

Special Committee on the College of Law Minutes Trustee Belvin Perry, Chair June 11, 2025

Trustee Belvin Perry called the meeting to order. Ms. Valeria Singleton called the roll, and the following committee member was present: Emery Gainey. A quorum was established.

The Special Committee on the College of Law started in April 2025 in response to the Gunster Assessment Report prepared by Simone Marstiller. Chair Perry acknowledged the hard work, collaboration, and courage it has taken to confront long-standing issues and embrace the opportunity for transformational change. The Special Committee has committed over 20 hours of public Zoom meetings and individual contributions focused on specific strategic areas of the College.

The Committee comprises an esteemed group of trustees, students, faculty, alumni, and legal practitioners. The Committee has met regularly through publicly noticed sessions and workgroups. The Committee reviewed the Gunster Report and internal data, strategic documents, and institutional trends. The process was collaborative, transparent, and aligned with FAMU's larger *Boldly Striking* Strategic Plan.

Chair Perry thanked the special committee members:

- Judge Dan Traver
- Professor Patricia Broussard
- Student Representative, Dr. Carl Cartwright
- Mr. Earnie Ellison
- Trustee Emery Gainey
- Ms. Mildred Graham
- Professor Jonathan Fineman
- Associate Provost and Interim Dean Cecil Howard
- Professor Lundy Langston
- Student Representative Amber Newsome
- Professor Robert Abrams
- Atty. Sean Pittman
- Professor Eurilynne Williams
- Ex Officio
 - · Provost Allyson Watson
 - · McKnight, Avery D.
 - · Beard, Timothy L.

Trustee Perry stated that the Committee has finalized a set of **actionable and measurable recommendations**, many of which are already being implemented by Provost Watson, Associate Provost Howard, and the faculty of the College of Law. These include:



• A new 0L Summer Bridge Program.

The new entering class of 1L students will begin this fall and represents a historic milestone for the College of Law, with the highest combined undergraduate GPA and LSAT scores in FAMU Law's history. In alignment with this achievement, starting in the 2025–2026 academic year, the Special Committee recommends implementing a mandatory 0L Summer Bridge Program. This initiative will equip incoming students with the foundational skills needed to succeed in legal education and ensure they are prepared for the NextGen Bar Exam from day one.

• Practice-Ready Legal Education and Centers of Excellence.

This recommendation originated directly from the practicing attorneys and sitting judges on the Committee, who identified a clear gap between student preparation and the realities of Florida legal practice. We recommend that the College of Law conduct a targeted analysis to identify critical areas of Florida law practice and form partnerships with local and statewide law firms to launch **Centers of Excellence** focused on high-demand legal fields such as health law, cybersecurity, real estate, and public interest law.

• New Vision and Mission Statement.

The Committee has rewritten the vision and mission of the College of Law to reflect this renewed focus on excellence, rigor, and professional readiness. The updated statement will reaffirm the College's commitment to producing practice-ready graduates equipped to serve underrepresented communities with distinction and integrity.

• Expansion of RISE and Student Support Services.

The College of Law has launched the **RISE—Resources for Increasing Success on Exams** program, which integrates BARBRI, Themis, and Kaplan tools to support bar exam preparation. However, with an instructor/coach-to-student ratio of 1:25, the Committee strongly recommends hiring additional **academic coaches, instructional personnel, and leadership roles** to ensure individualized student support, enhance data utilization, and strengthen faculty-student engagement.

• Strategic Plan Redesign.

Lastly, the **7th Edition of the College of Law Strategic Plan**, created in the 2022–2023 academic year, has been fully aligned with the University's *Boldly Striking* Strategic Plan. The Committee determined that most components of the original version were not actionable or measurable. As a result, we have completed a full redraft using the original 7th edition as a foundation, now enhanced with **clear deliverables**, **timelines**, **benchmarks**, **and performance metrics** to ensure accountability and measurable impact.

The College of Law is now on a firm pathway toward excellence—and, more importantly, sustainability. We are committed to increasing our bar passage rate, enhancing student and faculty



outcomes, and ensuring that the College of Law reflects the highest standards of legal education and professional relevance.

Trustee Perry thanked the Provost, Interim Dean Howard, and all who have leaned into this moment on behalf of the Committee. We look forward to continued collaboration and reporting on these metrics in future meetings.

Respectfully submitted,

Belvin Perry, Committee Chair