

## Possum Trot Special Purpose Center

### Summary and Responses

On October 28, 2020, Florida International University's Board of Trustees voted to approve Possum Trot as a Special Purpose Center. The land for Possum Trot is being gifted to Florida International University (FIU) by the current owner, Mr. Robert F. Barnum. Pursuant to Board of Governors Regulation 8.009, FIU must present their request to the Board of Governors for approval. If approved, Possum Trot will open in fall 2020. The proposal to establish a special purpose center is included in your meeting documents and was jointly reviewed by Academic Affairs, Budget, and Facilities staff.

A special purpose center is a unit of a university, apart from the main campus, that provides certain special, clearly defined programs or services, such as research or public service, and reflects a relatively permanent commitment by a university for the foreseeable future. The facility must be university-owned, leased, or jointly used with another public institution. Special purpose centers typically do not offer instructional programs or courses leading to a postsecondary degree.

Possum Trot will support cutting-edge research and innovative education in various disciplines, including agricultural sciences, environmental sciences, tropical biology, biochemistry, biotechnology, economics, marketing, and business. The special purpose center will be an important teaching element for FIU's Agroecology program, delivering applied research and practical training in sustainable agriculture, soil science, horticulture, and demonstration plots. Possum Trot will be a field site for agricultural and ecological research and support and an increase in the number of STEM graduates ready to join the agricultural and scientific workforce.

The grove contains an extensive and unique collection of tropical fruit, spice, and timber trees collected over the last thirty years by Mr. Barnum and his family. It has nearly 350 tropical and sub-tropical plant species, including medicinal, aromatics, and edibles. The living collection included more than 100 varieties of mangos, 50 varieties of jackfruit, ten varieties of avocado, 20 varieties of carambola, and several varieties of tropical plants that show medicinal promise.

The following are questions that the Board of Governors' staff posed to FIU with their noted responses. The responses were submitted via e-mail on October 14, 2020.

## Educational Offerings

1. The proposal mentions the potential opportunity for teaching, educational offerings, and an increase in job-oriented degrees. Please explain what degrees, courses, or specific teaching opportunities will occur at this site and to what extent.

As part of the Agroecology program in the Department of Earth and Environment within the College of Arts, Science and Education, students will get to conduct field experience (on-site learning) at Possum Trot. The following courses will incorporate field experiences at Possum Trot into their curricula:

- ❖ Horticulture and Lab – HOS 3012/L
- ❖ Agriculture Colloquium - AGR 3930
- ❖ Integrated Pest Management – IPM 4020
- ❖ Soils and Lab, Sustainable Agriculture – EVR 4592/L
- ❖ Advance Modern Crop Production - EVR 5935
- ❖ Sustainable Farming System – AGR 6251

Adult Learner/Student workshops to be offered on site are:

- ❖ Horticulture Professional Certificate Level I (FNGLA)
- ❖ Beekeeping
- ❖ International Workshop on Agroecology and Sustainable Agriculture
- ❖ Food Certification

## Partnerships and Land Transfer

2. Will FIU be partnering with any SUS institutions as part of Possum Trot's "extensive network?" If so, have any MOUs been created? Are MOUs in place for the specific sites referenced in the proposal?

Many of our faculty conduct research and collaborate with colleagues across the SUS, including the University of Florida's Tropical Research and Education Center (TREC), which is in the same area as Possum Trot. Currently there are no MOU's in place specific to Possum Trot.

3. When will the land gift be transferred to FIU, or has the transfer already occurred?

The land will be transferred on or around November 13, 2020

Budgetary

- 4. What is the revenue source for the workshops that FIU plans to sponsor through this center?

The revenue source will be Auxiliary income in the form of fees from participants in these non-credit workshops.

- 5. What are the ongoing expenses?

Landscape and parking space maintenance.

- 6. What is the income source for expenditures?

License fees for the use of Parcel A

- 7. Please explain the \$36,761 annual expenditure.

The projected costs of this project have been revised to reflect additional elements requested by the Florida International University Board of Trustees after submission to the Board of Governors. All numbers in the application have been revised to reflect this change including the \$36,761 reflected above.

Timeline

- 8. Please submit a revised timeline of critical benchmarks.

Approval by FIU Board of Trustees	October 28, 2020
Approval by Board of Governors	November 5, 2020
Transfer of Gift and other assets to FIU	November 13, 2020
Infrastructure Improvements (Fencing)	November 13, 2020
License of land to farmer tenant	November 20, 2020