

MINUTES
STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA
BOARD OF GOVERNORS
TASK FORCE ON ACADEMIC AND WORKFORCE ALIGNMENT
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 Eric Silagy convened the meeting on January 27, 2021, at 1:06 p.m. with the following members present: Governors Jones, Jordan, Kitson, and Lamb. A quorum was established.

2. Minutes of Task Force on Academic and Workforce Alignment Meeting

Chair Silagy called for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the Task Force's September 16, 2020, meeting. Governor Kitson moved to approve the minutes, Governor Lamb seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

3. Overview of State University System Workforce Initiatives

Chair Silagy said the next item on the agenda was to hear an overview of State University System (SUS) initiatives to ensure alignment between academic programs and the workforce needs of Florida, including academic program planning, career services, Programs of Strategic Emphasis, and the Baccalaureate Follow-up Study.

Chair Silagy recognized Ms. Emily Sikes, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Strategic Initiatives and Economic Development, to make the presentation.

Ms. Sikes said the workforce initiatives supported by the Board generally fall into three areas. The first is how degrees are aligned to Florida's workforce needs. The second is how to create a strong talent pipeline to diversify Florida's economy, and the third area is accountability mechanisms in place to ensure post-graduation success.

Ms. Sikes stated that when institutions create new programs, whether it is bachelor's degrees or higher, they must document workforce demand for those programs at the state and national levels, and academic staff at the Board office conducts a thorough review of the data. Additionally, Board staff periodically review existing programs to ensure efficient use of resources. Ms. Sikes explained that the Board also has an initiative called the Programs of Strategic Emphasis, which exists to better align SUS degree production with Florida's economic and workforce needs. The five approved categories of strategic emphasis are Education, Healthcare, Global Competitiveness, STEM, and Gap Analysis. Each of these categories was selected based on its

importance to Florida's economic and workforce needs. Ms. Sikes said the Board periodically updates the Programs of Strategic Emphasis list as new data becomes available. For example, the Board most recently approved updates to this list based on revisions to the 2020 CIP codes. Ms. Sikes explained that within the Programs of Strategic Emphasis is an initiative called the gap analysis, which specifically looks at statewide supply of certain programs aligned with workforce demand to identify any gaps in talent supply.

Ms. Sikes said the second area of Board workforce initiatives involves how the universities contribute to developing a strong talent pipeline to help diversify Florida's economy. Ms. Sikes stated the SUS career centers are actively working to prepare students for future employment. Every SUS institution is proactive in engaging students early on- during freshman orientation or through first-year experience courses to begin conversations on career exploration and the types of services the career center offers. Ms. Sikes noted that career centers utilize enterprise systems to provide students with easy access to career preparation tools and job opportunities. These systems enable students and employers to connect, and career centers have adapted because of COVID. She said that last spring, SUS institutions hosted a virtual career fair that attracted more than 100 employers nationwide, offering both full-time and part-time professional opportunities to Florida's 12 public university students and alumni.

Ms. Sikes explained that another method to develop a strong talent pipeline is to collaborate with economic development groups at the state level. Board office staff work directly with several economic development groups, including the Florida Council of 100, the Florida Chamber, Enterprise Florida, the Department of Economic Opportunity, and others. Staff often help these groups with system-level data and information to support their economic development and business recruitment efforts for the state of Florida.

Ms. Sikes articulated that SUS students are actively involved in research across the system, and the skills students gain from these experiences are preparing them for future high-skilled jobs.

Ms. Sikes stated that the Board has a number of mechanisms in place to hold universities accountable for these initiatives and to ensure post-graduation success. First, the Board has two metrics embedded in Performance Based Funding (PBF) that track graduate outcomes and two more metrics that track productivity in the Programs of Strategic Emphasis. Metrics one and two track post-graduation employment and median wages. Metric one has increased by four percentage points over the last five years, revealing that more students are finding gainful employment or pursuing further education. Ms. Sikes went on to say that metric two, median wages after graduation, showed a \$1,000 increase last year. She explained that the salary metric has been challenging, in large part because employers determine wages, but the trends clearly show that more graduates are securing employment and earning higher salaries.

Ms. Sikes said the improvements in the PBF metrics have come about in large part due to the efforts of the universities and the career centers, in particular, who are working diligently to help students be successful even beyond graduation. Ms. Sikes explained that PBF metrics six and eight measure the percentage of degrees universities award in Programs of Strategic Emphasis. She said the percentage of bachelor's degrees awarded within Programs of Strategic Emphasis has continued to increase over the last five years, up 3%. However, the percentage of graduate degrees awarded within Programs of Strategic Emphasis has remained relatively constant in the last five years at around 63%. These metrics are a mechanism for the Board to connect degrees awarded to those areas critical to Florida.

Ms. Sikes stated that another initiative the Board has in place to monitor and track post-graduation success is the Baccalaureate Follow-up Study. Last fall, Board staff published the fifth iteration of this report along with an interactive online data tool on the Board's website that allows anyone to explore graduate outcomes by program area. She said most SUS graduates were found employed and working full-time, but it should also be noted that many SUS students pursue additional education and earn additional credentials beyond the bachelor's degree. She stated that the study also looked at wages ten years after graduation and found a 57% increase in earnings. Ms. Sikes asserted that this information is useful to students, parents, and to the public and shows the positive return of investment of an SUS degree.

Ms. Sikes concluded her presentation by saying that in addition to the initiatives she described, there are many other efforts being taken on individual campuses across the system.

4. Discussion on Post-COVID Workforce Issues

Chair Silagy stated that the final item on the agenda was to have a discussion with Mr. Bob Ward, President and CEO of the Florida Council of 100 and Mr. Mark Wilson, President and CEO of the Florida Chamber of Commerce on how the State University System can work with the business community to focus on the future workforce needs for Florida. Chair Silagy explained that it is important to produce graduates today to meet the needs of companies and industries, but it is equally important to anticipate where the opportunities are to produce that talent pipeline for the jobs of the future for the next 5, 10, 20 years and beyond.

Chair Silagy recognized Mr. Ward and Mr. Wilson to make their opening remarks.

Mr. Ward expressed that universities are already doing a good job producing talent for Florida's workforce, but he added that the business community has to own where it is not effectively communicating its needs. He said businesses also need to do a better job of listening and helping in efforts to build new programs and to provide internships and externships. He stated that Florida Council of 100 will host an SUS presidents' roundtable in May to help break through any communication barriers that exist.

Mr. Wilson said that the business community needs to do a better job letting universities know what the skills and talent needs are going to be down the road. He stated that the university and college system is incredibly skilled at adapting to what the business community says they need.

Mr. Ward and Mr. Wilson both expressed that K-12 educators and leaders need to be a part of the conversation. Mr. Wilson said that Florida ultimately needs a talented workforce, and that includes all education sectors. Mr. Ward agreed and added that those conversations are already happening in districts like Miami-Dade. Mr. Ward said they are exposing kids to career paths very early on to help children explore new careers, and they are often presented with what they can expect to earn and what a college degree looks like in terms of affordability.

Mr. Wilson said that as people try to recruit managers and mid-level managers from other states, Florida still, for some reason, has a brand of not having a top-tier education system. However, he explained that the Florida K-12 education system is now in the top 10 according to U.S. News and World Report, and he said Florida needs to do a better job marketing the fact that it has the best higher education system in the country.

Mr. Ward stated that in the business headlines last week, there was an article about companies building a future in Florida thanks to the pro-business environment that exists in this state. He said Florida ranks among the nation's top pro-business environments and has to look to industries to grow and build for the future economy.

Mr. Wilson explained that this is not all about high-wage, high-skilled jobs. Also, he said the State University System, for more than a decade, has been focused on not just excellence but access as well.

Chair Silagy asked what feedback Mr. Ward and Mr. Wilson were hearing from businesses regarding difficulties in recruiting and retaining talent. Mr. Ward said COVID has definitely had an impact on recruiting and employment. He said there are not a lot of barriers currently and that businesses can reach out to the masses more now than before COVID. The average age of employees indicates retirement is on the way for many, and new jobs are constantly opening as organizations promote their workforce. He went on to explain that senior staff, in many cases, are feeling less safe to return to the workplace, and that may accelerate some employees not coming back to the workforce.

5. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

Having no further business, Chair Silagy adjourned the meeting at 2:03 p.m.

Eric Silagy, Chair

Roger Strickland
Director, Economic Development