



FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY

Board of Trustees

## Full Board Meeting Minutes Tuesday, April 16, 2024

---

### **I. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Chair Piero Bussani convened the full board meeting of the Florida Atlantic University Board of Trustees with the following members participating:

Vice Chair Barbara Feingold, Ms. Dalia Calvillo, Mr. Shaun Davis, Mr. Earnie Ellison, Mr. Robert Flippo, Mr. Brad Levine, Mrs. Sherry Murphy, Mr. Pablo Paez, and Mrs. Linda Stoch.

The following university officials participated: Dr. Stacy Volnick, University President; Mr. Daniel Jones, Vice President of Legal Affairs & General Counsel; and Mr. Andrew LaPlant, Board of Trustees Operations.

**Roll was taken and a quorum was present.**

### **II. Chair's Comments**

Chair Bussani opened by congratulating Daniel Jones on his promotion to Vice President of Legal Affairs & General Counsel and providing a brief summary of Mr. Jones's career. Chair Bussani then spoke about the honor it is to serve as a trustee at FAU; a sacred trust that transcends personal interests. Chair Bussani said that the mission is clear: "exemplify professionalism in addressing the formidable challenges that confront us, and capitalize on the opportunities that await our action. It is with this sense of purpose that I believe we were selected to steward FAU; to be on this board. Internal divisions on this board, however, continue to overshadow some of the remarkable achievements of our university, and inject tension into our board meetings. It's disheartening to note that there's been nearly 40 front page articles, not about the achievements of the school, but about

historic facts, finger-pointing, personal attacks, and all of these things that have happened in the past, while the commendable milestones of FAU are scant ... So let us move forward and agree as a board of trustees on three things as we turn the page and move forward as a united board. First, I think we can all agree, and I can speak on behalf of the entire FAU community, and I've met with them, that we are exhausted and frustrated over negative press. We are exhausted and frustrated for our reputation being tarnished by negative news articles. It is tired, it is old, it is boring, and it's time to move on, period. Let's put the past in our rearview mirror, please. Second, we will not allow these meetings to be interrupted, in terms of anything that's not on our agendas. I have left you ... Robert's Rules of Order. The point of the book is that we will maintain decorum during our meetings. As chair, I am committed to upholding parliamentary procedure and conducting these meeting with diligence and dignity. Third, and most importantly, let's agree to spend our time as a board on tackling the big and complex issues, and leave a legacy that this board can be proud of. Higher Education is at a time of transition. To paraphrase from a book, *The Great Upheaval*, as the United States experiences profound change, moving rapidly toward a knowledge economy and a digital age, will universities like FAU adapt to challenges it faces or be disrupted by them? These are the complex issues demanding this board's attention. I think that's why we are here to serve." Chair Bussani then listed some of the issues the board will be required to face, and he called upon the board to recommit to the responsibilities entrusted to the board by the Governor and Board of Governors.

### **III. President's Report**

President Volnick informed the board that the FAU Gala occurred the previous weekend, which focused on support for student scholarships. More than 650 people came and we anticipate having raised more than \$1.2 million in scholarships. The Transcend Tomorrow campaign has now raised half a billion dollars. More than 58,000 donors have supported the cause. SACS has affirmed FAU's accreditation for another ten years, pending formal approval by the organization's Board of Trustees in December. President Volnick went over the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). She thanked Provost Russ Ivy for leading the effort and the entire QEP committee. President Volnick stated that the university has 46,933 applications for admission this past year, which marked a 27% increase. FAU experienced an all-time high fall-to-spring retention rate of 95%. In March, FAU received the 2024 Ace Fidelity Investments Award for Institutional Transformation from the American Council of Education. FAU was selected by the National Organization for Student Affairs, Administrators in

Higer Education as the 2024 Excellence Award Honorary for our 1<sup>st</sup> Year Connections Mentoring program. FAU is now a Purple Star campus, which is awarded by the Florida Legislature to universities that demonstrate a commitment to supporting military families as set forth by Florida statutes. President Volnick spoke about areas to evaluate moving forward, including health initiatives, the enrollment growth plan, AI, research and commercialization, and our strategic plan.

Following the President's Report, Chair Bussani read a resolution congratulating outgoing Student Government President and Trustee, Dalia Calvillo. He also congratulated President Volnick on her induction into Phi Kappa Phi.

#### **IV. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

#### **V. Consent Agenda**

Chair Bussani stated that all items on the Consent Agenda were discussed and approved unanimously by the Audit and Compliance, Budget and Finance, Academic and Student Affairs, and the Strategic Planning and Initiatives Committees. No items were removed from the Consent Agenda. **A motion was made and seconded to approve the consent agenda. With no further discussion or amendments, the motion passed unanimously.**

#### **VI. New Business**

##### **a. Approval of Full Board Minutes**

- **March 20, 2024**

Chair Bussani asked for a motion to approve the minutes as written. **A motion was made and seconded to approve the March 20, 2024, Full Board Minutes. With no further discussion or amendments, the motion passed unanimously.**

##### **b. Presidential Search Update**

Chair Bussani stated that the Board of Governors (BOG), approved amendments to the Presidential Search Regulation, Regulation 1.002, and FAU will now take the initial steps to move forward with the search for the next president. The first step is that he will consult, as required, with the Chair of the BOG on the selection of the search committee. Second, also as required, he will select a chair of

that committee with the concurrence of the BOG Chair. Once these steps are done, we will gather information on a potential search firm and bring a recommendation to the board at the June meeting.

After the presidential search update, Chair Bussani acknowledged Trustee Ellison to speak. Trustee Ellison met an FAU student who was selected to serve on the Palm Beach County criminal justice commission. Her name is Shania Grant. Trustee Ellison recognized the Criminal Justice program at FAU and Cassandra Plunk, her mentor. Chair Bussani then acknowledged Vice Chair Feingold to speak. Vice Chair Feingold spoke about Passover and wished the local FAU, Boca Raton, Florida Jewish communities, and the people in Israel a happy, healthy, and peaceful holiday.

Chair Bussani said that he attended his first BOG meeting in March. The meeting was extraordinary. He was able to meet with the other chairs and presidents. He was impressed by the level of professionalism and was left with no doubt as to why this state has the best university system in the country. He was also impressed with how BOG Chair Brian Lamb conducted the meeting. Chair Bussani then gave an athletics update, which included: the hiring of the new men's basketball coach; the football spring game; the softball team leading the standings in the American Athletic Conference; and beach volleyball's national ranking of number 18 in the country. Chair Bussani recognized Athletic Director Brian White. He thanked Mr. White and said we have the best athletic director in the country at FAU.

## **VII. Adjournment**

**A motion to adjourn was made and seconded, and after unanimous vote, the meeting was adjourned.**