

FLORIDA **A&M** UNIVERSITY

Board of Trustees

Meeting Minutes September 24, 2026

CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

Deveron Gibbons, Chair

Chair Gibbons called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. Trustee Crossman offered a moment of prayer, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Trustees Brown, Crossman, Figgers, Gainey, Gibbons, Harris, Jones, Washington, White, Williams, and Young were present, establishing a quorum. Trustee Vazquez joined the meeting late and Trustee Shah was absent.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The meeting proceeded with the public comment period.

Mr. Vaughn Wilson, former FAMU football player and former Assistant Athletics Director for Sports Media, spoke on his own behalf and on behalf of former head coach Billy Joe, a Black College Football Hall of Famer. He urged the Board to discontinue scheduling future football games against Power 4 institutions, citing competitive disadvantages and reputational impacts.

Armani Hilario, a third-year Political Science scholar with a minor in Public Administration from Palm Beach County, presented the work of Serve First Incorporated and its efforts to support FAMU DRS K–6 teachers and students.

Before the President's Report, Chair Gibbons addressed recent comments suggesting the University had not been forthcoming in its efforts to organize the gubernatorial debate on campus. He asked Trustee Kennedy Williams, SGA President, to speak on the students' work related to the event. Trustee Williams emphasized that the debate was a priority for the student body, intended to provide students an opportunity to hear directly from candidates seeking to lead the state of Florida. She explained that the Student Government Association formed a gubernatorial forum committee in May and began outreach to the campaigns in July. Although the debate did not materialize as planned, the President's Office assisted in transitioning to gubernatorial forums, which will be held in Lee Hall Auditorium at 7 p.m. on September 29 with candidate Byron Donald and on October 12 with candidate David Jolly.

Chair Gibbons thanked Trustee Williams for the update and commended the students for their dedication to the project. Trustee Brown also expressed appreciation to SGA for attending the recent Faculty Senate meeting and providing information to senators and faculty.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Marva B. Johnson, President

President Johnson presented an operational framework designed to align the University's strategies, accountability, and execution, ensuring that every division holds a measurable share of institutional success.

She also recognized the collective efforts of the University team in successfully achieving the 2025–2026 performance goals.

She reported several significant accomplishments, including FAMU’s advancement to 79th place in the U.S. News & World Report rankings—making it the highest-ranked public HBCU in the nation. She discussed with Board members the distinctions between rankings for public universities and HBCU peer assessments. Within the State University System of Florida, FAMU posted the largest year-over-year gain among all institutions, rising thirteen places, and she expressed confidence that the University is on a strong trajectory toward reaching a top-50 ranking.

Her presentation also highlighted FAMU’s progress across strategic initiatives. She outlined her 2026–27 goals, organized around five strategic pillars: student success, academic and research quality, operational excellence, revenue diversification, and elevating the 1890 land-grant mission. These pillars support two overarching institutional commitments—sustaining FAMU’s national standing and positioning the University for Carnegie R1 readiness.

President Johnson emphasized achievements in student success, research, and operational excellence. She highlighted ongoing strategic planning efforts involving faculty, staff, students, alumni, and external partners, including JP Morgan Chase. Academic Affairs launched *Ira*, the Academic Intelligence Rattler agent, which provides undergraduates with timely answers and connects them to campus resources that help keep them on track for graduation. Four new interdisciplinary innovation hubs are opening in artificial intelligence, research, esports, and other emerging technologies. Since July 1, faculty have submitted 65 proposals totaling more than \$65.6 million and secured 28 new awards totaling \$17.5 million. The University is also strengthening research administration, compliance, technology transfer, and graduate research, including through a \$10 million Department of War-supported initiative. She reported that the Workday implementation remains on schedule for the October 1 launch. Updates were also provided on Audit, Compliance, deferred maintenance, collective bargaining, and University Advancement.

FAMU has additionally secured major external funding, including:

- More than \$5.1 million in renewed federal TRIO Talent Search funding;
- More than \$10.25 million through the Florida Rural Health Transformation Programs, including:
 - Nearly \$5 million for the Gadsden County preventative care-at-home program;
 - \$1.3 million for rural and satellite clinics;
 - More than \$2.85 million to fully fund two rural health workforce pathways serving seven counties across the region; and
 - \$1.1 million for the Food as Medicine initiative.
 -

She then introduced Dr. Lisa Battle, Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director, who announced a new partnership with 15 White Coats to support pre-med students through the Funding the Future Physicians (FTFP) Program, which provides resources and mentorship at no direct cost to Florida A&M University. Dr. Shelby Chipman, Director of Bands, provided an update on the band’s academic performance and upcoming engagements, including a gospel show for the upcoming football game and potential appearances at the Macy’s Day Parade and the Sydney Opera House.

CHAIR’S REPORT

Deveron Gibbons, Chair

Chair Gibbons began his report by congratulating Deputy Chief William Evers and Vice President for Advancement Brandi Tatum-Fedrick on their induction into the FAMU Sports Hall of Fame. He also extended birthday wishes to William Evers, William Hudson Jr., Nicole Schloss, and Joseph Maleszewski, and recognized the student ambassadors in attendance. He then presented Coach Quinn Gray with an autographed football signed by the Board of Trustees to commemorate his first win as FAMU’s head coach.

Chair Gibbons acknowledged Trustee Crossman on his appointment as Chair of the Board of the Orlando Housing Authority and thanked former Board of Governors Chair Brian Lamb for joining the trustees at their dinner the previous evening.

The Chairman's Awards were presented to Ryan Gilmore for his contributions to maintenance operations; Dr. George W. Pittman Sr. in honor of his 100th birthday and longstanding service to the University; and Martha Barnett for her distinguished legal career and steadfast support of FAMU.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION REPORT

Trustee Kennedy Williams, SGA President

The Student Government Association report provided comprehensive updates across leadership, partnerships, and the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. Trustee Williams highlighted the successful August SGA training, which incorporated tools and practices used during the annual Board Retreat. She also noted SGA's collaboration with COO Lawson to host town halls aimed at identifying student concerns. In response, SGA has begun outlining initiatives to address those concerns throughout the semester and is researching the feasibility of a holiday shuttle program.

Legislative Branch

The legislative branch is reviewing the election schedule, constitutional referendums, Senate unallocated funds, SGA confirmations, and its overall priorities for the year. Freshman senator candidates are on the ballot, with the campaign period running from September 28 through October 6. Election Day is October 6, with a run-off scheduled for October 8.

A constitutional convention was convened over the summer to ensure alignment between the SGA constitution and those of other institutions in the State University System. Plans are underway to place the approved constitutional amendments on the October ballot. SGA confirmations are 95% complete, with the final two appointments scheduled for the September 28 Senate meeting at 6 p.m.

The branch is awaiting an updated finance report regarding Senate unallocated accounts. Current estimates indicate approximately \$25,000 remain available for disbursement to student organizations this semester.

This semester, the legislative branch is prioritizing streamlined communication, advancement of constitutional and election-related responsibilities, and strengthened fiscal oversight.

Gubernatorial Update

Trustee Williams provided a brief gubernatorial update, announcing a shift from debate-style programming to student-centered forums. She emphasized SGA's excitement about creating opportunities for students to engage in candid conversations about the future of Florida. All ten qualified candidates were invited, and responses were received from the Donald and Jolly campaigns. Town halls are scheduled for Donald on September 29 and Jolly on October 12 at 7 p.m. in Lee Hall.

Student Lobbying will host a voter fair on October 14 and an election night watch party on November 3. SGA's official Vote Week is October 12–15, with Stroll to the Polls—co-sponsored by NPHC, CAB, and OSA—taking place on October 15.

Executive Branch

The executive branch has begun planning Hoops on the Hill and a mental health mixer for student athletes. Student Welfare, in partnership with the Surgeon General, will support planning for the annual Mental Health Day and conduct campus well-being surveys to assess student concerns related to mental health.

The Comptroller is preparing for the Snake Tank competition, with the date forthcoming. Trustees were invited to serve as judges. Additional initiatives include the Entrepreneurship 101 event on November 12 and exploration of microgrant opportunities for student entrepreneurs.

Judicial Branch

The judicial branch's annual goals include executing fall programming, strengthening industry partnerships, deepening tri-branch collaboration, expanding social media engagement, and formalizing systems for attendance, absences, and recognition accountability.

Homecoming

The theme for this year's Homecoming is **"There's No Place Like the Hill."** A full weeklong schedule of events was provided.

FACULTY SENATE REPORT

Trustee Jamal Brown, Faculty Senate President

Trustee Brown expressed his appreciation to University administrators for their consistent engagement at Faculty Senate meetings and for providing critical updates on research activity, the pursuit of Carnegie R1 status, the strategic plan, performance-based funding metrics, Workday implementation, and student success initiatives.

President Johnson offered remarks on academic policy research and the broader academic enterprise, giving faculty a deeper understanding of the University's R1 aspirations, the research environment, and the metric connected to leadership recruitment. Faculty were also invited to share their perspectives and feedback.

COO Lawson delivered updates on facilities, the strategic planning process, and Workday. He outlined upcoming initiatives—including QR code reporting for facilities issues, reviews of laboratory spaces, and updates related to DRS. In discussing the Workday rollout, he emphasized faculty inclusion throughout the planning process and described the transition across payroll, financial management, and employee self-service. Chief AI Officer Deidre Melton also led sessions on forthcoming AI-related initiatives involving faculty.

Provost Watson addressed admissions and enrollment trends, living-learning resources, and improvements to Canvas access. She and Dr. Sundra Kincey continue to collaborate with the curriculum committee, faculty senators, and faculty on implementing the Curriculog system to support real-time course approvals. Trustee Brown also announced that former colleague and Vice President, Dr. Daniel Osborne, has joined the Academic Affairs team as Associate Provost of Strategic Emphasis, and that Dr. Kyle Harris has been elected as the new Vice President.

In closing, he mentioned faculty received a briefing on the Board of Governors' metric selection, including the shift from internship participation to research expenditures, and how faculty input shaped the recommendation. Additional updates covered institutional priorities, academic systems, and textbook adoption processes.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Academic and Student Affairs Committee

Nicole Washington, Chair

The Academic and Student Affairs Committee met today. The following trustees were present: Jamal Brown, Kenneth Jones, Raphael Vazquez, Nicole Washington, and Kennedy Williams. A quorum was established.

The Committee recommended approval of the following items:

- Minutes for June 11, 2026;
- Academic Calendars (2027-2028 and 2028-2029);
- Post-Tenure Review;
- Tenure Upon Appointment;
- Annual Textbook and Affordability Report;
- Self-Supporting Programs Annual Report; and
- CIP Code – Pharmaceutical Sciences, Ph.D.

The Committee also heard an update on the Academic and Student Affairs Dashboard.

Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee

Trustee John Crossman, Vice Chair

Earlier today the Audit, Risk, and Compliance Committee met. The Committee took up four action items. The first item was approval of the minutes of February 12, 2026, meeting.

The other items approved and moving forward for full board consideration are approval of the Division of Audit Annual Work Plan; approval of the Division of Audit Charter, and approval of the ERM Annual Work Plan.

These items are included in the full Board consent agenda for consideration of approval. We also received informational updates from Compliance and Audit.

Finally, I led a discussion related to procurement transformation and nepotism policies.

Budget, Finance, and Facilities Committee

Trustee Emery Gainey, Chair

The Budget, Finance and Facilities Committee met on Thursday, September 24, 2026. The following trustees were present: Jamal Brown, Emery Gainey, Deveron Gibbons, and Victor Young. A quorum was established.

The September meeting agenda consisted of seven (7) action items and one (1) information item.

Action Item VI, Medical Marijuana Education and Research Initiative (MMERI), was removed from the agenda and will be considered later.

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- Minutes from the July 11, 2026, Committee Meeting
- FY 2026-1017 University Carryforward Spending Plan and Fixed Capital Outlay Budget

- College of Law Management and Maintenance Services Contract Authority
- Collins Building Renovation Construction Management Contract Authority
- Instructure (CANVAS) LMS Contract Renewal and Tier Upgrade
- University Pouring Rights Agreement with Refreshment Services Pepsi, Inc.

The Committee also heard updates on the Quarterly Financial Report – Budget to Actuals.

Direct Support Organizations and Athletics Committee

Trustee John Crossman, Chair

The Direct Support Organizations and Intercollegiate Athletics Committee convened on September 24, 2026.

The Committee approved the following action items:

- 1) June 11, 2026, committee meeting minutes.
- 2) Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Operating Budget for the FAMU National Alumni Association.

The Committee was presented with the following informational items:

- 1) Divisional Updates for University Advancement and the Direct Support Organizations.
- 2) Athletics Department updates from AD John Davis.

Governance Committee

Trustee Natlie Figgers, Acting Chair

The Governance Committee met today and approved the following items:

- The June 11, 2026, Committee Minutes;
- The Board's Evaluation of President Johnson;
- President Johnson's Bonus
- President Johnson's 2026-2027 Goals

After completing these items, Acting Chair Figgers facilitated the committee through its discussion of the Board of Trustees Self-Assessment.

Special Committee on the Developmental Research School

Trustee Jamal Brown, Chair

The Special Committee on DRS convened today and received the KPMG Report briefing.

Following the presentation, the committee approved the following items:

- The June 11, 2026, Committee Minutes
- The Recommendations for the Developmental Research School

Strategic Planning and Performance Measures Committee

Trustee Nicole Washington, Vice Chair

The Strategic Planning and Performance Measures Committee met earlier and approved June 11, 2026, Committee Minutes.

The Committee discussed FAMU's 2026 PBF performance and the actions underway to strengthen results for 2027. The University is focusing on the highest-impact opportunities for improvement while maintaining strengths in affordability, access and graduate outcomes. Efforts include stronger alignment

with Florida workforce priorities, targeted student-success interventions, and enhanced monitoring of leading indicators to identify performance concerns earlier and support timely corrective action.

CONSENT AGENDA

- **Items Approved Unanimously:**
 - Board Minutes.
 - June 11, 2026
 - August 31, 2026
 - Academic Calendars (2027 – 2028 and 2028 – 2029)
 - Post Tenure Review
 - Tenure Upon Appointment
 - Annual Textbook and Affordability Report
 - CIP Code – Pharmaceutical Sciences, Ph.D.
 - Division of Audit Charter (Revision)
 - University Compliance and Ethics Program Plan
 - FY 2026-2027 University Carryforward Spending Plan and Fixed Capital Outlay Budget
 - College of Law Management and Maintenance Services Contract Authority
 - Collins Building Renovation Construction Management Contract Authority
 - Instructure (Canvas) LMS Contract Renewal and Tier Upgrade
 - University Pouring Rights Agreement with Refreshment Services Pepsi, Inc.
 - Approval of DSO Operating Budget (FY 2026-2027):
 - National Alumni Association (NAA)
 - Board's Evaluation of President Johnson
 - President Johnson's Bonus
 - President Johnson's 2026-2027 Goals
 - Approval of Recommendations for DRS

Before adjournment, Trustee Crossman encouraged all trustees to make every effort to attend the College of Law Hooding Event. He expressed his appreciation to the President and the Law Dean for the opportunity to host a real estate event at the College of Law. He further recommended that the University engage Owens Real Estate Group—currently assisting facilities hiring—regarding the possibility of endowing a real estate scholarship. He also highlighted a missed full-ride scholarship opportunity for a FAMU SBI graduate to attend the University of Florida and emphasized his desire to ensure SBI students are aware of similar opportunities moving forward.

Trustee White spoke about potential advocacy efforts for all trustees during the upcoming legislative session beginning in January 2027 and underscored the importance of coordinated engagement.

Chair Gibbons concluded by thanking the IT Department for providing the Board with new iPad

ADJOURNMENT:

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