

FLORIDA **A&M** UNIVERSITY
Board of Trustees

Meeting Minutes
April 19, 2024

CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

Kristin Harper, Chair

Chair Harper called the meeting to order. Trustees Brown, Cliatt, Crossman, Figgers, Gibbons, Harper, Lawson, Perry, Reed, Stone, Washington, and White established a quorum. Trustee Mondelus did not join the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Isis Dukes, FAMU-NAA Government Relations chair presented comments to the Board of Trustees regarding the 2025-2026 Legislative Budget Request.

ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN

Provost Allyson Watson and interim vice president Roddrick Jones presented the University's 2024 Accountability Plan. Provost Watson highlighted key achievements, focusing on student success, academic excellence, performance-based funding metrics, and the aim to improve national rankings and achieve Carnegie R1 status. The report also outlined strategies for improving graduation rates and attracting high-achieving students through innovative curricula and enrollment management.

Trustee Lawson raised a question about addressing the Law School's performance. Trustee Washington clarified that while the Law School is important, it is not directly addressed in the Accountability Plan. Provost Watson reassured the Board that the issue is being addressed and that progress is being made.

Trustee White expressed concerns about the education requirements for strategic initiatives in artificial intelligence (AI), prompting a discussion on the need to prioritize programs and ensure they align with the demands of the workforce. Provost Watson confirmed that FAMU is emphasizing the importance of aligning the curriculum with industry needs. She also mentioned that the University is now targeting students with a calculus-ready background, and that their ACT and SAT scores are being used as predictive models. Trustee Washington suggested focusing on enrollment management strategy, rigor of courses, and student preparedness should improve the pipeline.

President Robinson discussed the University's recruitment strategy, emphasizing the importance of early engagement with students, especially those interested in STEM fields. Trustees Washington and White added that the University needs to focus on future-oriented programs and the training of professors to stay competitive.

Provost Watson discussed the slight decrease in the Performance Based Funding score from 78 to 72 and explained that the changes occurred in the implementation strategies and interventions for the classes of 2017 and 2019, both pre and post-Covid. She also noted that the academic progress rate was expected to rise in the coming year as they applied predictive analytics for students' first-year experience. She shared that there was a slight dip in the Pell Grant recipients' graduation rate, which contributed to the overall decrease. Upon further discussion, it was revealed that the 2020 class, which experienced the Covid-19 pandemic, had a significant impact on the metrics.

At the conclusion of the discussion, Trustee Lawson moved approval of the plan. The motion was seconded by Trustee Washington, and it was approved with a unanimous vote.

Next, Chair Harper acknowledged the new Student Government Association President-elect, Loryn May, who was in attendance to observe the meeting. Ms. May indicated that she was excited about the opportunity to serve the University and looked forward to working with the Board.

2025-2026 LEGISLATIVE BUDGET REQUEST WORKSHOP

Danielle McBeth, director of government relations, presented an overview of the legislative calendar and the budget process, emphasizing the importance of performance-based funding and the unique issues category. The team expects to have a draft of the Legislative Budget Request (LBR) ready to share with the Board by May 17, 2024 for review and input.

Trustee White emphasized the importance of understanding the legislative process and aligning with the Governor's goals. He also urged the team to leverage their relationships with new leaders at the legislature. Trustee Lawson raised concerns about the LBR process, specifically the need for unique university programs and faculty enrichment. Provost Watson acknowledged those points and assured that faculty success and best practice teaching aligned to industry standards were key considerations in the LBR process.

Trustee Brown raised concerns about the recruitment and retention of faculty, specifically questioning if changes in faculty salaries had been explained correctly. President Robinson responded that salary increases for faculty and staff have been merit-based in recent years, and a broader retention plan has been in place to reward outstanding work. He emphasized that the University would continue to explore ways to hold on to top performers. Provost Watson shared that \$7.5 million performance funding, emphasizing that it was not used to compress faculty salaries but to improve morale, reduce teaching overloads, provide startup packages for new faculty, upgrade classroom equipment, and support faculty attending national conferences. Chair Harper proposed discussing the ongoing compensation study at a future meeting.

Chair Harper then outlined next step:

1. Provost Watson will finalize and present the performance-based funding metrics and strategies for improving national rankings, achieving Carnegie R1 status, and enhancing graduation rates.
2. Mrs. McBeth and Provost Watson will provide the Legislative Budget Request (LBR) document to the Board for review and feedback at least two weeks before the May 29th board meeting.
4. The Board will discuss the LBR in detail during the Governance Committee meeting to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the document and its implications for the university.
5. The Board will approve the LBR at the May 29th full board meeting, following the discussion and feedback from the Governance Committee.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business for the Board, the meeting adjourned.