



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

BOARD MEETING ■ JANUARY 24, 2024 6:30 PM ■ MCCARTHY CENTER, ALUMNI ROOM & REMOTE

MINUTES

Chair Beth Casavant called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Roll Call

Nancy Budwig – present; Beth Casavant – present; Lino Covarrubias – present; Kevin Foley – present; Mariel Freve – present; Anthony Hubbard – present; Ryan Mikelis – present; Claire Ramsbottom – present

Diane Finch joined the meeting at 6:34 p.m.

1.0 Chair’s Report

- A. Consent agenda, pages 3 – 4
- BOT Meeting Minutes: November 15, 2023, pages 5 – 11
 - Personnel Actions, pages 12 – 15

A motion to approve the consent agenda was moved by Kevin Foley; Claire Ramsbottom seconded the motion.

Roll call vote: Nancy Budwig – yes; Beth Casavant – yes; Lino Covarrubias – yes; Mariel Freve – yes; Kevin Foley – yes; Anthony Hubbard – yes; Ryan Mikelis – yes; Claire Ramsbottom – yes; Diane Finch was not present at the time of the vote, due to technical issues with the remote format.

—Motion approved

Chair Casavant continued her report on the following:

- B. Trustee Nominations
- The Board is currently operating with vacancies and three terms expiring in March.
 - A new nominating procedure requires putting forth two names for each vacancy to be filled.
 - A request from trustees to put forth potential nominees was made. Counsel Ann McDonald will forward the “skills grid” to trustees for their review.
- C. Executive Committee – DEI Update

- Summary of the discussions held by the committee, which concluded that the land acknowledgement statement will be discussed with local Native leaders prior to any use of it by the Board.
 - The Executive Committee discussed the five roles that boards assume, page 36, September 20, 2023 Board of Trustees Meeting Book.
 - Jeffrey Coleman was asked for a list of equity minded questions which will be used to survey the committee chairs. This would allow committee chairs to evaluate the equity areas in the purview of each committee and consider the long and short-term DEI related goals that should be set for each committee.
 - Next steps include distribution of the survey, as well as a self-audit of DEI work covered by the committees. Survey results and self-audit will be used to guide conversations surrounding DEI to be held at the spring BOT retreat.
- D. Save-the-Dates: Undergraduate Commencement and Graduate Commencement
- Undergraduate Commencement will be held on May 19, 2024 at the DCU Center in Worcester; the Graduate Commencement will be held on May 18, 2024 on campus at the Richard C. Logan Gymnasium.
- E. BOT Retreat
- Wednesday, May 15 at the Warren Conference Center and Inn
 - Trustees Covarrubias and Foley noted a conflict with another event on May 15, and requested alternative dates be considered for the retreat so that they may be able to attend.

2.0 President's Report

A. Updates

President Nancy Niemi provided a summary of events taking place on campus including the Legislative Forum, a celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. legacy, lecture by Ayesha Shabazz, and the grand re-opening of the McAuliffe Center for Integrated Science Learning.

President Niemi invited consultant Linda Campanella to provide the following updates on Strategic Planning:

- Linda Campanella presented the summarized information included on page 16.
 - Trustee Finch commented on the series of listening sessions that were scheduled by the Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement with members of the campus community and affinity groups regarding safety, belonging, and customer service. Trustee Finch added that the Provost's Office will be holding listening sessions in February with faculty and librarians.

President Niemi continued reporting on the following:

- NECHE Self-Study, April Visit and Beyond
 - The self-study has received very positive feedback.
 - The NECHE team will be on campus April 7 – 10: Trustees have been invited to the dinner on April 7, and the meeting with the NECHE team on April 8.

- Trustees were informed that the priority would be to attend the meeting with the NECHE team on April 8.
- Summary of steps that will take place over the eight-weeks following the visit, concluding in the final notification of the accreditation status and action.
- Executive Search: VP for Finance Administration and Technology
 - Executive search firm, Isaacson Miller, has been contracted to conduct the search.
 - The search committee will be led by Kristen Porter-Utley and Natasha Bizanos-Ashe; Dan Rhodes will serve as the lead consultant.
 - The firm will be seeking input from the University community through a survey which will be distributed to FSU employees and trustees.
 - Anticipated next steps and timeline for the search:
 - Finalists to visit the campus in late spring for allowance for overlap with Dale Hamel to ensure a smooth transition of leadership before his retirement in mid-October 2024.

Conversation ensued regarding the following topics:

- Whether potential candidates come from other agencies within the Commonwealth.
- The importance of a member of the Board of Trustees to serve on the search.

B. Student-in-the-Spotlight: Jillian Hansen

Jillian Hansen was introduced by Dr. Michael Harrison, chair of the Marketing Department and faculty athletic representative for Framingham State University the Massachusetts State College Athletic Conference.

Dr. Hanson introduced Jillian as a first-generation college student, Framingham State honors program student, and a member of two honor societies, Alpha Lambda Delta and Sigma Beta Delta. She has the highest GPA amongst all marketing majors and is double minoring in international business and business.

Jillian began by discussing the reasons why she chose to attend FSU, out of the other schools that she was accepted by. Among several things that FSU offered, Jillian mentioned that being able to work while attending school was very important to her. She also felt the proximity to Boston, without being in the city was important in her choosing to attend FSU. Jillian noted that her great grandmother, Leslie Harris was a student at Framingham State Teachers College, earning a degree in teaching in the 1950s. Her great grandmother often asked Jillian for pictures of the campus, as she recalled how beautiful it was, especially in the fall.

Jillian highlighted academic opportunities she was able to take advantage of while earning her degree. These included being able to study abroad in the Netherlands at Maastricht University in 2023. Part of her capstone project involved helping a startup from Canada, Green Light Analytical, in making a social media marketing plan, which led her group to be picked as the

winner of those presentations. Jillian was offered a position as the marketing intern at the FSU Entrepreneur Innovation Center.

Jillian noted that at FSU, the one word that really resonates with her is “community”. She began attending college in 2020, as a first-generation student, having “no idea what to expect”, and then the pandemic changed everything. Guidelines on where she was able to eat, live, and attend classes upended the traditional college experience. Yet, she was able to make close friends with students in the residence hall, where she lived and worked. She also found that faculty cared about student’s lives outside of the classroom, commenting that they would make sure that students were able to relate to what’s going on in the class, regardless of their major or their interests outside of the class. She felt that the faculty members teaching her classes went above and beyond their teaching responsibilities.

In closing, Jillian stated that during her time at FSU she has been able to connect with community members and people from different backgrounds that she might not otherwise have had the opportunity to meet other than at FSU, and thanked the trustees for their time and for listening to her speak about her experiences at Framingham State.

C. Reports

Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement Report

Jeffrey Coleman provided the following highlights from his report, pages 18 – 22:

- DEI Discussion with the BOT Executive Committee
- Workshops and presentations:
 - Administered the Intercultural Development Inventory Assessment to 35 Resident Assistants and facilitated a 2-hour workshop entitled, *Strengthening Resident Assistants’ Cultural Competency Skills* as part of the RA staff winter training.
 - Facilitated a 90-minute workshop entitled, *Antiracism Part III: Racial Justice on Campus: What It Looks Like and Feels Like* to 23 faculty and staff as part of the HR Professional Development Certificate Series.
- Martin Luther King Jr. Commemoration Events include the first annual Martin Luther King Jr. Commemoration Celebration with speaker Dr. Ilyasah Shabazz.
- Center for Inclusive Excellence (CIE) Fall 2023 End of Term Report, page 19
 - Innovations and improvements were highlighted:
 - Campus Ministry Office relocated to the CIE, with the Director of the CIE supervising campus ministers. A “Brother from the Mosque” joined the team of campus ministers. This collaborative effort between the Campus Ministry and CIE allowed us to expand religious and spiritual support for campus community.
 - Department Effectiveness
 - 88% of participants reported that they strongly agreed that the programming in the CIE helped them to shift cultural perspective and increase their cultural competency.

- 86% of the students who came through the CIE agreed that the experiences that they had in the center helped them to identify a sense of belonging within the University community.

Development and Alumni Relations Report

Eric Gustafson provided the following highlights from his report, pages 23 – 26:

- YTD, Development has raised nearly \$1.6M.
 - Notable gifts included an estate gift of \$20,000 toward an existing endowed scholarship, and a \$15,000 gift for a new endowed scholarship.
- Alumni engagement work continues in collaboration with departments across campus, from Admissions, Athletics, and University Police, to History, Political Science, and Sociology.
 - In partnership with Human Resources, an event for alumni who also work at FSU was held.
- Grants and sponsored programs, YTP for FY24 has secured \$407,957 in grant funding, with \$3,240,087 in pending applications.
- Danforth Art Museum is currently hosting three successful exhibitions, which close at the end of the month.
 - Artist talks with the exhibiting artists and their collaborators, as well as multimedia events, including two sold-out dance performances, were held.
 - The exhibits have received press coverage, including an article in *The Boston Globe*.
- Danforth Art School revenue is up 25% this fall. The winter session revenue was already up 17% year-over-year. Summer Arts registration opened on January 2, and there has already been more than \$100,000 in revenue process since registration began.

A brief conversation regarding legacy donations was held. Eric Gustafson commented that the program offers a good opportunity for the University, and that marketing efforts were being made to engage with individuals to further promote the program.

Eric Gustafson continued by summarizing information on the motion being presented, informing trustees of Joan Murtaugh's background as an educator and active alumna, as well as the numerous contributions Joan Murtaugh has made to the University. He noted that the approved motion will also require approval from the Board of Higher Education.

A motion to name the property located at 45 Adams Road that currently houses the Alumni and Advancement departments to the "Joan E. Murtaugh '61 Alumni Center" was moved by Diane Finch; Mariel Freve 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; Ryan Mikelis – yes; Claire Ramsbottom – yes;

—Motion approved

3.0 Student Trustee Report

Trustee Ryan Mikelis reported the following:

- Events honoring Martin Luther King Jr. were hosted by the Student Government Association (SGA).
- Currently seeking a new Diversity and Inclusion Officer for SGA.
- New baby changing stations were installed in Dwight Hall and Athletic Center restrooms.
- SGA will meet on February 6 to discuss the student government's budget for the upcoming academic year.

Conversation regarding student clubs on campus ensued from Trustee Finch asking if new clubs have been proposed and if so, how they were funded. Trustee Mikelis responded that several new student organizations have been proposed. He continued by presenting information on the process in which new clubs are developed and funded.

4.0 Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management/Student Experience Committee

Trustee Claire Ramsbottom reported the following topics were discussed in the January 10, 2024 joint Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management and Student Experience Committee meeting:

- Defining retention and persistence, and how the definitions are used at FSU, and how that fits into the strategic enrollment plan, page 4, *Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management/Student Experience, January 10, 2024 Meeting Book*.
- Essential questions for student success work:
 - How do we become a student ready campus without knowing basic data about our students?
 - How do we target interventions and supports where they are needed without specific data?
- Referencing Tina Brown McNair, Trustee Ramsbottom noted the author points out that in order to be a student ready university... all of the services and activities from Admissions to the Business Office to the classroom, and even to University Police, are intentionally designed to facilitate student progressive advancement.
 - Student ready universities are committed not only to student achievement, but also to organizational learning and institutional improvement.

Trustee Nancy Budwig presented a high-level overview of some of this enrollment work addressed in the committee presentations, which included the following:

- The holistic approach in which the discussion of persistence and retention focused on the same overarching goals with students at the center.
- Collecting and drawing data to ensure that members of the University and Academic Affairs are able to make informed decisions.
 - How data is reviewed and reported: enrollment, full-time student head count; the number of students who interact with university members via Starfish, the use of the software CourseDog.
- Ongoing work in response to the current marketing efforts for academic programs, based on the new strategic initiatives.

5.0 Compliance, Audit, and Risk (CAR) Committee

Marisel Freve reported the following information from the January 17, 2024 CAR Committee meeting:

- The current year internal risk survey results were reviewed:
 - The top three risks identified from the survey continue to be 1) staffing level and turnover, 2) student enrollment and retention, and 3) budget constraints.
 - Discussion was held regarding additional questions to be added to the survey in the future. Two topics were identified: 1) regarding ethics and if we feel we're an ethical institution, and 2) questions around diversity.
- Update on internal assessments detailed on page 9, *January 17, 2024 CAR Committee Meeting Book* were reviewed.
- Update on ITS initiatives and assessments included the following: pages 10 – 11, *January 17, 2024 CAR Committee Meeting Book*
 - Security Awareness Training Audit has been launched. The state Auditor's Office has indicated that they will continue the audit well into 2024.
 - Managed Detection and Response (MDR): After considerable testing, the University has selected Adlumin as our vendor of choice for our managed detection and response system.
 - FSU has acquired the licensing for the KnowBe4 cyber security training system.
 - Future initiatives include work around policy. New policies on the protection of systems, data, and internal control assessment.
- General Counsel's Report discussed the "Dear Colleague" letter, issued by the U.S. Department of Education, page 13, *January 17, 2024 CAR Committee Meeting Book*
 - The letter addressed first amendment rights and providing an educational environment free from harassment for all students.

Trustees engaged in conversation regarding the risk assessment survey results, and personnel. Trustee Foley asked if there was a recruitment strategy in place, and if it included the recruitment of international employees. Kim Dexter, responded that the University typically sponsors two to three individuals a year. These are generally faculty positions. Kim Dexter added that overall, positions are being filled fairly quickly, and are being filled with well qualified individuals. Much of the challenges around recruitment were ones that were not unique to the University. A larger conversation regarding staff turnover, recruitment, and retention, as well as employee morale was held.

6.0 Administration, Finance, and Technology Committee

Trustee Anthony Hubbard summarized topics covered in the January 9, Finance Committee meeting:

- Facilities condition assessment conducted by DCAM
- Budget planning for AY 24-25

- Report includes comparisons on financial aid; gaps in allocations
- Development of FY25 budget is in the early stages

Trustee Hubbard asked Dale Hamel to continue the report:

- Facilities conditions assessment summarized on pages 29 – 39
 - Used to inform local capital spending plans, as well as DCAM allocation of critical repair spending budget.
 - No major impact on the 5-year capital spending budget, however, decisions on the state level in terms of fair-share funding may be impacted.
- FY25 Budget Context reviewed trends challenges, and risks, pages 43 – 45
- FY23 Comparative Financial Ratios with Sister State Universities, pages 46 – 50
 - Update on where we are in FY24, and projected budget deficit, page 52
 - Provided perimeter for development of the FY25 budget, page 54
- Discussion of identification of highest impacting risk: downturn in state revenue, as the assumption of state revenue is used in the budget model.
 - FY24 GAA Budget vs Governor’s Budget in FY25, page 56
 - Three areas of fair share funding: additional financial aid, capital, and MassReconnect (in the community college sector).
 - Campus line item in FY24, increased 11% – 8% in salary increases and 3% in financial aid
 - Parameter for the FY25 formula funding was assumed at 2.7%; this year there was a reduction to 1% increase to campus line items.
 - House and Senate budget is pending.

Conversation continued regarding student aid, state appropriations, and the overall fiscal health of the University.

7.0 Chief of Staff, General Counsel, and Secretary to the Board of Trustees Report

Ann McDonald reported on the following:

- A. Cybersecurity Training
 - Cybersecurity training will be opened to include training for the trustees. ITS will be launching the training to trustees on February 1st.
- B. State Ethics Commission: Conflict of Interest Law Training and Acknowledgement
 - New process will include an annual acknowledgement requirement by trustees in alternate years with online training still required every other year.

8.0 New Business

Trustee Finch commented that she would like to have the report on RAMs 101 be presented at a future Student Experience Committee meeting. Trustee Ramsbottom agreed.

Trustee Ramsbottom added that in light of a national agenda to review accreditation, that she would like to have a better understanding of this, and have a conversation about the subject in an upcoming meeting.

9.0 Public Comment

Ann Johnson introduced herself as a faculty in the Nutrition and Health Studies, and the new chapter president of the MSCBA Union. She invited trustees to the Equity in Higher Education Policy Summit, which will be held on campus on February 1, 2024.

10.0 Adjourn Open Meeting

A motion to adjourn the public meeting was moved by Diane Finch; Anthony Hubbard 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; Ryan Mikelis – yes; Claire Ramsbottom – yes
—Motion approved

The meeting ended at 8:42 p.m.