



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

BOARD MEETING ■ SEPTEMBER 20, 2023 6:30 PM ■ MCCARTHY CENTER, ALUMNI ROOM & REMOTE

MINUTES

Chair Beth Casavant called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Before moving forward with the agenda for the evening, Chair Casavant recognized a sadness on the University campus with the loss of a student. She added that Djeila Barbosa's life has touched the community, reminding us of our obligation to support the students, and to acknowledge that student challenges go well beyond the classroom walls.

Chair Casavant continued by inviting Trustee Claire Ramsbottom, chair of the Student Experience Committee, and Student Trustee Ryan Mikelis to share additional information.

Trustee Ramsbottom reminded attendees of the Counseling Center resources which are available. Student Trustee Ryan Mikelis informed attendees that a candlelight vigil will take place on Thursday, September 21, to honor Djeila's memory.

Chair Casavant led a moment of quiet reflection for the memory of Djeila.

Roll Call

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

1.0 Chair's Report

- A. Consent agenda, pages 4 – 6
 - BOT Meeting Minutes: May 10, 2023, pages 7 – 16
 - BOT Retreat Meeting Minutes: May 24, 2023, pages 17 – 18
 - Personnel Actions, pages 19 – 23

A motion to approve the consent agenda was moved by Diane Finch; Kevin Foley seconded the motion.

*Indicates remote attendance.

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

Chair Casavant continued by reporting the following:

- A. Welcome to New Trustees and Administrators: Student Trustee and Deans
 - Ryan Mikelis, Student Trustee; Dr. Marilyn Cleary, Dean of Graduate and Continuing Education; Dr. T. Stores, Dean of Humanities introduced themselves.
- B. Open Trustee Position Status
 - Two current vacancies remain unfilled and three terms are expiring in March 2024.
 - The trustee nominating committee is scheduled to meet twice before the end of the calendar year.
 - Submission of trustee nominees will be forwarded to the committee for review on Monday, September 25.
- C. President Niemi’s First Year Report and Goals for FY 2023–2024, pages 24 – 34
 - Chair Casavant thanked President Nancy Niemi for completing a self-evaluation even though a formal evaluation was not required by the Board of Higher Education for the first year of the president’s term.
 - The report and goals were shared with the trustees for review in August.
- D. Charge to the Committees
 - Chair Casavant made the following charges to the standing committees in their reporting:
 - To include matters addressing antiracism and diversity equity and inclusion practices at the University.
 - To include current matters evidencing FSU students and faculty involvement in community engagement as part of their agendas.
- E. Executive Committee
 - Committee Update: in addition to the charge to the committees, an informal summary of REJI workshop was completed. A recommendation was made to review previously recorded materials, and two slides, which are included on pages 37 and 38, were discussed and highlighted. This information was offered as a guide for the Board to conduct their work with consideration of advancing DEI efforts at the Board level.
- F. Motion: Radio License 91.3 WDJM
 - Chair Casavant provided context for the motion:
 - Beginning June 30th, 2023, WDJM started a pause in terrestrial radio for one calendar year. The decision was made due to lack of student interest in “over the air” radio. Student interest has shifted to online streaming and podcasting.
 - Annual costs for terrestrial radio averages to be \$11,350. Additionally, major repairs and equipment upgrades would be required to maintain terrestrial/FCC regulations, which would cost a minimum of \$7,700. Moving to non-terrestrial platform, the

annual cost would be approximately \$7,500 and repairs and upgrades would not be required.

Conversation ensued, including whether the University would reserve the rights with the FCC for the 91.3 FM channel and call sign, and whether partial sale of the license was considered for additional revenue.

Counsel Ann McDonald responded that the license is suspended for a year beginning June 30, 2023, and would be due for renewal prior to that date, should it choose to retain the license. Regarding the partial sale of the license, due to limited range (4 miles) of the radio frequency, the option was not considered as there would be limited marketing incentive.

A motion to approve the temporary suspension in the terrestrial radio broadcast for WDJM for a period of one year, was made by Claire Ramsbottom; 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

2.0 President's Report

President Nancy Niemi presented the following updates:

A. Fall Start Up Activities

- Campus-wide BBQ picnic event welcoming incoming students and returning faculty and staff was held on September 5. The event was successful and well received by the full University community.
- Homecoming Weekend: September, 22 – 23, 2023

B. Summer Delegation of Authority Approvals

- Summary of actions taken over the summer months were reviewed, page 40.

C. Annual Report

- Highlighted the new format of the report, which provided key activities and impacts.

D. Strategic Planning

- Planning phase has begun.
- NECHE self-study preparation continues in preparation for the accreditation team campus visit in April 2024. Additionally, the strategic enrollment planning process will begin to wrap up in the fall with implementation already in progress. Both of these efforts will generate content that will inform the strategic planning process.
- Timeline will be outlined; the kick-off will take place in October.

E. Diversity, Inclusion and Community Engagement (DICE) Report

Jeffrey Coleman reported items detailed on pages 41 – 44 of the September 20, 2023 BOT meeting book.

Highlights included:

- DICE personnel and staffing updates, included the hiring of a new Center for Inclusive Excellence (CIE) Director, Program Coordinator, and Graduate Assistant; faculty have also been appointed as Research Grant Program Coordinator, and Faculty Fellow Program Coordinator, page 41.
- New DICE initiatives include: the Community Incident Intervention Team, developing processes and procedures to responding to incidents; the Task Force on Community Safety and Belonging developing concrete strategies to address community safety and belonging on campus, page 43.
- CIE new initiatives include: the Cultural Programming Council, which will partner with student groups that require additional financial support for projects that reflect the mission of the department; Diversity Peer Influencer will consist of student leaders hired to assist in efforts to promote DEI, antiracism, and social justice, page 43.
- Council on Diversity and Inclusion (CDI) initiatives included the awarding of over \$15K to 20 different DEI initiatives offered by University staff and faculty, page 43 – 44.

Conversation followed the report including description of a variety of planned activities and resources available to the trustees and broader FSU community in support of DEI efforts.

Jeffrey Coleman was further asked whether a DEI/antiracism dashboard is used and if it may be accessible to BOT committees to assist with their charge. He responded that he has provided the antiracism framework from the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education in his work with others at the University.

President Niemi added that DEI is one of the baseline markers for the measurement of a healthy university. She added that the required data is currently being gathered for each of the markers, and will share the information with the Board in the future.

F. Development and Alumni Relations Report

Eric Gustafson highlighted the following from his report, page 45 – 47

- Fundraising efforts finished ahead of last year – YTD \$800K.
 - Endowment Incentive Program has been included in the legislative FY 2024 budget.
- Upcoming events include the Cape Cod Clambake, the hosting of a book signing for Helen Heineman, and the Swiacki Children’s Literature Festival event.
- Grants \$4.5M and additional \$5M in anticipated grants, a complete list of grants and awards are included on page 47.
- The Danforth Art Museum attendance has been excellent, with over 2,000 visitors in attendance during the summer alone. Upcoming exhibitions include the annual juried show, as well as three new exhibitions.
- The Art School: revenue has increased by 11%. Will be offering a new comic book class in association with the Framingham Public Library.

G. Student-in-the- Spotlight: Jennifer Melara Valle

Dr. Amy Johnston, Assistant Professor of Earth and Environmental Sciences, introduced Jennifer Melara Valle.

Jennifer is a senior, majoring in environment, society, and sustainability. Jennifer came to Framingham State University as a dual enrollment student who graduated from Keefe Tech High School, in Framingham. She is a Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipient, and her heritage has been an important part of her student life. She is also a first-generation university student, paving the way for her brother, who is a freshman this year at FSU.

While Jennifer has accomplished a great deal during her time at the University, she highlighted her work as a peer mentor, as well as the opportunities she had, and knowledge gained in the two research assistantships she had at MIT (UG Research for Geo Sciences for Under Represented Groups Program) and Princeton University (Modeling and Earth Systems).

When asked what she would say to prospective students interested in STEM that would encourage them to enroll in the University. Jennifer responded that the small class size allowed her to get individual attention and offered an opportunity to get to know her professors. Additionally, she appreciated all of the support she received from professors and university administrators as a first-generation student.

3.0 Student Trustee Report

Trustee Ryan Mikelis reported the following:

A. Updates

- New Student Orientation and Week of Welcome
 - Through his personal experiences as an Orientation Leader, Trustee Mikelis shared extensive information, beginning with the purpose of new student orientation, to the events held during Black and Gold Beginnings.
 - The Welcome picnic was very well received by students.
- Student Engagement on the Increase
 - Student Work Fair on September 7 demonstrated level of high student interest and engagement.
 - SGA Open Forum swearing in: two returning senators, fully staffed Executive-board, additional 8 senators are expected to be sworn in soon.
 - Anticipated strong turnout for upcoming homecoming event

Trustee Nancy Budwig asked Trustee Mikelis for his perspective as a commuter student, asking if he felt that commuter students are able to engage on campus with student activities, and if they are encouraged and given opportunity to be involved with campus activities and student organizations.

He responded that it is always a concern that activities are made as accessible as possible for the commuter student. He noted that a segment of orientation was specifically created to address the needs and interests of the commuter population. The hiring of commuter students as orientation leaders, as well as providing on campus housing for commuter students during orientation was provided in hopes to encourage more engagement on campus for commuter

students. Additionally, Trustee Mikelis suggested possible changes to some student organization meeting times, to better accommodate commuter students.

4.0 Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management Committee

Trustee Nancy Budwig reported the following from the Academic Affairs Committee meeting on September 5, 2023:

A. Committee Report

- With new members and administrators joining the committee, introductions were made and the charge of the committee was reviewed.
- Review of the previous year's work: addressed personnel cycles, and reviewed new data driven processes for hiring; review of Centers, page 51.
- This year's Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management Committee will focus on strategic planning. Areas of focus include: enrollment, student readiness, and community and regional engagement, page 52.
 - Improvement of data access and faculty line request processing and scheduling.
- The strategic enrollment management planning process is now transitioning to strategic enrollment management, page 53.
- Ongoing challenges to UG enrollment, page 55.
- Current enrollment data reviewed, page 57.
 - Undergraduate enrollment of first time, full time students is up 2% from last year.
 - Overall decline is at 6% compared to 10-11%, year over year.
 - Admissions goals to focus on yield and melt, page 58
 - Yield went up by 2% and melt was reduced as well.

Trustee Budwig concluded her report by noting that the committee will continue to monitor the metrics associated with enrollment, but commend to the community that made the report possible.

Trustee Budwig invited Kristen Porter-Utley and Iris Godes to comment. Conversation was had regarding the work to be anticipated for the coming year, which includes the launching of a new website and promotional and branding materials, as well as a new communication plans, that speaks to our prospective students in a personal, relevant, and strategic manner.

Trustee Claire Ramsbottom asked what the reaction to the new branding has been. President Niemi responded that the overall response was positive and has received many comments about its boldness and freshness.

Iris Godes commented that the response from the Admissions staff was very positive, describing it as active, positive, and bold. She added that it has given them a boost, and they appreciate the investment that is being made to enrollment efforts.

Conversation returned to recruitment and enrollment and the positive nature of the efforts being made collaboratively across departments.

In closing Iris Godes informed trustees that she would provide a list of enrollment funnel definitions.

5.0 Administration, Finance, and Technology Committee

Trustee Anthony Hubbard reported on the following from the September 7, committee meeting:

A. FY 2024 Budget Update

- Outlined initiatives that impacted the budget discussion, page 59

Trustee Hubbard invited Dale Hamel to further provide context to the update.

Dale Hamel reported the following:

- Enrollment was slightly higher than originally projected.
- State appropriation came in as expected, as did performance funding.
- Additional fair-share funding for one-time capital expenses was included.
- \$2M for state universities for student services, through an RFP process was included.
- The Endowment Incentive Program was extended for another year.

Trustee Lino Covarrubias asked Dale Hamel if there were any earmarks from the Commonwealth included in the budget, and if so, what is the amount. He responded that there is a \$1.5M capital project for the Warren Center that obtain matching American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding, but that there were no earmarks for University operations.

B. FY2023 Independent Audit of Financial Statements Delegation Approval

A motion to approve the delegation of authority to the Board of Trustees Finance Committee (the "Finance Committee") and the Board of Trustees Compliance, Audit and Risk Committee (the "C.A.R. Committee") to review and approve the FY2023 Independent Audit of Financial Statements to meet the Office of the State Comptroller's deadline of October 16, 2023 for submittal, was moved by Kevin Foley; Diane Finch 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

6.0 Compliance, Audit & Risk (CAR) Committee

Trustee Mariel Freve reported the following from the September 6, 2023 CAR Committee meeting:

A. Committee Update

- Enterprise Risk Management report included the following:
 - Update on external audits, which are close to completion:
 - Veteran Affairs Compliance Survey
 - Cyber security awareness training: State Auditor will be conducting an audit on policies and procedures on the cybersecurity training of employees.
 - Policy development and creating a digital policy repository

- Work is ongoing and good progress is being made in the setup and updating of the repository.
 - Internal Assessments: There was an amendment to cash receipts audit. Progress was made in all of the management resolutions, follow ups have been made.
 - Open 2023 follow ups include accounts payable, and banking and treasury deposits.
 - 2024 will focus on physical accessibility, transportation and safety training and maintenance, accident incident reporting, safety conditions and training to OSHA standards, grant administration and compliance, and a follow up to common origination and disbursement (COD), a follow up for enrollment management from previous years.
- IT Security Updates included:
 - Audit/assessments: Critical work was undertaken to review full remote access assessment.
 - Unnecessary access was terminated.
 - Multi Factor Authentication (MFA) for students has been launched and is going well.
 - Successful cyber security insurance policy renewal.
 - Other initiatives include policy controls and access management.

Trustee Freve invited Counsel McDonald to update the Trustees regarding collective bargaining agreements with the unions.

Counsel McDonald reported the following:

- Collective bargaining with all four unions has progressed with tentative agreements. They are yet to be ratified.
- Division of Graduate and Continuing Education (DGCE) union has begun negotiations.

Trustee Freve concluded by reporting on the Move-it data breach used by the National Student Clearinghouse.

- No impact to the University to report; but no specific confirmation was received.

6.0 Student Experience Committee

Trustee Claire Ramsbottom reported the following from the September 6, 2023 Student Experience Committee meeting:

A. Committee Report, pages 61 – 66

- The committee reviewed the charge and focused on the areas that are impacted by the integrated committee, page 62.
 - Plans for the year: topics to address throughout the academic year has been established. The new format will invite guests to present on specific areas, and highlight work conducted around DEI efforts.
- During the September 6 meeting, guests LaDonna Bridges and Tanya Milette reported on the work of the Center for Academic Success and Achievement (CASA).
 - There were 156 student intakes over the summer, page 64.

- Top areas of need/concerns include: acuity of mental health concerns, managing student needs vs. expectations, accessible course content.
- Residence life reviewed 93 requests for housing accommodations for the fall, page 65
 - Changed capacity for housing to 1,370 beds, 300 less than last year. As of September 6, housing was at 98% capacity.
- Summer Orientation reformatted to better meet student needs.
- New Police Chief: Joseph Cecchi
 - Chief Cecchi introduced himself and identified initiatives for the future which included collaborating with SGA and the CIE.
- Public safety: Active Attack Integrated Response Training held on the University campus; the Emergency Response Committee has been reactivated.
- RRC Food and Amenity Pantry: 169 hours over the summer; 172 visits; 88% identified as BIPOC, page 65.
- Veterans Affairs: partnering with the Department of Veterans Affairs Bedford Healthcare system – one of eight higher education institutions in the state participating in the program.

In conclusion, Trustee Ramsbottom encouraged trustees to further review information included in the committee materials.

8.0 New Business

Lino Covarrubias suggested the reading of the Land Acknowledgement prior to the start of each Board Meeting.

9.0 Public Comment

There was no public comment.

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 8:44 p.m.