

MINUTES
STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA
BOARD OF GOVERNORS
ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH EXCELLENCE COMMITTEE
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
March 26, 2024

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<https://thefloridachannel.org/videos/3-26-24-board-of-governors-meeting/>

1. Call to Order and Opening Remarks.

Vice Chair Lydecker convened the meeting on March 26, 2024, at 03:36 p.m., with the following members present: Governors Bell Barnett, Edge, Jones, Levine, Oliva, and Silagy. A quorum was established.

2. Minutes of the Committee Meeting

Vice Chair Lydecker requested a motion to approve the January 24, 2024, committee meeting minutes. Governor Jones moved to approve, Board Vice Chair Levine seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

3. State University System Research and Innovation Dashboard

Vice Chair Lydecker emphasized that the System Research and Innovation Dashboard update included lots of good news. He explained that in 2016, the Board approved a 19-metric research and innovation dashboard to document the System's progress towards realizing a \$3 billion research expenditure goal and achieving national and international prominence in research. The dashboard includes metrics that quantify research activity and growth in the categories of Research Contracts and Grants, Innovation, People, and Return on Investment.

Vice Chair Lydecker recognized Ms. Emily Sikes, Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, to provide the update.

Ms. Sikes explained the history of the \$3 billion research goal, which originated in 2019 when the Board's strategic plan goals were updated. She stated that in 2019, research expenditures were anticipated to be approximately \$2.6 billion by 2025. The \$3 billion goal was an aspirational goal set by the Board Chair at the time, Ned Lautenbach. The Board and universities have consistently emphasized the goal in recent years. Ms. Sikes expressed that the System is very close to the goal and attributed the success to significant improvements in research expenditures in the last year. She explained that research expenditures lag a year behind and that the \$3 billion goal will be surpassed once the 2025 Strategic Plan runs its course.

Board Chair Lamb recalled the initial conversations where Board Vice Chair Levine proposed the \$3 billion goal and the Board's uncertainty about reaching the goal. He expressed that he was enthusiastic about the trajectory of the System and excited that each institution was contributing to meeting the metric. Chair Lamb noted that it's an excellent time to review the \$3 billion figure again because he feels the System could do more. He explained that the System's performance is the primary reason for the tailwinds in national rankings, the System's brand, and its impact on the workforce in Florida.

Board Vice Chair Levine elaborated that the committee was formed by the Board Chair at the time, Ned Lautenbach, and he appreciated the opportunity to serve when the initial goals were being established. At the time, initial conversations were centered around growing research, and he believes that conversations going forward should be about the System's efforts around commercialization. He said planning for the next strategic plan should include topics such as translating research to commercialization and how those translations result in job and revenue growth for the state. Board Vice Chair Levine said that the Board had not had good visibility into what each institution has been doing to commercialize research. He stated that current legislators, future legislators, and governors will find enormous value in the System if it can demonstrate the positive economic benefits of university research commercialization.

Ms. Sikes added that she believes the research goal was met because of the Board's focus and the investments from Governor DeSantis and the Florida Legislature to help universities recruit and retain high-quality, world-class faculty. She also mentioned that research collaborations have also skyrocketed. She said universities have been working together to secure research funding for the System rather than competing for the same grants.

Ms. Sikes stated that the numbers can be dissected in many different ways but emphasized the successes behind the numbers. For example, the System continues to be nationally competitive in the number of patents awarded annually. The dashboard also looks at return on investment, such as the number of jobs created due to research and the economic impact of state and federal dollars awarded to universities for meaningful research. Ms. Sikes said she believes the dashboard's innovation and return on investment metrics could be stressed more in the System's strategic plan. Across the System, critical research continues to make groundbreaking discoveries that are changing the lives of Floridians, from cancer treatments to helping individuals recover from strokes, to research on the Florida coastline, to working with the military, and more.

Vice Chair Lydecker thanked all university leadership and faculty for the outstanding results in this year's research dashboard.

4. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

Vice Chair Lydecker adjourned the meeting at 03:44 p.m.

Charles Lydecker, Vice Chair

Mariela Ramirez,
Intern, Academic and Student Affairs