MINUTES
STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA
BOARD OF GOVERNORS
INNOVATION AND ONLINE COMMITTEE
March 26, 2024

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1. Call to Order and Opening Remarks

   Chair Ed Haddock convened the meeting at 1:06 p.m. on March 26, 2024, with the following committee members present: Aubrey Edge, Jack Hitchcock, Charles Lydecker, Craig Mateer, and Amanda Phalin. A quorum was established.

2. Approval of Committee Meeting Minutes

   Governor Phalin moved that the Committee approve the minutes of the meeting held on January 24, 2024. Governor Edge seconded the motion, and the members concurred.

3. Academic Innovation: The Role of Artificial Intelligence in University Teaching

   Chair Haddock opened the session by introducing the focus of the meeting: artificial intelligence (AI), which furthers the committee's interest in learning about and promoting academic innovation in the SUS. He said that the committee is pleased to host three distinguished SUS faculty members who will discuss their use of artificial intelligence and related strategies to improve teaching and student interactions. Chair Haddock invited Dr. Joel Davis, Clinical Professor in Information Systems & Operations Management at the University of Florida, to begin the session.

   Dr. Joel Davis discussed his journey from business consulting to academia and addressed a significant gap in the business world's adoption of AI. He observed that this gap isn't due to limitations in technology, but rather a deficiency in skills and effective adoption strategies. Dr. Davis's goal at UF is to ensure that students and faculty not only understand AI but can integrate it into various disciplines, reflecting UF's mission to expose students to AI in a way that suits their field of study.

   Highlighting the transformative potential of generative AI in education, Dr. Davis addressed concerns about cheating with tools like ChatGPT but sees generative AI as a resource for personalized tutoring and a catalyst for rethinking traditional assessments. He suggested that students should use AI tools to enhance their

learning, with generative AI serving as a constant, accessible tutor. This approach can allow faculty to support students wherever and whenever they need assistance, creating a more flexible and adaptive learning environment.

Dr. Paul Marty, a professor at the Florida State University School of Information provided a brief description of how artificial intelligence (AI) has evolved from early expert systems to sophisticated generative AI tools like ChatGPT and Microsoft Copilot. He believes AI is in an exponential growth phase, transforming both higher education and the workforce. Drawing a parallel with the early internet, Dr. Marty likens the release of ChatGPT in November 2022 to the launch of the first graphical web browser in the 1990s which signaled a significant shift in technology's impact on education and industry. He reflected on the dramatic adoption rate of AI among students: none had heard of ChatGPT in January 2023 but by March every student was using it in some capacity.

Dr. Marty also recognized that faculty have been slower to adapt, prompting FSU to offer workshops to help faculty and staff understand and incorporate AI tools. The positive response from faculty suggests that AI can revolutionize education, much like the internet did for online learning.

Dr. Marty advocated for integrating AI into the curriculum to foster more meaningful assignments, higher expectations, and a focus on critical and creative thinking while acknowledging that this transition will require significant effort to identify which skills should be retained by humans and which can be augmented by AI. He concluded by emphasizing the importance of teaching students to use AI ethically and effectively, thereby preparing them for a workforce where AI is pervasive.

Dr. Sherry Robinson, Chair and professor in the University of Central Florida Department of Writing and Rhetoric, discussed the use of generative AI in classroom settings. She emphasized a student-centered approach to technology, believing it prepares students for the rapidly changing workforce and society.

Dr. Robinson has integrated ChatGPT into her courses, encouraging students to explore AI while building teaching portfolios and writing assignments. She focuses on three key areas: the "human in the loop," workforce development, and AI literacy, and focuses on students' preparation for success in the workforce.

Dr. Robinson discussed AI literacy, stressing the importance of teaching students to use AI ethically. UCF is part of a multi-campus partnership that received a federal grant to study chatbots and their impact on student success, illustrating the broader implications of AI in education. Dr. Robinson concluded by stating that a priority goal of UCF is to graduate students who understand the ethical and responsible use of generative AI in their careers and personal lives.

In response to Governor Lydecker's question, Dr. Robinson described her collaborative effort to decrease the gap in AI literacy between faculty and students by implementing tools that are already in use by other university faculty, such as technologies and workshops. Dr. Davis responded by pointing out the challenge of tracking and sharing best practices used by faculty across the 12 universities and recommended identifying and disseminating these undocumented, behind-the-scenes practices.

In response to a question by Governor Levine, Dr. Marty recommended the implementation of AI within every major program in the SUS as part of the core. Governor Hitchcock added that the universities have yet to catch up, asserting that university programs and classes should be showcasing what can be achieved with AI resources. He advocated for the widespread implementation of AI in every class across the 12 universities, citing its potential to enhance learning and serve as a personalized tutor to address individual student weaknesses.

Board Chair Lamb identified the need for the Board to implement AI in the upcoming Strategic Plan so that the SUS can remain the #1 System in the US. Chair Haddock commended the presenters for an outstanding presentation. He believes that AI competencies will give students an advantage in their careers compared to peers who have been working longer but may not have the same depth of AI knowledge.

4. Outstanding Online Student

Chair Haddock reported that the Committee continues to recognize the accomplishments of individual online students at our universities and introduced Ms. Aubrey Mys who will describe her journey to complete a University of Florida undergraduate degree in psychology and sociology with the support of the UF Online program.

Ms. Mys is a recent graduate of the UF Online program and attributed her success to the faculty and support staff in the program. Considering family and work responsibilities, Ms. Mys stressed that the program's flexibility and support enabled her to complete the degree. She described how she remained active in campus leadership positions including a student ambassador position and was recognized as a member of the UF Hall of Fame. Ms. Mys is currently a student at the UF Levin College of Law.

Chair Haddock thanked Aubrey and congratulated her on her academic achievements. Following concluding remarks, Chair Haddock adjourned the meeting at 2:05 p.m.

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Edward Haddock, Chair

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Jon Rogers, Ph.D.
Assistant Vice Chancellor