

MINUTES  
STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA  
BOARD OF GOVERNORS  
ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE  
October 30, 2024

*Video or audio archives of the meetings of the Board of Governors and its committees are accessible at:*

<https://thefloridachannel.org/videos/10-30-24-florida-board-of-governors-meeting-part-1/>

1. Call to Order and Opening Remarks

Chair Cerio convened the meeting at 10:03 a.m. with the following Governors present: Governors Cerio, Brinkman, Diaz, Frost, Haddock, and Phalin. A quorum was established.

2. Minutes of Committee Meeting

Chair Cerio requested a motion to approve the September 18, 2024, committee meeting minutes. Governor Phalin moved to approve, Governor Brinkman seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

3. 2024 Intellectual Diversity Survey Results Update

Chair Cerio stated that Florida Statutes require an annual assessment of intellectual freedom and viewpoint diversity of faculty, students, and staff to be conducted at each institution and that the surveys be compiled and the results published by the Board of Governors. Chair Cerio commented that the Board of Governors and the Florida College System collaborated to develop and administer the survey to students and employees. He recognized Chancellor Ray Rodrigues to comment on the survey.

Chancellor Rodrigues noted that this is the second annual survey, the first of which was conducted in 2022. The first survey had a participation rate of 2.5% and yielded statistically invalid results. He stated that his office consulted with Dr. Samuel J. Abrams, a leading expert in viewpoint diversity and Professor of Politics at Sarah Lawrence College and Senior Fellow with the American Enterprise Institute, to assist with the 2024 survey.

Chancellor Rodrigues provided examples from the 2022 assessment and highlighted recommendations Dr. Abrams provided to improve the 2024 survey process. Recommendations included the timing of when the survey will be distributed in the semester, communication methods used to reach students about the survey, and incentives to improve survey participation. Chancellor Rodrigues remarked that the 2024 survey had a 14.53% participation rate. Chancellor Rodrigues thanked the university presidents for contributing bookstore gift cards valued at \$500 each, which were used to incentivize students to complete the

survey and were awarded to students through a drawing process. He also thanked Dr. Abrams for volunteering his time and expertise and recognized him to present an overview of the survey results.

Dr. Abrams provided information on the scope of the State University System (SUS) 2024 Intellectual Diversity Survey. He presented the aggregated data by categories of partisanship and ideology, views of expression and speech on campuses, how viewpoint diversity works on campuses, and how cancel culture may affect campuses. He further separated the results into findings related to students, faculty, and staff, comparing SUS results to national data. Dr. Abrams illustrated that while there is room for improvement in some areas, the SUS is not behind the national average on any of the benchmarks presented in the survey, and overall, Florida is equivalent to or exceeds the national average.

Chair Cerio noted the importance of the 2024 Intellectual Diversity Survey being a statistically valid benchmark for future surveys and the importance of the survey for including and protecting faculty, staff, and students.

Governor Phalin reiterated that the 2024 survey was greatly improved from the 2022 survey. She commented that moving forward, more consideration should be given to some of the concepts in the survey to ensure it is capturing what is intended to be captured. Governor Phalin provided examples of wave analysis and its potential effects on survey results and requested more comprehensive definitions to be included in the survey for the words "protest" and "cancel culture." She added that a distinction between the concepts of cancellation of comments, words and ideas, free speech, and accountability should also be included.

Governor Levine expressed concern about the findings related to students reporting they believe it is okay to block other students from participating in campus events. Chair Cerio asked Dr. Abrams to elaborate on the finding. Dr. Abrams noted the issues raised by Governors Phalin and Levine are valid and should be reviewed and suggested that holding First Amendment seminars may help educate and provide accountability to students concerning First Amendment rights and limitations.

Governor Brinkman emphasized students' rights to protest and provided examples of campus conversations he has heard among students that included differing definitions of the term "protest." He noted that clarifying the definition would help remove varying interpretations among students.

Governor Phalin added that a definition of the term "block" could also have varying interpretations and reiterated the importance of providing definitions of terms in the survey.

#### 4. Academic Program Requests

##### A. Ph.D. Aerospace Engineering, CIP 14.0201, Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University and Florida State University

Chair Cerio recognized Dr. Lynn Nelson, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Innovation, to provide an overview of a request from Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU) and Florida State University (FSU) to implement a joint Ph.D. in Aerospace Engineering.

Dr. Nelson reported that the proposed program is a Program of Strategic Emphasis and would be offered by the joint FAMU and FSU College of Engineering. She noted that the program would be funded through Education and General (E&G) funds and contracts and grants. The universities would charge the currently approved tuition rates for resident and non-resident students based on the respective institution. Dr. Nelson reported that the universities indicated that there is student demand for the program. The program is aligned with occupations such as aerospace engineers, engineering managers, and faculty, which are all projected to grow significantly over the next eight years.

Chair Cerio requested a motion to approve the proposed Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University Ph.D. in Aerospace Engineering, CIP 14.0201, at the currently approved tuition rate of \$405.67 per credit hour for resident students and \$1,022.00 per credit hour for non-resident students, with a program implementation date of fall 2025. Governor Phalin moved to approve, Governor Brinkman seconded, and the motion passed.

Chair Cerio requested a motion to approve the proposed Florida State University Ph.D. in Aerospace Engineering, CIP 14.0201, at the currently approved graduate tuition rate of \$479.32 per credit hour for resident students and \$1,110.72 per credit hour for non-resident students, with a program implementation date of fall 2025. Governor Frost moved to approve, Governor Phalin seconded, and the motion passed.

##### B. Ph.D. Microbiology and Cell Science Self Supporting Track, CIP 26.0503, University of Florida

Chair Cerio recognized Dr. Nelson to provide an overview of the University of Florida's request for a self-supporting online track in the existing approved Microbiology and Cell Science Ph.D. program.

Dr. Nelson reported that the University of Florida is proposing an online track of a Ph.D. in Microbiology and Cell Science, an existing approved program, with a concentration in Microbial and Cellular Data Science. The university is requesting that the online program be funded with self-supporting tuition and no state funds. Dr. Nelson remarked that per Board of Governors Regulation 8.002 on self-supporting tuition rate programs, universities may request to offer graduate-level degree programs as self-supporting programs if the program meets specific criteria. She reported that this request meets the required criteria outlined in the regulation and requires approval by the Board as this is a Ph.D. program that was previously approved for E&G funding. Dr. Nelson noted that for resident students, the proposed self-supporting program will charge the same tuition rate as the currently approved graduate tuition rate for E&G programs and will charge a lower tuition rate for non-resident students than for the currently approved graduate tuition for non-resident students in the E&G programs.

Chair Cerio requested a motion to approve the online track of the Ph.D. in Microbiology and Cell Science, CIP 26.0503, at the University of Florida as a self-supporting program with a graduate tuition rate of \$488.73 per credit hour for resident students and \$600.00 per credit hour for non-resident students, with a program implementation date of spring 2025. He continued by stating that requests to increase these tuition rates would need to come before the Board for approval. Governor Phalin moved to approve, Governor Frost seconded, and the motion passed.

## 5. Academic and Student Affairs Updates

### A. Council for Student Affairs (CSA)

Dr. Larry Faerman, Chair of the Council of Student Affairs, provided an update on recent activities. He reported that State University System senior student affairs officers have met biweekly during the fall 2024 semester, working on issues surrounding the impact of the hurricanes on students and universities, planning and implementing homecoming events, and completing the fall semester. Dr. Faerman commented that several universities reported larger incoming first-year classes for the fall semester, which have generated more student participation on campuses and increased the need for additional student housing. Dr. Faerman also reported that hazing prevention efforts continued across all campuses. He commented that each university supports Hazing Prevention Week and that across the System, more than 40,000 students completed hazing prevention education through AliveTek, a statewide software platform, between September 2023 and August 2024.

### B. Florida Student Association (FSA)

Governor John Brinkman, Chair of the Florida Student Association, provided an overview of recent activities, which included plans for a lobbying day in Tallahassee and launching a campaign reminder for students of the U.S. election. Governor Brinkman reported that the reminders include information about voting dates and early voting. He added that at

the University of Florida, 1,851 students registered to receive voter reminders, resulting in high numbers of students participating in early voting.

C. Advisory Council of Faculty Senates (ACFS)

Governor Amanda Phalin, Chair of the Advisory Council of Faculty Senates, provided an update on recent activities. Governor Phalin reported that faculty senates across the System are working to improve faculty environments on campuses. She also noted that some universities are creating new academic program majors that meet workforce demand areas, developing and implementing AI policies, and creating public faculty recognition programs.

6. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

Having no further business, Chair Cerio adjourned the meeting at 10:49 a.m.

---

Tim Cerio, Chair

---

Catherine Oakley  
Director, Academic and Student Affairs