

MINUTES
STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA
BOARD OF GOVERNORS
The Tampa Edition
September 17th, 2024
Duration approx. 1.5 hours of discussion

Governor Jones began the discussion by reflecting on the System's goals, ranking progression, and the success of long-term plans for each university.

A board member reflected on the board's goal for research dollars and explained its importance in identifying the return on investment on research efforts. Another board member discussed student well-being on campus, saying students need to feel part of a village of support.

Chair Lamb gave the floor to Governor Jones to begin Strategic Planning discussions. Governor Jones aimed to speak broadly about the State University System (SUS). He explained that the goal of maintaining the System's status as the number one Public Education System could not be as simple as adhering to previous practices but just increasing metrics. The Board must think long-term when setting goals.

Emily Sikes then led the discussion, focusing on the current plan and planning for the future. She provided a background on the development of our current plan and discussed how the System has come a long way. The expanding pool of student success statistics, faculty excellence, and research and innovation are at the heart of the System's high rankings. She argued that this proved the board's current plan was working. She then asked the board to reflect on whether the metrics were where they ultimately wanted them.

Governor Phalin commented on the marked shift in student mental health, and she had observed an influx of students with a need for accommodation in the classroom. She emphasized that more students today are struggling with anxiety or other mental health issues in academic settings.

Governor Silagy commented on reasons for Florida students to remain in the state for higher education, including university ranking, location, and tuition cost. He stated that the Florida System was the top system due to tuition subsidization. Governor Silagy inquired how this would make the System look six years from now.

Governor Lydecker stated that the biggest weakness in the private sector was adequate money for research and development. If a university successfully enrolls students whose academic goals and interests align with the university's, their success will call for a larger budget. He also believes that Florida should charge more for out-of-state tuition by extension of these ideals.

Governor Silagy warned the board that natural economic fluctuations would eventually lead to the legislature not being as generous with the budgets as in recent years.

Moving forward, Emily Sikes facilitated a discussion around some of the potential strategic areas that were discussed by the Steering Committee.

A. Brand: Building a Brand to Tell Our Story

The board discussed and entertained the idea of branding the SUS, but ultimately determined the undertaking would be costly and unrealistic due to various Florida universities already having personal brands that had evolved over many decades. Yet, some members argued that fitting the universities to a single brand could create a Florida powerhouse once well-established.

The Board discussed a strategy for building the brand and visibility of the System to both private and public stakeholders on a national scale, highlighting Florida's ranking as a top state for higher education.

The Board conversed about the importance of distinguishing the System and its strengths from competing public and private higher education institutions.

B. System Coordination: Leveraging the Power of 12 Universities as 1

The Board discussed a strategy for System coordination, which includes combining the best practices from each university to maximize efficiency in terms of securing mega partnerships, using technology to solve problems, promoting operational excellence, and addressing Florida and global challenges.

A board member mentioned forming a large team representative of the System to generate and evaluate big ideas. This initiative could help identify commonalities among institutions and the appropriate resources to achieve the System's strategic goals. The Board talked about the potential for creating a System Council for operational excellence to identify areas in which the System will negotiate with vendors.

Additionally, the Board conversed about the potential for implementing unified software and technological systems across the System to enhance data collection and sharing. One example mentioned was the adoption of a system-wide license for electronic notebook technology. A member emphasized that this could be essential for improving the System's research capabilities in securing National Institute of Health (NIH) grants.

The Board identified the advantages of forming a major partnership with an industry partner across multiple universities to efficiently manage shared resources, personnel, internships, job placements, and research activities.

A board member mentioned an idea for creating potential financial incentives for System collaboration in cases where the decisions develop efficiencies.

C. Industry Strategy

The Board emphasized the need to expand industry partnerships within the System to give graduates more competitive job opportunities and to ensure businesses that System graduates are prepared to thrive in real-world situations.

The Board mentioned that it is crucial to identify the types of value the System can add to corporations.

The Board conversed about the need to expand internship opportunities System-wide to incentivize student success. Students who complete job internships are more likely to receive job offers in those corporations and are less likely to be unemployed.

The Board noted that creating an industry outreach unit within the Board office could help coordinate strategic partnerships and internships, leading to greater success for students and businesses.

The Board highlighted the need to enhance career networking and internship pathways by integrating best practices from individual institutions into a unified strategy for the entire System.

The Board emphasized recruiting talented staff for career and support services within the System that are connected with industry partners.

D. Superpowers: Top 25/Top 5/Top 1 & Shared Centers of Excellence

The Board discussed the idea that each university should identify its key strengths and work towards achieving national and global recognition in its areas of expertise, aiming for the top 10, top 25, or even number one rankings.

The Board considered that discipline-specific rankings may be more reliable and meaningful than national rankings in identifying a university's areas of expertise.

The Board identified areas of expertise should emphasize outcomes, including the quality of graduates, faculty performance, and the institution's impact on industry and society. The need to consider program duplication across institutions was mentioned to maintain focus and avoid inefficiencies. Another board member indicated that each university should leverage their areas of expertise with at least one industry partner to support its strategic goals related to career development and internships. The Board highlighted that each superpower must align with the university's brand to improve visibility to industry partners.

Following the discussion around these areas, Emily Sikes asked for items that were missed.

The first item mentioned was about access and demand. The Board emphasized the

need to balance access and demand, considering admission trends for in state and out-of-state students and their impacts on System planning, metrics, and strategic growth.

The Board also shared concerns about national trends, such as the decline in high school graduates and corporations no longer requiring four-year degrees for high-paying jobs.

The Board emphasized the need for strategic adjustments to ensure that System demand remains competitive while providing affordable, high-quality education showcasing each university's strengths and valuable programs.

Another item mentioned was regarding university endowment management and investment policies, which can reduce financial loss and support effective strategic planning for student scholarships and other university needs.

A final item mentioned was regarding the data for faculty awards.

Closing Remarks

The Board outlined the next steps in the strategic planning process, including reviewing objectives, key results, and metrics and collecting feedback from both internal and external stakeholders.

The Board will have further updates in October, with a focus on faculty excellence and ensuring feedback plays a key role in refining the 2030 Strategic Plan.

Brian Lamb, Board Chair

Ryan Ford, Policy Associate