

FLORIDA A&M UNIVERSITY

Board of Trustees

Meeting Minutes

April 15, 2026

CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

Deveron Gibbons, Chair

Chair Gibbons called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m. Trustees Brown, Bryant, Crossman, Figgers, Gainey, Gibbons, Harris, Jones, Shah, Vazquez, Washington, White and Young established a quorum.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The meeting opened with the public comment period, during which no individuals signed up to speak.

UNIVERSITY UPDATE

President Johnson delivered a comprehensive university update, beginning with highlights from Google's Gemini National Campus Tour—their first stop on a 35-institution national circuit designed to bring hands-on AI demonstrations and learning experiences to campuses. She noted the successful hosting of the Fourth Annual Undergraduate Research Symposium, where student research was showcased across three thematic areas: behavioral sciences, health sciences, and STEM.

She then addressed the NCAA penalties imposed on the football program, including the restriction on post-season eligibility for the 2026 season, and outlined the corrective measures now underway. President Johnson also celebrated recent academic achievements, commending Dean Cecil Howard, the Provost, and the College of Law team for the 66.7% first-time bar passage rate on the February 2026 exam—an improvement that surpassed the state average.

She closed with reminders about several upcoming initiatives: the 1887 Strikes Day of Giving campaign, the Frederick Humphries miniature statues campaign, and the April 21 investiture ceremony for the University's 13th president. Chair Gibbons encouraged full board participation in the giving campaign.

Prior to concluding the update, Chair Gibbons, President Johnson, and other leaders expressed their appreciation to Nichole Murry for her service as Acting CFO/Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration, offering thanks for her leadership and contributions as she transitions to a new professional role.

APPROVAL OF CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT CONTRACT

COO Kelvin Lawson presented the request for approval to grant the President authority to negotiate a construction management contract of up to \$18.4 million with Allstate Construction for the Chemical and Biological Research Center Renovation Project. The agreement would complete the top two floors of the Pharmacy Building, which were left unfinished when the facility opened in 2016 due to insufficient funding.

He outlined the project's funding plan, which includes \$14.3 million in PECO funds and \$7.9 million from a federal grant, with an additional \$13.1 million pending legislative approval. Should the legislative request not be approved, the University is prepared to complete 50% of the remaining work now and finish the balance once additional funds are secured.

Trustee Crossman encouraged integrating the project's vendors into academic activities by inviting them to deliver guest lectures, providing hands-on experiential learning opportunities for students, and highlighting the University's involvement through the companies' social media platforms.

Mr. Talton informed the Board that FAMU already maintains internship programs within the School of Architecture, Construction and Facilities Management that collaborate closely with architects and construction firms working on campus projects. He added that the University consistently encourages its construction partners to hire FAMU graduates.

BANKING RESOLUTION

Attorney Avery McKnight presented the proposed banking resolution. If approved, it would remove the former interim controller and add the newly hired controller, Shajuana Jenkins, while granting signature authority to President Johnson, Acting CFO Murry, and Ms. Jenkins.

Trustee Washington asked whether the banking resolution would be affected by Acting CFO Murry's departure from the University. Attorney McKnight responded that her departure would not impact the resolution. He explained that Acting CFO Murry was included only because there was no permanent controller during the staffing transition, and that the president and controller customarily serve as the authorized signatories.

APPROVAL OF INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS' ANTICIPATED EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS

President Johnson began by thanking the board for their patience as it relates to the transition taking place in athletics. She also thanked the Board of Governors for relieving athletics of its financial obligations to repay the debt owed to the university. After speaking with the chair and other board members, she announced a measured approach to reviewing athletics policies rather than rushing implementation, with plans to conduct a broader review of board operating procedures to revisit some of the athletics policies while focusing on hiring necessary coaching staff to ensure compliance.

Athletics Director John Davis provided an update on athletics, specifically requesting approval for an amendment to women's basketball head coach Bridgette Gordon's employment agreement extending her term to April 15, 2027, with an option for further extension in 2028.

The board discussed the proposed organizational chart for athletics department positions within the current fiscal year budget. Trustee Jones asked whether any pending contracts requiring board approval were anticipated between now and June. Chair Gibbons and AD Davis confirmed that while certain contracts would require board action, the organizational chart—reflecting both current staff and vacant positions—would support timely hiring within the board-approved budget parameters.

Trustee Brown moved to approve the organizational chart via the consent agenda, authorizing the athletics department to proceed with hiring based on the approved positions and budget ranges. Trustee Jones seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

Trustee Brown then moved to suspend Article 4.2.4, paragraph 7 of the operating procedures related to intercollegiate athletics employment contracts for purposes of approving the organizational chart and the

women's basketball coach contract extension. Trustee Jones seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

APPROVAL OF UPDATED COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Vice President Alonda Thomas presented an updated communications policy for board approval, which was reviewed by outside counsel with expertise in higher education to ensure first amendment compliance. The 2026 revision represents a comprehensive effort to modernize the policy and strengthen its effectiveness. These updates help the university maintain close alignment with peer institutions across the state university system and reinforce adherence to applicable regulations. This includes but not limited to matters related to goods and services, the use of trademarks and branding, prohibiting employees' participation in media interviews without prior review & approval from the Office of Communications, and expectations regarding confidentiality.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Provost Allyson Watson presented the leave of absence request for the 2026-2027 academic year for Professor Rhonda Reeves.

SABBATICAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEAVE

The Sabbatical and Professional Development Leave Committee recommends approval of sabbatical leave for Kwesi Dinsu, Naima Ford, Wenru Wang, Craig Huffman, Igwu Kaly, Hinjun Lee, Idangaset Mikpong Ruffin, and Musila Musa, and approval of professional development leave for Sang Park.

ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN

Drs. Allyson Watson and Roddrick Jones delivered a forward-looking update centered on performance-based funding achievements and student success momentum. They highlighted several record-setting outcomes that position the University strongly for the next PBF cycle.

Key Achievements and Innovations

- The University reached a **record 97.1% fall-to-spring retention rate**, reflecting strengthened academic support and student engagement.
- FAMU will host the **first HBCU Student Success Summit**, designed to scale evidence-based strategies across peer institutions.
- FAMU researchers continue to lead in innovation, including:
 - **3D human liver models** that enhance drug safety testing.
 - A **seawater battery** developed by a doctoral student, offering new possibilities for underwater exploration.
- The University's **textbook affordability initiative** has saved students **\$2.8 million** in course material costs and has now expanded to the College of Law.

Performance-Based Funding Highlights

Dr. Jones reported several record-breaking PBF outcomes:

- The **4-year graduation rate** increased by **1.85 percentage points year-over-year**.
- The **academic APR** reached a historic **88.1%**, surpassing the accountability plan's target of 81.

- **Metrics 6 and 8**, recently modified by the Board of Governors, show adjusted rates but continue to demonstrate year-over-year improvement.

Across the full PBF cycle, **nine metrics** show positive movement. Additional indicators include:

- **Employment and continuing education rate:** 72.5%.
- **FTIC Pell recipients' six-year graduation rate:** rebounded to **53.7%**, a significant improvement.

Dr. Jones also outlined proposed moderate goal increases to reflect steady, sustainable growth. Trustee Washington emphasized that the accountability report is designed as a **five-year improvement plan**, offering a trajectory rather than a static snapshot.

STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS UPDATE

Dr. Jones presented data on institutional performance metrics, including PBF trends, student success metrics, and projections for four-year graduation rates. He highlighted the university's goals and baseline versus accelerated projections, noting that while achieving a 6% annual increase may be challenging, it is achievable and would place the university within the SUS median by 2029. Chair Gibbons emphasized the importance of understanding these trajectories during the upcoming strategic planning session.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Vice President Michelle Robinson provided a brief legislative update, noting that no substantive updates were available due to ongoing budget negotiations.

CONSENT AGENDA

- **Items Approved Unanimously:**
 - Board Minutes.
 - February 12, 2026
 - Leave of Absence
 - Professor Rhonda Reeves
 - Sabbatical and Professional Development Leave
 - Accountability Plan
 - Approval of Updated Communications Policy
 - Approval of Construction Management Contract
 - Chemical and Biological Research Project
 - Banking Resolution
 - Approval of Intercollegiate Athletics' Employment Contracts
 - Suspension of Article 4.2.4, Paragraph 7 of the Board Operating Procedures

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business for the Board, the meeting adjourned.