

MINUTES
STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA
BOARD OF GOVERNORS
STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE
NEW COLLEGE OF FLORIDA
January 27, 2021

*Video or audio archives of the meetings of the Board of Governors
and its committees are accessible at <http://www.flbog.edu/>.*

1. Call to Order and Opening Remarks

Vice Chair Alan Levine convened the meeting on January 27, 2021, at 8:37 a.m. with the following members present: Governors Edge, Frost, Lamb, Self, and Silagy. A quorum was established.

2. Minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee Meeting

Chair Cerio asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the November 5, 2020, committee meeting. Governor Frost moved to approve, Governor Lamb seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

3. Financial Aid 2021 Update

Vice Chair Levine announced that the next item on the agenda was to hear a presentation on financial aid in the System. Vice Chair Levine recognized Mr. Troy Miller, Deputy Chief Data Officer.

Mr. Miller began by providing an overview of gifted financial aid. Gift aid includes grants, scholarships, third-party gifts from a business or sponsor, and waivers. Over the past year, there's been a 12% increase in the amount of gift aid Florida resident undergraduates received. Over the last five years, this amount has increased by 67%. He noted that grants and scholarships have increased \$660 million over the last five years.

Mr. Miller gave an overview of the amount of student debt Florida resident undergraduates incur. The increase in gift aid combined with the cost of tuition remaining flat since the 2012-13 academic year has resulted in decreases in loan amounts. Mr. Miller highlighted that the percent of students without loans has been steadily increasing, from 59% for the 2015-16 academic year to 70% for the 2019-20 academic year.

Mr. Miller then provided additional detail on grants and scholarships. Two changes resulted in an increase of grant funding. For the 2018-2019 academic year, the federal government re-introduced year-round Pell Grants, which provided students funding during the summer semester. Additionally, because of the state's efforts to increase access to the Florida Student Assistance Grant (FSAG), the number of students

receiving the grant has doubled since the 2016-2017 academic year. Lastly, in 2019-2020, institutions received \$74.4 million in CARES Act funds. In terms of scholarships, the largest increases were from the Bright Futures Program. Starting in the 2017-2018 academic year, the Florida Legislature increased the award amount. He added that the Board office annually monitors cost-to-the-student through Performance Based Funding Metric 3 and the annual accountability plan process.

Board Chair Kitson thanked Mr. Miller for the presentation and highlighted that two-thirds of the students in the System have not had to take out student loans. He commended the Florida Legislature and Governor for their continued investment and providing students with access to higher education.

Vice Chair Levine commented that it would be helpful to have additional context such as the percentage of the student population benefitting from each type of aid. Mr. Miller noted that Performance Based Funding Metric 7 captures the percentage of students receiving Pell Grants. During the 2019-2020 academic year, the amount was 38%.

Governor Lamb agreed that providing the context would be helpful and that adding in student success metrics demonstrates that the current model is working and the System needs to stay the course.

Governor Silagy asked about the \$1.6 billion in aid in comparison to the total tuition dollars. Mr. Miller responded he would need to work with the budget office and would provide a response at a later date. Governor Silagy then asked about the CARES Act funds. Mr. Miller said the institutions reported that funds were used to provide financial aid during the spring 2020 term.

Chancellor Criser added that the System is still waiting to hear from the United States Department of Education regarding the rules of the second wave of federal funding provided to postsecondary students and institutions in order to help offset financial challenges created by COVID-19. He also added that funds from the first wave of federal funding were used for financial aid to help students with housing, meal plans, and technology. Governor Silagy asked how students apply for the funding. Chancellor Criser noted that the funds were given to students as grants and included direct grants to students and need-based grants. Each university had processes in place to receive student requests for need-based grants.

Board Chair Kitson commented that it's important to have transparency regarding the CARES Act funding. Chancellor Criser mentioned that the Board's Inspector General has been in communication with the compliance officers at each institution regarding the rules. Governor Silagy asked if there has been communication to the students letting them know they qualify. Chancellor Criser responded that there has been extensive communication to the students regarding the process to make requests.

Governor Self added that Florida Academic Scholars and Florida Medallion Scholars are key tools in recruiting the state's top talent.

Vice Chair Levine thanked Mr. Miller for the presentation.

4. 2020-21 Pillars of Excellence, Quarter 1 Spending Report

Vice Chair Levine stated that the last item on the agenda was to hear an update on the Pillars of Excellence first quarter spending for the 2020-21 Fiscal Year. He explained that four System institutions were allocated funding by the 2020 Legislature for Pillars of Excellence initiatives. Both Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) and University of North Florida (UNF) received funding for the Universities of Distinction proposals. Also, Florida State University (FSU) and the University of Florida (UF) received funding for Preeminence and national rankings enhancements. Vice Chair Levine then recognized Dr. Christy England, Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, to provide the update.

Dr. England began with an overview of the Pillars of Excellence funding initiative established by the Board at the August 29, 2019 meeting. The 2020 Legislature allocated \$560 million for Performance-Based Funding, \$30 million for Preeminence and national rankings enhancements, and \$9 million for Universities of Distinction. She explained that her presentation would review progress made during the first quarter, which ended on September 30, 2020.

Dr. England explained that FGCU received \$3 million for the Water School. Some of the goals of the Water School were to increase research capacity, research production and educate the next generation of leaders and scholars who will deal with environmental issues. In the first quarter, FGCU has spent approximately \$450,000 on initiatives to meet the Water School's goals. These initiatives include purchasing research equipment to study coastal waters and algal blooms, awarding teaching and research assistantships, and training K-12 teachers through Project WeTLands, which connects K-12 teachers with FGCU researchers.

Vice Chair Levine asked why less than a quarter of the funds allocated were spent in the first quarter and whether this delay would have an impact on Year 2 proposals submitted in the fall of 2019. FGCU President Michael Martin, explained that Covid-19 impacted faculty hiring. Dr. Greg Tolley, Director of The Water School, added that COVID-19 had an impact on hiring and research conducted in indoor labs. The Water School continues to do research outdoors. Dr. Tolley anticipated that the Water School will begin the process of hiring during quarter two.

Next, Dr. England noted that the UNF received \$6 million under Universities of Distinction for its MEDNexus initiative. MEDNexus's goals included becoming a national leader in healthcare, research, and innovation while connecting healthcare providers, students, faculty, and researchers in the Northeast Florida region. UNF also received an additional \$1.5 million in non-recurring funds from community partners to begin building nursing simulation centers at Palm Coast and Jacksonville, a skills laboratory, and a medical technology laboratory. As part of the MEDNexus initiative, UNF had planned to hire additional faculty and staff and award student scholarships. As of September 30, 2020, Dr. England explained that UNF has primarily been laying the groundwork to secure additional laboratory, classroom, and office space in Jacksonville and the City of Palm Coast. UNF has spent \$1.1 million on equipment for

one of the new labs. She added that UNF plans to commence the hiring process in the second quarter. Also, UNF reported that no scholarships had been funded in the first quarter.

Vice Chair Levine inquired about financial aid and why these funds have not been dispersed. UNF President Szymanski responded that the semester had already started when the funds became available. Additionally, UNF will be starting a new cohort, and the scholarships will be used to recruit new students.

Then Dr. England reviewed FSU's use of the Preeminence and national rankings enhancement funds. As of September 30, 2020, FSU spent approximately \$1.6 million to invest in ongoing initiatives such as reducing class size and redesigning STEM gateway courses. FSU also made investments in graduate and teaching assistantships, which resulted in graduate student retention. Lastly, FSU invested in the continuing cost of faculty compensation. Dr. England noted that these initiatives might impact U.S. News and World Reports' metrics, including student outcomes, faculty resources, and reputation and expert opinion metrics.

FSU President John Thrasher added that the institution has been primarily focused on four-year graduation rates and faculty retention.

Then Dr. England reviewed UF's use of the Preeminence and national rankings enhancement funds. Dr. England noted that in addition to the \$15 million awarded by the Legislature for Preeminence and national rankings enhancements, UF received an additional \$25 million in operational funds. As of September 30, 2020, UF has used approximately \$3.7 million to improve rankings, including investing in the continued cost of faculty raises, expanding institutional aid to Pell Grant eligible students, and improving facilities. Additionally, UF invested in two existing Moonshot Programs: decreasing health disparities and improving STEM K-12 education. Dr. England noted that these initiatives could impact U.S. News and World Reports' metrics, including reputation and opinion through faculty retention and the moonshot program. Additionally, increased institutional aid may impact the social mobility metric and financial resources metric.

Vice Chair Levine asked about the HiPerGator Artificial Intelligence Super Computer and if other institutions in the System had access. UF Provost Glover replied that UF has offered free access for educational purposes to all System institutions. UF has also made the supercomputer available for research purposes at the same costs UF faculty pay.

Governor Silagy asked about the U.S. News and World Reports metric on faculty compensation and noted differences in cost of living in other states. He noted that System institutions should be careful about chasing that metric and focus on quality of faculty and retention. UF President Fuchs added that UF tracks the market by discipline at the national level and UF salaries are below market rate.

FSU President Thrasher added that faculty salaries represent 7% of the total rankings for U.S. News and World Reports metrics.

Vice Chair Levine thanked Dr. England for the presentation.

5. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

In his closing remarks, Vice Chair Levine noted that all institutions received the 2021 Accountability Plan updated. He reminded the committee that they did not approve out-year goals during the 2020 Accountability Plan process. Due of the impact of COVID-19, institutions have the opportunity to adjust out-year goals and provide a specific rationale for the changes. He thanked all the institutions for continuing to serve the needs of students in the System.

Having no further business, Vice Chair Levine adjourned the meeting at 9:23 a.m.

Timothy Cerio, Chair

Disraelly Cruz, Ph.D.
Director, Planning & Policy