

Florida A & M University

Full Board of Trustees "Special" Meeting  
Presidential Candidate Interviews

Grand Ballroom

Tallahassee, Florida

Trustees Present: Challis M. Lowe, Chair; William Jennings, Vice-Chair; W. George Allen; Phillip Agnew; Regina Benjamin; Laura Branker; Al Cardenas; Mary Diallo; Pamela Duncan; R. B. Holmes; Leerie Jenkins; Spurgeon McWilliams; Jesse Tyson

Trustees Absent: None

Minutes/Summary

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Challis Lowe at 8:55 a.m. A roll call established a quorum. The Agenda was adopted.

Chairperson Lowe began by stating the importance of the meeting, which was a vital step in the election of the President of Florida A&M University. She thanked the finalists who would be making their third trip to the campus. Chair Lowe complimented and thanked the Search Committee; the process; and students, faculty and alumni for their participation. Chairperson Lowe explained the procedure for the proceedings. The interviews will be divided into 2 components:

- The interviews were scheduled to last up to two hours, and each candidate will begin with general introductory comments, which may last up to 10 minutes.

COMPONENT # 1

Designated Trustees will ask each candidate the same four questions provided by the **Hollins Group**:

**1. Academic Leadership (Benjamin)**

**Question:** A major element of growth and development of FAMU has been the academic leadership of past presidents. Would you please describe for us your vision for FAMU's academic programs and your strategy for achieving the vision?

**2. Expertise in Management (McWilliams)**



**Question:** Florida A & M University is a very complex organization with more than 12,000 students, over 650 faculty and staff, a 423-acre campus and an operating budget of more than \$390 million dollars. What are the key experiences in your professional career that will enable you to provide effective management for FAMU's considerable assets?

**3. Success in Institutional Advancement (Cardenas)**

**Question:** Federal and state funding for higher education is uncertain, at best. Public universities, including FAMU, are facing a growing need to increase revenues from every possible source. First, would you please describe your most successful fund-raising experience; and second, would you give us a glimpse of how you would lead an initiative to strengthen FAMU's fund development efforts?

**4. Effective Personal Skills (Jennings)**

**Question:** Among the most important roles of the FAMU President is to represent convincingly the goals and aspirations of the University to the various internal groups that comprise the University community, as well as to various external entities that are increasing in their importance to the future of the University. What unique interpersonal skills do you have and how will you use them to play this important role as the face of FAMU?

COMPONENT # 2

Every trustee will have the opportunity to ask each candidate any legal questions they choose. At the conclusion of all of the questions, each candidate will be allowed to make closing comments.

Chairperson Lowe stated that in June 2006, the Board of Trustees decided to use Web-cast for public access to Board meetings because it was the most cost-effective way of delivery. However, the quality was not up to standards, and therefore, radio delivery is the method for today's meeting. Web-cast will resume at a later date. She reminded the audience that the selection decision belongs to the Board of Trustees because FAMU's governance and fiduciary matters are the responsibility of the Board of Trustees. Again, she expressed appreciation for the involvement of all others.

Further, Chairperson Lowe stated she hoped the decision of the selection of the president could be made today, but that deliberations could last until the March Full Board meeting. In closing, she stated that she was humbled by her position as Chair, especially today.

The first to be interviewed was Dr. James Ammons, Chancellor of North Carolina Central University. His interview began at 9:15 a.m. and lasted until 11:15 a.m.



Immediately following his interview, the meeting recessed for a "food" break as the trustees planned to forego a lunch break.

Immediately following the break, Dr. Thelma Thompkins, President, University of Maryland, Eastern Shores, began her interview, which concluded at 1:45 p.m.

The third and final candidate, Dr. Howard Johnson, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, University of North Texas, began his interview at 2:00 p.m. Chairperson Lowe asked him to address rumors of his withdrawal from consideration for President of Florida A & M University. Dr. Johnson stated that even though he had accepted a new position, he had no desire to remove his name from consideration. His interview concluded at 3:00 p.m.

At the conclusion of the interviews, Chairperson Lowe asked the Board if they had enough information to make a decision. Trustee Duncan requested that Trustees Diallo and Tyson share their findings from campus visits for the three applicants. With concurrence from the Board, Chairperson Lowe granted the request. Trustees Tyson visited two campuses and Trustee Diallo visited all three. Chancellor Ammons' visit was held at a hotel, not the campus of North Carolina Central University. Dr. Ammons was not involved.

**\* For interviews and results of campus visits, please consult the Proceedings as recorded by the Court Reporter.**

Trustee Cardenas thanked Trustees Branker and Holmes, Search Committee Co-Chairs and the entire Search Committee for a thorough process. Trustees Holmes thanked the Committee and the Hollins Group and stated that he felt satisfied and would like to vote today. Trustees Allen stated that today's meeting was advertised as a special meeting to question candidates. Chairperson Lowe called for a vote to determine if voting for president would take place today:

For 12          Against 1

Trustee Agnew asked if the winner would be determined by a majority vote. Chairperson Lowe stated that 7 votes would be a majority, and if no candidate receives a majority on the first ballot, there would be a second ballot between the top 2 candidates. Chairperson Lowe also stated that since this is a public Board Miss Borland, Board of Trustees Liaison, would conduct a Roll Call for votes. Trustees voted as follows:

**For Dr. Ammons:** Trustees Agnew; Cardenas; Diallo; Duncan; Holmes; Jennings; McWilliams (7)

**For Dr. Thompson:** Trustees Allen; Benjamin; Branker; Jenkins; Lowe; Tyson  
(6)



**For Dr. Johnson: (0)**

Dr. James Ammons, former Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Florida A & M University and current Chancellor of North Carolina Central University, received the majority vote and became the 10<sup>th</sup> President of Florida A&M University.

Chairperson Lowe asked Vice-Chairperson Jennings to lead contract negotiations with Dr. Ammons.

The meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.