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## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

BOARD MEETING ■ MARCH 29, 2023 6:30 PM ■ MCCARTHY CENTER, ALUMNI ROOM & REMOTE

### MINUTES

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Chair Kevin Foley called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and asked Counsel Ann McDonald to conduct the roll call for attendance.

#### Roll Call

Nancy Budwig – present; Beth Casavant – present; Lino Covarrubias – present\*; Diane Finch – present; Kevin Foley – present; Mariel Freve – present\*; Anthony Hubbard – present; Claire Ramsbottom – present; Robert Richards – present; McKenzie Ward – present

#### 1.0 Chair's Report

##### A. Consent agenda

- BOT Meeting Minutes: January 25, 2023
- Personnel Actions

Diane Finch moved the motion, Beth Casavant seconded the motion

Roll call vote: Nancy Budwig – yes; Beth Casavant – yes; Lino Covarrubias – yes; Diane Finch – yes; Mariel Freve – yes; Kevin Foley – yes; Anthony Hubbard – yes; Claire Ramsbottom – yes; McKenzie Ward – yes

—Motion approved

Chair Foley continued by reporting the following:

##### B. Board of Trustee Retreat: May 24, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. at the Warren Conference Center

- Reminded the trustees of the in-person retreat date and location.

##### C. Update DEI and Antiracism Professional Development

- Training has been contracted with Interactive Business Inclusion Solutions (IBIS) Consulting Group and scheduled to be held on April 14.

Chair Foley invited Trustee Beth Casavant, who is currently working with the IBIS consultants, to present additional information.

- Trustee Beth Casavant stated that she and other members of the executive staff have been working with IBIS to develop relevant and useful content for the training.
- IBIS will be providing an interactive “theater” experience. Trustee Casavant and the others on the team have been able to provide feedback to the consultants to ensure that the script for the actors will allow trustees the opportunity to relate to the presented scenario.

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\*Indicates remote participation.

- Pre and post-assessments will be discussed in the next meeting with IBIS to ensure long-term DEI methods are continued to be implemented.
- Trustee Casavant noted the IBIS consultants have emphasized the importance of “trusting the process”; that participants need not prepare for the training, but rather be willing and open to allow for uncomfortable conversations and not be afraid to make mistakes.
- Chair Foley thanked the trustees who were able to participate in the Racial Equity and Justice Institute (REJI) sessions, noting that additional sessions are forthcoming.

A brief conversation took place regarding whether materials from the REJI sessions may be shared with the trustees. Additionally, a question was posed regarding whether after the IBIS DEI training, an opportunity for discussion and processing may be available for the trustees.

- Counsel McDonald agreed to contact representatives from Bridgewater State University to acquire permission to share the materials from the REJI sessions.
- The board retreat in May will allow for an opportunity for discussion of the IBIS DEI training.

Chair Foley continued his report on the following items:

D. Trustee Vacancies

- Two trustee positions remain open. One candidate was nominated, however, there has been no update on the status of the nominee.

E. Trustee Convening

- The DHE trustee convening will resume in fall 2023.

Chair Foley concluded his report by reminding the trustees that commencement will be held in May, asking that trustees contact him or Ann McDonald if they are available to participate in the ceremony.

## 2.0 President’s Report

Before beginning her report, President Nancy Niemi took the opportunity to honor those that served in the Vietnam War, this being the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the war.

She continued her report on the following:

A. Updates

- NECHE Update
  - In a campus-wide effort, subcommittees are reviewing and reporting on the nine NECHE standards.
    - The subcommittees are currently appraising how the standards are being met and where improvements may be made.
    - Co-chairs have identified three major content themes across the standards.
      - 1) Enrollment declines over the past 10 years, the campus-wide impact the enrollment decline has made, and the strategic ways in which the University has address the impact.
      - 2) Work on antiracism and DEI
      - 3) The University’s responsiveness to student needs pre, during, and post the COVID pandemic.

- President Niemi provided an overview of the assessment and report writing timeline, as well as a community engagement timeline, which will conclude with a visiting team from NECHE coming to the FSU campus, April 7 – 10, 2024.
  - Commissioner Ortega's Visit to FSU
    - The commissioner visited the campus as part of his tour of the state universities and community colleges. The visit included lunch with students, a campus tour, and meetings with the Executive Staff and President.
  - Strategic Planning Process (2024-2029)
    - The strategic plan has been approved for a one-year extension. Work will begin on the strategic plan in the fall of 2024.
    - During his conversation with the President, the commissioner noted that the BHE will be looking to see alignments between FSU's strategic plan and the Commonwealth's equity agenda and student success framework.
- B. Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement (DICE) Report
- Jeffrey Coleman presented the following on the three initiatives that his department is currently working on:
- Community Incident Intervention Team – page 16
    - Despite the University's best efforts, the campus will continue to have incidents that will impact the identity, feelings of belong and wellbeing of the university community.
    - This initiative will provide a campus response within 48-hour period and allow for the development of an education experience for the community.
      - Immediately respond to, and provide resources to communities impacted.
      - Creating a space for processing, discussion, and support of the communities impacted.
    - The goal will be for this response to become part of the university processes and procedures, allowing for a responsive rather than reactive approach to these kinds of incidences.
  - DEI Community Partners Meeting – page 16
    - Will be meeting with MetroWest DEI leaders to establish a support system or consortium resource group to address common issues and challenges faced by community organizations.
  - Community Conversation on Race and Policing – pages 16 – 17
    - The community was invited to share experiences on race and policing at FSU.
      - Themes focused on safety, belonging, and customer services.
      - Discussion included ways in which the University Police can contribute to the sense of belonging for students of all backgrounds.
    - A Taskforce on Community Safety and Belonging will be established by the end of the spring semester.
      - Charge and goals were outlined – page 17

Chair Foley asked if other organizations and sister institutions would be consulted regarding best practices.

- Jeffrey Coleman responded that the taskforce would be consulting other campuses and would also consult the Framingham City Police Chief to develop realistic strategies.

Trustee Claire Ramsbottom asked about the ability to recruit and hire police officers with the existing rates of pay, and if it has had an impact on police customer service.

- Jeffrey Coleman agreed to add the issue as an action item for the Taskforce to address.

### C. Development and Alumni Relations Report

Eric Gustafson presented the following information:

- Development has raised \$2.5M year-to-date for FY2023, meeting targeted goals.
  - Reviewed notable gifts. – page 18
- Alumni Engagement – page 18
  - Events in Florida were highlighted, as were Men’s and Women’s Basketball games.
  - The 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Gatepost* celebration was well attended. Trustees Diane Finch and McKenzie Ward were both in attendance.
  - Upcoming spring events include the 50<sup>th</sup> reunion celebration of the Class of ’73, President’s Circle Gala, and softball alumni event.
  - Focus will be on partnering with academic departments to develop ways in which alumni can connect with current and prospective students.
- Grants and Sponsored Programs – page 18
  - Year-to-date, the department has secured \$4M in grants and an additional \$2M in pending grants- pages 20 – 21
- Danforth Art Museum and Art School – pages 18 – 19
  - New exhibits opened, including a new permanent exhibit.
  - Distinguished artist Jaune Quick-to-See-Smith (Class of ’78) work on loan to the Whitney Museum as part of a retrospective for the artist.
  - Winter session had a 22% increase in revenue over last year; 390 students registered.
  - The Art School will host high school students enrolled in fashion classes this summer, allowing for a great promotional opportunity for the FSU Fashion Design and Merchandising programs.

In conclusion, Eric Gustafson invited the trustees to the delayed grand opening of the Mancuso Humanities Workforce Preparation Center, on Monday, April 10 at 3:00 p.m.

- Student-in-the-Spotlight: Blake Carlson  
Dr. Joseph Coelho, introduced student-in-the-spotlight Blake Carlson.
  - Blake is a senior, graduating summa cum laude in the Honors Program this spring. He is majoring in Political Science, minoring in Business Administration and has been accepted into five law schools.
  - Blake came to FSU at 21-years old, after taking some time off between high school and college.
  - He is a member of Pi Sigma Alpha, a national political science honors society, and is a research assistant to Dr. Giuliano Espino, with whom he is conducting research on the role of media influences shaping legislative action in congress.
  - In addition to his scholastic achievements, Blake is the co-captain of the FSU hockey team, and is the team’s goalie.
  - Although FSU was not originally his first choice of schools, Blake found that it shaped who he is today, and is proud of who he has become. He thanked the

professors and community who allowed him to accomplish his goals and for allowing him to “leave this place better than he found it”.

### **3.0 Student Trustee Report**

Trustee McKenzie Ward reported the following:

#### **A. Updates**

- Thank you to the trustees that participated in the BOT Student Open Forum.
  - Students are hoping that the forum will be offered each year, as it allows them the opportunity to meet and learn more about the trustees and the important role they play in the University’s administration.
- Administrator’s Forum
  - Themes included: ways in which to improve pathways for students to voice and address concerns; how strengthen communications across the University, and seeking ways for students to better engage with administration.
- SGA and Student Trustee Election
  - SGA will be hosting elections on April 13, with results becoming available at 10:00 p.m. that evening.
  - The new student trustee for AY23-24 will be introduced at the May BOT meeting.

Trustee Ward also thanked the administrators that participated in “Pie SGA”, a fundraiser for graduation stoles.

### **4.0 Academic Affairs Committee**

Trustee Nancy Budwig reported on the following:

#### **A. Academic Affairs Committee Report**

- The Sports Management Program, which the trustees previously approved, was advanced to, and approved by the DHE.
- Focus on faculty and DEI
  - Hiring processes – pages 7 – 8, *March 21, 2023 Academic Affairs Meeting Book*
- Focus on the recruitment of faculty of color – pages 11 -14, *March 21, 2023 Academic Affairs Meeting Book*
  - We currently are a primarily white institution, and have work to do to diversify our faculty and staff to better match our student body demographics.
    - Highlighted part-time faculty
  - Professional development opportunities for faculty: CELTSS and REJI
  - Further discussion was had by the committee regarding the professional development and financial resources available to the University.

Trustee Ward commended the University for its commitment and focus on the recruitment of faculty and staff of color. She noted the importance of having faculty and staff who reflect the student body. Adding that it is significant for the recruitment of new students, as well as the retention of current students.

## **5.0 Enrollment and Student Development Committee**

Trustee Claire Ramsbottom highlighted the following information from the Enrollment and Student Development Committee meeting:

- A. Enrollment and Student Development Committee Report
  - First-time freshman admissions funnel, year-to-year comparisons:
    - Deposits and deposit rates – page 23
    - Transfer rates – page 24
  - Strategic Enrollment Plan (SEP) timeline – page 25
    - Based on this timeline, the committee will convene in the summer after the Prioritization Summit to discuss implementation.
  - Differentiating of the work being conducted – page 26
  - Student Health, Safety, and Wellbeing – page 27 and 28
    - Five components of wellness.
  - Wellness Education Office
    - Full-time Health and Wellness Educator has been hired.
  - Student Enhancement
    - Persistence communication plan – page 30
      - Assessment of communication with students and aligning communication across departments to best serve students.
        - Departments currently included in the communication plan – page 31
        - Goals identified – page 32

Trustee Diane Finch asked Dr. Lorretta Holloway if the \$295K grant included in the report for new advising mentorship program and a new position for data analytics using Starfish will be applied toward the current academic year or the year following.

- Dr. Holloway confirmed that it will be implemented in the fall and a report will be forthcoming.

## **6.0 Administration, Finance, and Information Technology Committee**

Trustee Anthony Hubbard provided the following information regarding the March 21<sup>st</sup> Finance Committee meeting:

- The budget discussion will include several competing areas that will require balancing resources. Those include:
  - Development of the strategic plan
  - Enhancements for student enrollment
  - Ways to mitigate the impact of inflation on tuition and student fees
  - Recruitment of staff
  - Student support programs
  - Reserves and endowments

Trustee Hubbard invited Dr. Dale Hamel to continue the report on the budget discussion.

Dr. Hamel began by providing an update to an item which had been introduced, but was not completed at the time the committee met. He informed the trustees that about two-thirds of the

real estate investment trust has been redeemed, and as of Monday (March 27), invested in short-term treasuries.

Dr. Hamel continued by reporting the following:

A. Administration, Finance, and Information Technology Report

- The committee discussed the banking contract through the Commonwealth, which is held by Bank of America. All balances are insured beyond the \$250K provided by the FDIC.
  - The committee discussed the impact of the Silicon Valley Bank closure, which did not impact FSU.
- Budget Discussion FY2024
  - General Operations and the impact of the passage of Question One (Fair Share Amendment)
  - Governor's budget has been released, and included are:
    - Significant new funding for financial aid
    - Funding for MASSGrant Plus program
      - Funding for students with the most need
    - Student cost stabilization
      - Tuition/fee freeze or a tuition/fee lock
        - Tuition lock may be impacted by future state appropriations
    - Funding for the campuses: a specific one-time funding for activities
      - 2% increases to the base budget of campuses, in addition to a commitment for funding collective bargaining over the next three years of the contract
      - Performance funding line item, providing an additional 3% to the campus
  - Parameters have been updated by the release of the Governor's budget
    - No changes to collective bargaining
    - State appropriations will cover results from the collective bargaining process; also covered will be performance funding and additional funding for base support which was not included in the previously presented initial parameters.
  - No changes to student charges for FY24; the tuition lock proposal is scheduled to begin in FY25.
    - Proforma budget updating out-years will determine what approach to take to stabilize tuition and fees.
  - Small adjustments to enrollment model; updated as projected enrollment is provided by RNL.
  - Small increases in reserve use for the support of efforts of SEP and the strategic plan.
  - Trust fund supports are still working with the assumptions made in the original budget.
- Reduction in the anticipated use of the reserves in FY24, with the continued intention that we progress toward the use of reserves to meet the budget in fiscal out-years.
  - Proceeding with the current update with anticipated changes to come.

The trustees engaged in conversation that included the following subjects:

- Student cost stabilization
- Budget timeline: the House budget is due in April, the Senate budget in May
- Timeline for financial aid and how the timeline would impact recruitment efforts
- Strategic priorities and goals
- Student tuition/fee freeze vs lock

#### **4.0 Governance Committee**

Trustee Beth Casavant reported the following:

- A. Governance Committee Report
  - By-Law review and revision
    - The overlap between Academic Affairs and Enrollment and Student Development Committees is being further defined.
  - A final draft version will be presented to trustees during the May Board of Trustees Meeting for approval to go in effect July 1, 2023.

#### **5.0 Chief of Staff, General Counsel, and Secretary to the Board of Trustees Report**

Counsel Ann McDonald reported on the following:

- A. Process for recommending potential BOT nominees
  - Referenced document for trustees to review – page 40
- B. Public Meeting Law
  - Counsel McDonald informed the trustees that the current public meeting law allowing remote participation to apply toward quorum is scheduled to expire March 31, 2023, but anticipates the date will be extended.
    - Trustee Casavant commented that she received notification (March 29) from the Massachusetts Municipal Association of the supplemental law allowing remote participation has been extended to 2025.

#### **6.0 New Business**

There was no new business reported.

#### **7.0 Public Comment**

There were no public comments made.

#### **8.0 Adjourn Open Meeting**

Motion to adjourn was moved by McKenzie Ward and seconded by Diane Finch

Roll call vote: Nancy Budwig – yes; Beth Casavant – yes; Lino Covarrubias – yes; Diane Finch – yes; Mariel Freve – yes; Kevin Foley – yes; Anthony Hubbard – yes; Claire Ramsbottom – yes; McKenzie Ward – yes

—Motion approved

The meeting ended at 8:30 p.m.