Good thanked Board Chair Levine for the opportunity to lead the Academic and Research Excellence Committee.

Having no further business, Chair Good adjourned the meeting at 3:15 p.m.

Carson Good, Chair

Rajendra Indar, Academic and Student Affairs Student Intern