

Direct Support Organizations (DSO) Steering Committee

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April 16, 2026 | 5:00pm – 7:00 pm EST

Location: Virtual (Zoom)

Call to Order

The meeting of the DSO Steering Committee was called to order at approximately 5:00 PM. The meeting was publicly noticed and conducted in accordance with Florida Sunshine Law requirements.

Leadership

Consulting Partner / PMO Lead/Neutral Facilitator: Chekesha Kidd

VP for University Advancement & Executive Director, FAMU Foundation/Chair: Dr. Brandi Tatum-Fedrick

Attendance Summary

Committee members, university leadership, and stakeholders were present, including representatives from:

- Florida A&M University Foundation
- University Advancement
- Board of Trustees (DSO & Athletics Committee)
- National Alumni Association (NAA)
- Rattler Boosters
- Athletics Department
- Finance and Administration

A quorum was not formally established as this meeting was informational and organizational in nature.

Sunshine Law Training

Deputy General Counsel Iris Elijah provided training on Florida Sunshine Law requirements, including:

- Open meetings requirements (Chapter 286, Florida Statutes)
- Public records requirements (Chapter 119, Florida Statutes)
- Notice requirements (minimum 7 days)
- Prohibition of discussions outside publicly noticed meetings
- Record retention obligations

No action was taken. Training was acknowledged by the committee.

Purpose and Charge of the Committee

The committee was convened to evaluate and provide recommendations regarding the Direct Support Organization (DSO) operating model, with a focus on:

- Strengthening fundraising capacity
- Improving coordination across DSOs
- Enhancing alumni engagement
- Supporting long-term institutional growth

Opening Remarks

Trustee John Crossman

- Emphasized the need to modernize FAMU's fundraising infrastructure
- Highlighted gaps between FAMU and peer institutions in fundraising performance
- Reinforced that the goal is alignment and coordination, not elimination of DSOs
- Stressed transparency, collaboration, and shared success

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President Marva Johnson

- Expressed appreciation for committee participation
- Reaffirmed institutional commitment to supporting the committee's work
- Emphasized the importance of building infrastructure to support academic, research, and athletic growth

University Advancement Overview

Dr. Tatum-Fedrick presented the current state and strategic direction:

Key Highlights:

- Four consecutive years of record fundraising growth
- Approximately \$226M in Foundation assets; \$140M endowment
- Alumni giving rate below peer benchmarks

Key Challenges Identified:

- Fragmented systems and donor engagement
- Lack of unified fundraising infrastructure
- Trust and coordination gaps

Strategic Priorities:

- Strengthen advancement operations
- Implement unified technology systems
- Improve alumni engagement
- Enhance support for athletics and DSOs
- Build a culture of accountability and trust

Committee Discussion Summary

A. Fundraising and Donor Engagement

- Emphasis on defining and communicating value to donors
- Need to demonstrate impact and transparency in use of funds
- Importance of donor recognition and tiered engagement strategies
- Concerns raised regarding donor fatigue due to multiple, uncoordinated solicitations

B. DSO Coordination and Structure

- Broad agreement on need for:
 - Clear delineation of roles among DSOs
 - Reduction of duplicative efforts
 - Centralized planning and communication
- Recognition that alignment is critical to long-term success

C. Technology Modernization

- Discussion of integrating DSOs into unified systems (CRM, Workday)
- Goal to improve reporting, efficiency, and donor tracking
- Formation of a technology subcommittee anticipated

D. Trust and Transparency

- Identified as a central issue impacting engagement
- Recommendations included:
 - Increased communication and reporting
 - Strategic planning sessions/retreats
 - Clear visibility into financial outcomes

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E. Athletics and Booster Engagement

- Identified funding gap in athletics support
- Need to expand booster membership and engagement
- Discussion of NIL strategy, governance, and fundraising structures
- Recognition of importance of improving fan experience and facilities

F. Facilities and Revenue Strategy

- Need for long-term planning and cost visibility
- Exploration of revenue-generating opportunities, including public-private partnerships
- Importance of aligning funding priorities across DSOs

Key Themes

- Strong support for a “One FAMU” unified advancement approach
- Need for improved coordination and strategic alignment
- Importance of enhancing donor experience and engagement
- Recognition that building trust is essential to success

Next Steps

- Distribution of meeting materials and summary
- Continued stakeholder engagement and interviews
- Formation of subcommittees (including technology modernization)
- Development of recommendations focused on athletics
 - **Timeline:**
 - May 2026: Review and refine recommendations
 - June 2026: Present recommendations to Board of Trustees
 - Summer 2026: Expand work to additional DSOs

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:00 pm EST.