

MINUTES
STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA
BOARD OF GOVERNORS
CAMPUS SAFETY AND STUDENT SUCCESS
COMMITTEE
March 25, 2026

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<https://thefloridachannel.org/videos/3-25-26-florida-board-of-governors-meeting/>

1. Call to Order and Opening Remarks.

Chair Bell Barnett convened the meeting at 1:35 p.m., with the following Governors present: Broxson, Dale, Dunn, Edge, Haddock, Kamoutsas, Lukis, Lydecker, Perry, and Sinatra. A quorum was established.

Board Chair Levine stated that ensuring the safety of students, faculty, and visitors across the System remains a critical responsibility and noted that the incident that occurred last year at Florida State University showed that such events could occur on any campus. He commended the leadership at Florida State University for its response to the incident and noted that it provided an opportunity to identify areas for improvement in campus safety. He reported that, with Board support, he established the Campus Safety and Student Success Committee.

Chair Bell Barnett emphasized her longstanding commitment to student support, which she said is critical to student success. She stated that the committee will begin by focusing on campus safety and food security and reported that a 2026 work plan is being developed to address areas such as internships, student well-being, retention, and student satisfaction.

2. Campus Safety

Chair Bell Barnett introduced the panel discussion on campus safety and emphasized that the security of campus communities remains a top priority for the System. She noted that the discussion builds on the fall 2025 SUS Safety Summit and referenced House Bill 757, highlighting its relevance to campus safety and security.

Chair Bell Barnett recognized Vice Chair Dale to facilitate the panel discussion.

Vice Chair Dale introduced the panelists: Mr. Kyle Clark, Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration at Florida State University; Dr. Robin Griffin-Kitzerow, Associate Vice President of Public Safety and Chief of Police at the University of Central Florida; and Mr. Darren Norris, Vice Chancellor with the Office of Safe Schools in the Florida Department of Education.

Vice Chair Dale asked Mr. Clark to describe Florida State University's response to the April 17, 2025, incident, including identified gaps and facility enhancements. Mr. Clark stated that campus safety remains a top priority for the university and reported that more than \$34 million has been invested in public safety enhancements over the past three fiscal years. He reported that, following the April 17 incident, the university invested more than \$8 million in additional enhancements and conducted an after-action review. Mr. Clark described facility improvements, including the replacement of more than 217 doors, updated locking mechanisms, and expanded training.

Mr. Clark highlighted additional enhancements, including installing more than 700 active assailant alert systems, expanding surveillance and security technologies, and increasing coordination with law enforcement. He also noted the use of data analytics, real-time crime center capabilities, and tools such as license plate readers, wearable devices, and drones to support emergency response.

Dr. Griffin-Kitzerow reported that universities across the System have implemented a range of campus safety enhancements following the incident at Florida State University. She noted that these efforts fall into three areas: fortification, prevention, and response.

Dr. Griffin-Kitzerow described fortification efforts, including upgrades to locks and access controls, expanded camera systems, improved lighting, and additional safety infrastructure such as panic alarms and license plate readers. She reported that prevention efforts include enhanced threat management processes, expanded training, and increased coordination with law enforcement agencies. Dr. Griffin-Kitzerow further noted that response efforts include the use of drones, expanded emergency response tools, improved communication systems, and strengthened collaboration with local and state partners, and emphasized that the state universities continue to coordinate regularly.

Vice Chair Dale asked Mr. Norris to discuss key challenges from the K-12 sector that may impact higher education, particularly in relation to the implementation of House Bill 757.

Mr. Norris stated that lessons from the K-12 sector have informed the development of House Bill 757 and noted that many of its provisions reflect established safety practices. He identified mindset as a primary challenge in implementing safety initiatives and emphasized that effective school safety requires shared responsibility, preparedness, and ongoing training. Mr. Norris noted that school safety requires continuous adaptation to evolving threats and highlighted the importance of sustained coordination and information sharing to support implementation in higher education.

Vice Chair Dale asked Mr. Norris about the opportunities and challenges of implementing the Guardian Program in higher education.

Mr. Norris stated that the Guardian Program has been effective in the K-12 sector, noting that it was established to address limitations in law enforcement capacity and ensure the presence of trained personnel on campus. He explained that the program has evolved to support rapid response. Mr. Norris noted that, while universities often have their own police departments, the Guardian Program serves as a supplemental option. He emphasized that a timely response is critical in emergency situations and that additional trained personnel can help mitigate threats.

Vice Chair Dale then asked the panelists to describe actions taken since the 2025 SUS Safety Summit to improve Systemwide coordination related to campus safety.

Dr. Griffin-Kitzerow reported that public safety groups across institutions have increased coordination through regular communication among police chiefs and teams, including emergency management and threat management. She noted that institutions are collaborating through joint training and sharing best practices to strengthen Systemwide coordination.

Mr. Clark reported that coordination also occurs among chief financial officers and procurement teams, including discussions of shared resources and investments, and noted that institutions routinely share information on threats and campus activities.

Mr. Norris stated that many safety practices in higher education build on K-12 training and noted that expanding training for students, faculty, and staff will enhance campus safety. He reported that improved information sharing between K-12 and higher education supports the continuity of student care and strengthens threat management and prevention efforts.

Governor Cerio asked about campus lighting and whether universities are maintaining and improving lighting conditions, particularly along walkways at night.

Mr. Clark, Dr. Griffin-Kitzerow, and Mr. Norris reported that institutions conduct routine assessments, including campus safety walks and facility reviews, to identify and address lighting needs and support campus safety. Mr. Clark emphasized the importance of maintaining lighting and related infrastructure to support campus safety technologies. He noted that tools such as cameras and license plate readers have enhanced response capabilities and contribute to improved campus safety.

Board Chair Levine noted that the Board is in the early stages of formalizing its approach to campus safety oversight and commented on the need for a structured method to monitor institutional risks and emerging issues.

Mr. Clark reported that Florida State University provides regular updates to its board of trustees on public safety initiatives and risk mitigation efforts and noted that this information is confidential. He explained that information on safety investments may be available through existing reports, including annual carry-forward submissions.

Governor Kamoutsas recognized Mr. Norris to provide additional context on the Guardian Program, including the certification process and participant requirements.

Mr. Norris explained that the Guardian Program includes extensive screening and training requirements, including background checks, psychological evaluations, and drug testing. He stated that the training exceeds certain law enforcement standards and is designed to ensure preparedness to respond to emergencies.

Governor Dunn asked whether procedures are in place to ensure that participants in the Guardian Program can be clearly distinguished from potential threats during an incident.

Mr. Norris stated that Guardian training programs address procedures for distinguishing participants from potential threats and include preventive measures to reduce the risk of misidentification. He noted that different Guardian models, including uniformed and concealed roles, are incorporated into training and implementation.

Governor Good asked whether the Guardian Program includes continuous training requirements similar to law enforcement.

Mr. Norris stated that the Guardian Program does include continuous training requirements, noting that participants must complete annual requalification and often receive additional training beyond the statutory minimum.

Mr. Peter Collins, Chair of the Florida State University Board of Trustees, stated that the university may evaluate the Guardian Program based on its existing public safety resources and noted that approaches to campus safety may vary by institution.

Board Chair Levine reiterated that safety is a top priority across institutions and highlighted the importance of ensuring the Board has sufficient information to support campus safety efforts. He further emphasized that campus safety extends beyond physical threats to include fostering an environment in which students feel safe.

3. Campus Food Pantries

Vice Chair Dale recognized Dr. Lynn Nelson, Associate Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs and Innovation, to provide a System overview of campus food pantries.

Dr. Nelson reported that all State University System institutions operate campus food pantries to support students experiencing food insecurity and noted that, collectively, the pantries have more than 28,000 visits each semester. She noted that the pantries provide a range of food, including fresh and perishable items at some institutions, as well as basic personal care products and home and school supplies.

Dr. Nelson stated that funding varies across institutions and is supported through a combination of donations, foundation support, and institutional resources, with partnerships playing a key role in sustaining operations.

Dr. Nelson shared university-identified best practices to improve access and efficiency, including expanded hours, additional locations, and student-choice models, and noted that some institutions offer nutritional education.

Vice Chair Dale recognized the student body presidents participating in the panel discussion: Ms. Trista Bennett, University of West Florida; Mr. Colby Manrodt, Florida Polytechnic University; and Ms. Amelia Dyal, University of North Florida.

Vice Chair Dale asked the student panelists to share feedback on student needs related to campus food pantries and opportunities to improve support.

Ms. Bennett reported that students at the University of West Florida have expressed a need for a wider variety of pantry items, including refrigerated options, and noted that additional equipment and donations would help expand available offerings.

Mr. Manrodt reported that food pantry usage at Florida Polytechnic University is limited and noted that the institution is exploring partnerships with dining services to provide unused meals to students.

Ms. Dyal reported that some students at the University of North Florida rely on campus food pantries as their primary source of food and emphasized the need for increased access and additional donations to support demand.

Vice Chair Dale asked the student panelists to describe commonly selected pantry items and comment on student awareness of campus food pantries.

Ms. Bennett reported that students at the University of West Florida most frequently select fresh items, hygiene items, and school supplies, and noted that the university offers multiple pantry locations to improve access and visibility. She also stated that the institution promotes awareness of pantry resources through campus events and emphasized efforts to normalize their use and reduce stigma among students.

Mr. Manrodt reported that Florida Polytechnic University provides meal kits through its food pantry, using accessible, non-perishable items, and noted efforts to increase awareness of pantry services. He stated that stigma related to pantry use is minimal and highlighted opportunities to further reduce barriers, including exploring alternative delivery methods to improve access.

Ms. Dyal reported that students at the University of North Florida most frequently select fresh produce, frozen meals, and snack items, with usage varying based on living arrangements. She noted that the centralized location and supportive staff have improved accessibility and awareness.

Vice Chair Dale asked the student panelists to discuss how the Board could support university efforts to address student food insecurity and strengthen campus food pantry services.

The three panelists agreed that developing partnerships with donors would further support food pantry operations. Additionally, continued engagement with students and the sharing of best practices would help improve food pantry services.

Governor Cerio asked the student panelists to clarify how food insecurity is defined across institutions and whether eligibility and access to campus food pantries vary, including the extent to which services are limited to students.

Ms. Bennett reported that the University of West Florida's pantry serves students and noted that the pantry operates without an application process to reduce stigma and improve accessibility.

Ms. Marva Johnson, J.D., President of Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, stated that the university's food pantry also supports some faculty and staff and noted that this approach aligns with institutional needs and community support efforts. She indicated that extending services can strengthen donor engagement by supporting both students and the broader campus community.

Governor Dunn asked how institutions assess unmet student needs and how the Board can support these efforts.

Ms. Dyal stated that maintaining open access to campus food pantries improves accessibility and reduces barriers for students and noted that increased visibility supports awareness.

Mr. Manrodt stated that increasing general awareness of campus food pantries is key to reaching students with unmet needs and noted that peer-to-peer engagement can be an effective way to connect students with available resources.

Ms. Bennett stated that increased student awareness at the University of West Florida has contributed to more consistent utilization. She commented that student feedback reflects the pantry's role in supporting food access and academic success.

4. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

Having no further business, Vice Chair Dale adjourned the meeting at 2:50 p.m.

Ashley Bell Barnett, Chair

Ryan Ford, Assistant Director, ASA