

Academic and Student Affairs Committee Minutes
Trustee Nicole Washington, Chair
March 6, 2024

Trustee Nicole Washington called the meeting to order. Ms. Valeria Singleton called the roll, and the following committee members were present: Jamal Brown, Otis Cliatt, Deveron Gibbons, Kristin Harper, Londe Mondelus, and Nicole Washington. A quorum was established.

Trustee Gibbons moved to approve the minutes for the meeting on December 6, 2023. Trustee Brown seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

The Committee recommended approval of the following items:

Sabbatical and Professional Development Leave - Each year, the University allows faculty to apply for sabbatical or professional development leave for the succeeding year. This year, seven faculty members were approved for sabbatical leave, and two staff members were approved for professional development leave.

Name	College/School	Semester(s)
Dr. Ashvini Chauhan	School of the Environment	Fall 2024
Dr. Beni Dangi	College of Science and Technology	Fall 2024 and Spring 2025
Dr. Sungmoon Jung	FAMU-FSU College of Engineering	Spring 2025
Dr. Bhanu Prasad	College of Science and Technology	Fall 2024
Dr. Gwendolyn Singleton	College of Social Sciences, Arts, and Humanities	Fall 2024
Dr. Komalavalli Thirunavukkuarasu	College of Science and Technology	Fall 2024 and Spring 2025
Dr. Darius Young	College of Social Sciences, Arts, and Humanities	Spring 2025
Name	Area	Semester(s)
Dr. Elizabeth Dawson	Carrie Meek-James N. Eaton Black Archives Research and Museum	Spring 2025
Professor Kenneth Jones	School of Journalism & Graphic Communications	Spring 2025

Trustee Brown moved to approve the applications for sabbatical and professional development leave. Trustee Mondelus seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Student Affairs Updates – informational updates were provided:

- Dr. William Hudson, Jr., and his team provided updates on enrollment management, financial aid, and hazing prevention.
- The Office of Undergraduate Admissions and Recruitment continues to experience increases in first-time-in-college (FTIC) applications with a 2.6% increase.
 - Transfer applications from the Florida College System (FCS) are down. However, we actively engage FCS collaborations to encourage enrollment and update academic pathways. Currently, 1,267 transfer students are enrolled in the IGNITE program through FCS partners.
 - The recruitment team participated in the Los Angeles HBCU Expo in early February, with more than 20,000 student participants.
- The Spring Preview and Be Out Day will be on Saturday, March 23, 2024. There are approximately 5,233 total participants registered for the Spring Preview.
- The Office of Financial Aid continues to monitor the Department of Education’s (DOE) website for updates regarding the FAFSA simplification. The DOE has released information sparingly over the past few months, leaving schools and service providers in limbo regarding preparation for receiving and reviewing student records.
- The US Department of Education has been working to simplify financial aid forms for several years. The process was to go live on December 31, 2023, but it has been dramatically delayed. So, the University is creating an internal FAFSA simplification webpage and communication plan for internal and external stakeholders, and it will debut within a few days. We will utilize Trellis to assist with disseminating information to students through emails, text messages, informational videos, workshops, town halls, and social media.
- The transfer of applicant information to schools, state higher-education agencies, and scholarship organizations has hindered the financial aid offices' ability to process, package, and communicate financial aid offers to students.

Question: What’s the timeline for awarding financial aid with the FAFSA simplification process?

Response: There was a soft launch in December 2023; however, there were timeline restrictions. Applications could be submitted between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. daily. If students or parents need to make corrections, they can no longer make the corrections because the portal is closed. The University has not received any FAFSA applications for the 2024 – 2025 award year, so this puts the University at the mercy of the Department of Education.

Question: Previously, what percentage of our students would have been awarded by now?

Response: As of today, all of our incoming students would have been awarded aid, and we would have received at least 75% of our FAFSA applications from the Department of Education.

Question: What is the typical timeframe for packaging the awards?

Response: Normally, we package the freshmen awards in March, and continuing students' awards are packaged in April. The delay with the FAFSA application delivery has caused uncertainty about when we will be able to package the awards. This will have a substantial potential financial impact on the school.

Question: Is this unique to FAMU?

Response: No, this is not unique to FAMU. It has impacted all institutions that participate in federal aid. The financial implications for FAMU are \$150 million. This is a serious matter because it interferes with the timing of the packaging of financial assistance and affects housing and meal plans.

- The final informational update was regarding the hazing prevention initiatives:
 - The University has one open investigation of a possible violation of University Regulation 2.028.
 - There are 22 Greek letter organizations and clubs are holding membership intake this semester. Hazing prevention educational sessions will be conducted with these entities upon completing their membership intake processes.

Academic Affairs Updates – The following informational updates were provided:

- Provost Watson provided brief updates on retention and academic excellence, the Rattler Solar Center, and the inaugural Provost Professor for Community Engagement, Outreach, and Research.
 - **Retention** – Our increasing retention of first-time college students has come to fruition based on the diligent work of Student Success, the Office of First Year Experience, and the Academic Advising teams. There are currently 21 advisors employed with an average advising load of 250. Four vacancies will be filled, and 11 positions will be advertised this month. When filled, all units will be staffed entirely, including academic units, the Center for Educational Disability Access and Resources, and Transfer Student Success. There was a special athletic advising session where the advisors provided one-to-one advising to athletes. The registration portal for the fall semester will open on March 25. The Academic Advising Office will host an Advising Blitz on March 20 to promote early registration.
 - **Academic Excellence** - Dr. Darius Young, a history professor, was selected for the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) as an inaugural ACLS HBCU Faculty Fellow and Grantee. Dr. Young was selected from a pool of more than 150 applications; the 2024 ACLS HBCU Faculty Fellows and Grantees represent 16 HBCUs and a wide range of disciplines

and scholarly approaches to humanistic research, community-engaged work, and pedagogical innovation.

As a fellow, Dr. Young will receive up to \$50,000 to support long-term engagement with a significant research project. Additionally, as an awardee, our institution will receive an additional grant of \$2,500 to support humanities programming and infrastructure.

- **Rattler Solar Center** - The College of Agriculture and Food Sciences acquired funding from Duke Energy to establish the Rattler Solar Center in Hernando County. This project marks a significant stride towards sustainability and innovation within our university community.

The Rattler Solar Center is named in recognition of our partnership with Duke Energy and its strategic location. The center will testify to our commitment to renewable energy and environmental stewardship. Utilizing photovoltaic (PV) panels, the facility is poised to produce enough electricity to power approximately 23,000 average-sized homes at peak production. The new Rattler Solar Center will span 560 acres within a 2,100-acre parcel. With a capacity of 74.9 megawatts, it will house approximately 210,000 solar panels, embodying a substantial leap towards clean energy production.

This endeavor exemplifies the intersection of academia, industry, and community engagement. Through our partnership with Duke Energy and the diligent efforts of our faculty and staff, the Rattler Solar Center will serve as a beacon of sustainability and innovation, leaving a lasting impact on generations to come.

- **Provost Professor for Community Engagement, Outreach, and Research** – Regarding the triad to reach Carnegie R1 Status of Research, Teaching, and Service, the Office of Academic Affairs has secured two inaugural Provost Professor for Community Engagement, Outreach, and Research.
 - Dr. Reginald Ellis, Associate Professor of History, and Dr. Gail Randolph, Associate Professor of Physical Therapy, are the two esteemed members who launched the initiative. In this role, the two will assist with the cultivation, development, implementation, evaluation, and dissemination of evidence-based and successful strategies to address essential needs of the local and regional community, specifically as it relates to the Boldly Striking 2022-2027 strategic plan. They will develop and sustain productive working relationships with local and regional partners and collaborate with other university-wide academic teams to document the relevance and impact of partnership programs. We look forward to growing this initiative to bring university impact across the colleges and schools and into the universities.

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Lastly, Provost Allyson Watson and Dean Sarah Price (College of Education) secured 9 million dollars of a 50-million-dollar Unlimited Potential Partnership School Grant from the US Department of Education. The University of Central Florida leads this grant and will have a 5-year sustainable impact across Florida. The grant will directly impact Unlimited Potential Schools for the Northern Florida Region through FAMU Developmental Research School and Leon County public schools.

Dr. Jennifer Collins provided an update on the academic planning tool that empowers students to navigate their degree programs—EduNav. The tool will act as a GPS for the students and help them navigate their pathway to graduation.

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 2:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole Washington, Committee Chair