MINUTES
STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA
BOARD OF GOVERNORS
STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE
September 2, 2026

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https://thefloridachannel.org/videos/9-2-26-florida-board-of-governors-meeting/

1. Call to Order and Opening Remarks

Chair Lydecker convened the meeting at 5:11 p.m., with the following Governors present: Dunn, Good, Jones, Mack, Mateer, Seibert, and Sinatra. A quorum was established.

2. Minutes of Committee Meeting

Chair Lydecker requested a motion to approve the Strategic Planning Committee meeting minutes from June 25, 2026. Governor Jones moved to approve, Governor Dunn seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

3. Accreditation Update

Chair Lydecker recognized university presidents to provide updates on accreditation activity across the System.

Dr. Angela Falconetti, Interim President of the University of North Florida, stated that university leadership met with the Higher Learning Commission's Institutional Actions Council Hearing Committee on July 28, 2026. The hearing committee concurred with the peer review team's determination that the university meets all requirements and recommended that the Higher Learning Commission Board grant initial accreditation at its fall meeting in November 2026.

Dr. Devin Stephenson, President of Florida Polytechnic University, stated that the university was selected as the first institution to go through the accreditation process with the Commission for Public Higher Education (CPHE). The university completed its self-study, was evaluated against 21 standards, and received no reportable findings or concerns. The peer review team praised the university's leadership, its capstone and internship experiences, and its student success outcomes. President Stephenson reported that the university is on track for review by the CPHE advisory council in September, with action from the CPHE board expected in October. He noted that the accreditation will not be effective until CPHE is formally recognized by the United States Department of Education. Accordingly, the university has also submitted its preliminary report to the Higher Learning Commission, with a comprehensive report due by January and a site visit expected in early spring.

4. Public Notice of Intent to Amend Board of Governors' Regulation 8.008, Nursing Education

Chair Lydecker recognized Ms. Emily Sikes, Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, to provide an overview of the proposed amendment to Board of Governors' Regulation 8.008, Nursing Education.

Ms. Sikes stated that the Board approved a notice of intent to amend the regulation at its June meeting. Based on feedback received, staff recommended adding a clarification to align the regulation with a statute that was amended during the most recent legislative session. The clarification would allow a university president or designee to submit a Linking Industry to Nursing Education (LINE) Fund proposal to the Board of Governors, not to the university's board of trustees.

Chair Lydecker requested a motion to approve the Public Notice of Intent to Amend Board of Governors' Regulation 8.008, Nursing Education. Governor Dunn moved to approve, Governor Jones seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

5. 2026-27 LINE Fund Proposals

Chair Lydecker recognized Ms. Sikes to present the 2026-27 Linking Industry to Nursing Education (LINE) Fund proposals.

Ms. Sikes stated that this is the fifth year of the LINE Fund program, which has been successful across the System, with demand for funding consistently exceeding the funds available. She reported that staff recommendations for funding proposals were structured to remain within the $6 million allocated by the Florida Legislature and to distribute funding proportionately across the System. Ms. Sikes noted that with this year's funding, the universities expect to fund over 2,000 scholarships, support nursing faculty across the System, and increase the number of nursing students in the System by 1,000.

Chair Lydecker requested a motion to approve the 2026-27 LINE Fund proposals. Governor Jones moved to approve, Governor Dunn seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

6. Cooperative Education Programs

Chair Lydecker recognized Ms. Sikes to provide an overview of cooperative education programs.

Ms. Sikes stated that legislation passed during the most recent session authorizes the Board to calculate an adjusted graduation rate for students who complete cooperative education (co-op) programs. She explained that co-ops differ from internships in that they are structured, paid work experiences spanning multiple semesters, in which students progressively advance within an employer's organization and are often positioned for full-time employment after graduation. Ms. Sikes noted that established co-op programs at institutions such as the Georgia Institute of Technology, the University of Cincinnati, and Purdue University require a minimum of two semesters. Ms. Sikes explained that the adjusted graduation rate is intended to avoid disincentivizing co-op participation, as students in these programs may take longer to graduate. She presented proposed criteria for co-op programs, developed from statutory provisions and federal financial aid criteria. She stated that if the Board agrees to the criteria, staff will incorporate the provisions into a regulation to be presented at the November Board meeting. Ms. Sikes noted that this would also outline the process for the Chancellor to review and approve university co-op programs in accordance with the Board-approved criteria.

Chancellor Rodrigues added that employers in co-op programs commonly pay the students' tuition and fees for the following semester, allowing students to attend school at no cost while earning paid work experience and preparing for post-graduation employment.

Governor Dunn observed that the programs provided as comparisons require a minimum of two or three semesters, while the proposed criteria include no minimum, only a maximum of four semesters. She suggested establishing a minimum of two semesters as part of the criteria.

7. Programs of Strategic Emphasis: 2026 Update

Chair Lydecker recognized Ms. Sikes to present an update on the review of the Programs of Strategic Emphasis list.

Ms. Sikes stated that the Programs of Strategic Emphasis list must be reviewed every three years pursuant to Florida Statutes. She noted that the 2023 overhaul of the list established a new methodology, developed in collaboration with the REACH Office in the Governor's Office, to better align credentials with workforce needs, labor market projections, and salary outcomes. Ms. Sikes explained that this year's review examines whether the list remains aligned with current labor market projections for Florida. She reported that staff have updated certain thresholds used in the methodology, including raising the occupational growth threshold to reflect higher statewide growth. Ms. Sikes noted that the most significant change relates to entry wages. The 2023 threshold of $40,000 was aligned with the Performance-Based Funding Model, and staff recommend raising the threshold to align with the higher goals of the SUS 30 Strategic Plan. She reported that the initial analysis indicates only minor changes to the list at each degree level.

Ms. Sikes stated that the proposed list will be shared with the universities for feedback following the meeting. She commented that university recommendations to add or remove programs must be supported by evidence of labor market demand, such as regional data not captured in state-level projections. Final recommendations, incorporating university feedback, will be presented to the Board in November.

8. SUS 30 Update

Board Chair Levine requested that the item be placed on the agenda for the next Board meeting.

9. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

Having no further business, Chair Lydecker adjourned the meeting at 5:28 p.m.

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Charles Lydecker, Chair

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Kyle Roark, Director of Academic & Student Affairs