

MINUTES
STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA
BOARD OF GOVERNORS
ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH EXCELLENCE COMMITTEE
January 30, 2025

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<https://thefloridachannel.org/videos/1-30-25-florida-board-of-governors-meeting/>

1. Call to Order and Opening Remarks.

Vice Chair Lydecker convened the meeting at 9:45 a.m. with the following Governors present: Bell Barnett, Edge, Good, Jones, Levine, Lydecker, and Silagy. A quorum was established.

2. Minutes of Committee Meeting

Vice Chair Lydecker requested a motion to approve the November 20, 2024, meeting committee minutes. Governor Silagy moved to approve, Governor Edge seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

3. 2025 World Class Faculty and Scholars Report

Vice Chair Lydecker provided background to the committee and explained that Florida Statutes require the Board of Governors to submit a report on the World Class Faculty and Scholars program to the Florida Legislature by March 15, 2025. Vice Chair Lydecker recognized Dr. Lynn Nelson, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Innovation, to present an overview of the report.

Dr. Nelson shared that the Legislature established this program in 2018 to elevate the System's national competitiveness. She indicated that the System allocated the majority of the funds in the 2023-24 Fiscal Year to faculty recruitment, retention, and research. Some examples provided included enhancements to instruction and research infrastructure and support for postdoctoral fellowships.

Dr. Nelson reported that according to the U.S. News and World Report rankings, Florida has been recognized as the best state for higher education for the past eight years. The System is also ranked fifth among other public systems nationally in research expenditures. The National Science Foundation ranked five state universities in the top 100 public institutions for research in Fiscal Year 2023.

Dr. Nelson highlighted that \$23 million of Florida Atlantic University's total research award dollars came from faculty that received support from the World Class Faculty and Scholars program, which equates to a 410% return on investment. Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University reported that funds from the program were utilized to support

the PRISM Scanning Electron Microscope, substantially enhancing the university's imaging capabilities.

Vice Chair Lydecker requested a motion to approve the 2025 World Class Faculty and Scholars Program Report. Governor Silagy moved to approve, Governor Bell Barnett seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

4. Professional Graduate Degree Excellence Report

Vice Chair Lydecker explained that Florida Statutes require the Board of Governors to submit a report on Professional Graduate Degree Excellence to the Florida Legislature by March 15, 2025. Vice Chair Lydecker recognized Dr. Nelson to present an overview of the report.

Dr. Nelson stated that the Professional and Graduate Degree Excellence Program supports graduate programs in medicine, law, and business across the State University System. This includes six medical schools, four law schools, and graduate business programs at ten institutions. In the 2023-24 Academic Year, the System awarded over 700 medical degrees, 700 law degrees, and over 5,000 graduate-level business degrees.

Dr. Nelson shared that for the 2023-24 Fiscal Year, the Florida Legislature provided \$60 million in recurring funds to support the program. Of the funding received, 60% was utilized to recruit and retain faculty. Additionally, one-quarter of the funding was utilized to further support student-focused programs such as enhancing student advising, improving licensure preparation for required professional examinations, and offering more fellowships.

To add further context, of the \$60 million in funding received for the program, \$23.6 million was allocated for graduate business education, \$21 million was designated to support graduate education in medicine, and \$15.4 million was used to support enhancements for legal education programs. She highlighted the positive economic impact of this funding on the System and the state. Some examples include Florida International University, Florida State University, and the University of Florida Law Schools, which rank in the top 100 according to U.S. News and World Report. Additionally, the University of Florida and the University of South Florida have business programs ranked in the top 100 nationwide.

Vice Chair Lydecker requested a motion to approve the 2025 Professional and Graduate Degree Excellence Report. Governor Edge moved to approve, Governor Silagy seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

5. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

Having no further business, Vice Chair Lydecker adjourned the meeting at 9:56 a.m.

Jose Oliva, Chair

Rosary Pericone, Intern