

MINUTES
STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA
BOARD OF GOVERNORS
ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH EXCELLENCE COMMITTEE
NEW COLLEGE OF FLORIDA
JANUARY 27, 2021

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and its committees are accessible at <http://www.flbog.edu/>.*

1. Call to Order and Opening Remarks

Chair Alan Levine convened the meeting on January 27, 2021, at 10:01 a.m. with the following members present: Governors Edge, Jones, Jordan, and Lydecker. A quorum was established.

Chair Levine highlighted COVID-19 research being conducted by State University System (SUS) institutions. The research covered a number of topics, including the impact of COVID-19 on agriculture, business, mental health, education, and public health.

Chair Levine reported that SUS institutions have initiated nearly 1000 unique research projects, of which 38 are collaborative efforts among institutions and 148 are federally funded.

He noted that some SUS institutions provided seed funding for over 120 different projects. Lastly, Chair Levine acknowledged the impact of legislative investments, and stated he would be willing to advocate for the continued support from the legislature.

2. Minutes of the Academic and Research Excellence Committee Meeting

Chair Levine asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the November 5, 2020, committee meeting. Governor Jones moved to approve, Governor Edge seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

3. World Class Faculty and Scholar Program Report

Chair Levine stated that the committee would now hear a presentation on the World Class Faculty and Scholar Program Report. He explained that Section 1004.6497, Florida Statutes requires that the Board of Governors submit a report to the legislature by March 15 of each year. The 2020 Legislature allocated \$90.5 million dollars in recurring funding to support the efforts of SUS institutions to recruit and retain exemplary faculty and research scholars. Chair Levine then recognized Ms. Emily Sikes, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Strategic Initiatives and Economic Development, to provide a brief overview of the report.

Ms. Sikes provided a brief overview of the program noting the intent of the program was to elevate the national competitiveness of Florida's state universities through faculty recruitment and retention. Ms. Sikes reported that the allocated funds were used to fund faculty recruitment, retention, and research. Examples of faculty recruitment and retention efforts included: research-centric cluster hires, awards for outstanding performance, professional development, and overall hiring/retention of faculty. Examples of research efforts reported included commercialization efforts, instruction and research infrastructure enhancements, student research initiatives, and awarding of postdoctoral fellowships.

Ms. Sikes reported that as of fall 2020, World Class Scholar funds were used to recruit 217 faculty and retain over 3,000 faculty. Additionally, faculty have transferred approximately \$37.7 million in research funding to the institutions and have more than \$300 million in research proposals under development or review.

Lastly, Ms. Sikes indicated that if the aforementioned trends continue, the Program would continue to increase the research profile and national rankings of the State University System of Florida.

Governor Lydecker moved to approve the World Class Faculty and Scholar Program Report, Governor Jordan seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

4. Professional and Graduate Degree Excellence Program Report

Chair Levine introduced the next item on the agenda. He stated that Section 1004.6498 Florida Statutes, requires that the Board of Governors submit a report on the Professional and Graduate Research Excellence Program by March 15 of each year. The 2020 Legislature allocated \$60 million in recurring funds to enhance the quality and excellence of professional and graduate schools and degree programs in medicine, law, and business. Chair Levine then recognized Ms. Sikes to provide a brief overview of the report.

Ms. Sikes provided a brief overview of the purpose and intended impact of the program. She explained that in the SUS there were six medical schools, four law schools, and ten institutions with graduate-level business programs. Institutions' funding was based on prior performance on indicators such as licensure exam passage rates, employment outcomes, and number of graduates.

Ms. Sikes explained that 59% of the funds were used to recruit and retain faculty and 29% was used to support students. Faculty recruitment and retention initiatives included salaries and research investments. Student initiatives included scholarships, fellowships, pay increases for graduate research and teaching assistants, and student recruitment efforts.

Ms. Sikes then provided an in-depth view of expenditures by program. She stated that SUS institutions spent approximately \$23 million to support graduate education in medicine, approximately \$14 million to support law education, and approximately \$22.2 million to support graduate business education.

She reported that there was an overall increase in the total number of graduate-level completers in all three areas and noted improvements in graduate and professional programs' national rankings. Ms. Sikes added that the Board of Governors is required to report on licensure pass rates in medicine and law and that this information is consistent with the information included in the 2020 Accountability Plan.

Governor Lydecker inquired about the distribution of funds spent on faculty, specifically as it relates to the retention of faculty versus the recruitment of faculty.

Ms. Sikes responded that there had been differences across institutions and is dependent on the institution's focus.

Chair Levine noted the impact of COVID-19 on medical and nursing training and practicum experiences. Passage rates could be impacted due to the limited availability of hands-on training and access to patients.

Governor Edge requested data related to the faculty turnover and retention rates before the state investment and after. Ms. Sikes stated that the Board office would need to follow up with the institutions to request this data.

Governor Lydecker moved to approve the World Class Faculty and Scholar Program Report, Governor Jordan seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

5. Artificial Intelligence Initiative

Chair Levine informed the Committee that the next item was a briefing on the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Initiative at the University of Florida (UF). The initiative was gifted to UF through an alumnus and NVIDIA. Chair Levine recognized Dr. Joe Glover, Provost, and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at UF, to provide the overview.

Dr. Glover noted the increasing pervasiveness of AI in the manufacturing, agricultural, financial, and drug development sectors. He added that the State of Florida needed to lead in the development of jobs and the production of graduates who will help solve some of society's greatest challenges. He indicated that the System-wide efforts in Artificial Intelligence would continue to build on the System's momentum.

Dr. Glover explained that UF has the largest and fastest supercomputer in higher education, which will give faculty and researchers new tools to solve applied problems that were previously out-of-reach. He added that the implementation of AI across the curriculum would make AI skill development accessible to all students at UF, irrespective of their major and degree level. Additionally, Dr. Glover commented on the prospect of Florida being a national leader with a replicable model that can graduate a competitive AI workforce during a critical time.

Dr. Glover acknowledged Chris Malachowsky, Co-founder of NVIDIA and the NVIDIA Corporation, for their generous gift of the largest and fastest AI supercomputer in the nation and all of higher education. He commented on the HiPerGator's capacity as a System-wide resource. UF will offer the resource for educational purposes to every SUS institution at no charge and at the same rate as UF faculty for research purposes.

He described current efforts at UF to modify curriculum across all sixteen colleges to incorporate AI principles into every major and degree level. Additionally, UF has a new undergraduate major in data science, a master's degree in applied data science, and a master's degree in artificial intelligence in development.

Dr. Glover asked that the SUS do four things: make good use of HiPerGator AI for educational and research purposes; collaborate with industries to promote rapid adoption of these technologies; help build the state's AI-trained workforce; and adopt an "AI Across the Curriculum" philosophy so that all students can acquire the skills and expertise.

Chair Levine thanked Dr. Glover for his presentation and expressed his support for the efforts made to increase the number of faculty in the field. Chair Levine then recognized Dr. Daniel Flynn, Chair of the SUS Vice Presidents for Research, to provide brief remarks on the plans for how the initiative will be leveraged for research purposes across the System.

Dr. Flynn described how the supercomputer processes data, specifically images. He provided a brief description of its potential application in fields such as healthcare, agriculture and deep space exploration. Each institution has identified how the NVIDIA technology will be utilized for research in environmental resilience, medical imaging, land and water assessment, cybersecurity and robotics. Lastly, he described the educational applications available to students in the System.

Dr. Flynn acknowledged Dr. David Norton, Vice President for Research, at the University of Florida, for his efforts in facilitating the collaborative efforts and access to the AI technology across the System.

Dr. Levine recognized Dr. Ken Furton, Chair of the Council of Academic Vice Presidents (CAVP), to provide brief remarks on how AI will be incorporated across the curriculum. Dr. Furton stated that CAVP has recently discussed the use and plans for incorporating AI at each institution. Some examples include embedding modules in undergraduate courses, non-credit earning courses that offer micro-credentials, senior thesis options, and the development of workshops. Lastly, Dr. Furton commented on the opportunity the technology provides faculty and students.

Chair Levine noted the benefits the state and the System would incur due to UF acquiring and sharing the technology across the System. He added that this initiative is an example of how the advancement at a single university that is shared System-wide, can expand the reputation of an entire system through rankings and improving the student experience. Governor Lydecker agreed and noted the benefits to the state and the System.

Board Chair Syd Kitson added that this initiative would have an economic impact on the state, and it will attract companies.

Governor Haddock commented on the benefit of integrating AI skills across the curriculum and the idea of enabling students to acquire AI skills while pursuing their academic field of choice.

Chair Levine thanked Dr. Glover, President Fuchs, and the UF Board of Trustees for their leadership on this initiative.

6. National Science Foundation Meeting Update

Chair Levine announced that the last item on the agenda was to hear an update on a meeting between the SUS institutions and the new National Science Foundation (NSF) Director, Dr. Panchanathan. Chair Levine recognized Dr. Flynn to provide a brief overview of the meeting.

Dr. Flynn stated that the purpose of the meeting was to gain insight into future funding areas NSF may be supporting. He indicated that Dr. Panchanathan shared NSF's ongoing and potential future funding initiatives.

Dr. Flynn reported that Dr. Panchanathan emphasized the need to develop domestic scientific research talent, public-private partnerships, and collaborations with research institutions that train diverse populations of students.

Dr. Flynn stated that Dr. Panchanathan affirmed the NSF's ongoing commitment to education and discovery-based research through investments in regionally located technology and research labs such as Florida State University's Mag Lab and NVIDIA, that promote common access to research. There was an emphasis on research areas such as artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and biotechnology.

Dr. Flynn summarized the big vision of the NSF is that universities, industries, and the government will work collaboratively to innovate, train, and push national research forward as the global leader.

Chair Levine thanked Dr. Flynn for his remarks. He commented on the ongoing positive relationship between the NSF and the SUS.

7. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

Having no further business, Chair Levine adjourned the meeting at 10:51 a.m.

Alan Levine, Chair

Brittanian Gamble
Assistant Director, Academic Affairs