September 14, 2007

Dear Boards of Trustees Members:

The Board of Governors held a three-day series of meetings at the University of South Florida in Tampa August 7-9, 2007. I am pleased to provide you with a brief summary of these meetings.

August 7: BOG staff conducted an orientation for new BOT members
August 8: BOG-BOT Workshop
August 9: BOG Committee meetings and meeting of the full Board

BOG Chair Carolyn Roberts and Governor Charlie Edwards, Chair of the BOG Trustee Nominating Committee, hosted the inaugural BOG orientation session for recently appointed BOT members. The Chancellor and BOG staff shared information on the history, mission, goals and current challenges for the SUS; as well as the functions and responsibilities of the university BOTs. We received positive feedback about the style and content of the discussions. It was a great opportunity for new Trustees to get to know each other and to become familiar with the BOG Chair and staff.

Approximately 60 Trustees participated in the day-long workshop for BOT and BOG members, and discussions included national and state trends in higher education; audit, accountability and compliance best practices; presidential review best practices; and the forthcoming legislative budget request. On behalf of the BOG, let me thank all Trustees who participated in these discussions; as well as Chair Roberts, Governor Tico Perez, Larry Abele (FSU), Wanyonyi Kendrick (UNF BOT), Rhea Law (USF BOT) and Bruce Taylor (UNF BOT), who all served as presenters and facilitators.

Prior to the workshop, Chair Roberts and the Chancellor met with BOT Chairs to discuss system strategy issues and challenges to improved cooperation. BOG Chief of Staff Bob Donley met with BOT staff liaisons to discuss ways to enhance communication and collaboration.

The meetings of the BOG Budget Committee and Emergency Preparedness and Campus Safety Task Force, both chaired by Governor Perez, were followed by a meeting of the full BOG Board.
During the Budget Committee meeting, Governor Perez asked university presidents to report to the Chancellor prior to the September BOG meeting on any issue that may have been overlooked for their university in the 2008-09 legislative budget request (LBR). The Committee agreed that the issues of graduate student support, the marine research vessel and the global initiative should be reviewed in other committees before a final decision is made at the September BOG meeting. Governor Perez said that campus safety would be added to the LBR at the September meeting. Both the Teaching, Research Incentive Program and the Distance Learning initiative will be re-examined before the September meeting, however, both will remain in the LBR.

The Budget Committee also discussed the new medical schools’ requests for funding beyond their original budgets due to recent changes in the Liaison Committee on Medical Education’s accreditation standards. The Chancellor agreed to convene the presidents and medical school deans to address 1) current system-wide synergies occurring in the existing medical environments, and 2) the possibility of synergistically approaching the additional funding requests for the new medical schools. The ultimate desire is to reduce costs. One of the ideas for consideration is medical faculty using technology to teach across universities and common curricula.

The Committee recommended approval of the BOG’s Office budget as submitted and approval of the remainder of the budget as submitted with the exception of backing out the graduate student support issue, the research vessel and the global initiative for further study until September. The Committee also recommended continued support of need-based financial aid from the Department of Education.

The Emergency Preparedness and Campus Safety Task Force provided reports on notification systems, campus security and law enforcement, and training and identification of at-risk students. I want to thank Governor Perez for his leadership of this Task Force, as well as Governors Frank Martin, Ava Parker and Arlen Chase for their reports.

At the full BOG meeting, Chair Roberts announced that the next BOG meeting scheduled for September 26-27, 2007, would be moved to Tallahassee due to the scheduled Special Session of the Legislature (which has since been rescheduled for October 3-12, but the BOG meeting will still be held in Tallahassee).

The issue of student safety and security was pulled from the 2008 substantive legislative agenda because the universities believe that, in these tight budget times, they can effectively work with local jurisdictions to sufficiently address these issues.

The UF bond issue for Ben Hill Griffin Stadium was approved, as were the USF certificates of participation to finance the Medical Faculty Office Building.
amended and restated Articles of Incorporation of the Johnnie B. Byrd, Sr. Alzheimer’s Center and Research Institute were pulled from the agenda for further consideration.

Governor Lynn Pappas, Chair of the BOG FAMU Task Force, reported that since her Task Force received only one-third of the requested legislative funding, it was necessary to turn to the universities for assistance to accomplish some of what the Task Force needs to do. The Budget Committee’s recommendations were approved.

The BOG also approved two recommendations presented by Governor Ann Duncan on behalf of the Florida Technology, Research and Scholarship Board (FTRSB), which met on August 8, regarding criteria changes for Centers of Excellence proposal submissions to the FTRSB.

Sincerely yours,
Mark B. Rosenberg
Chancellor