

FLORIDA **A&M** UNIVERSITY

Board of Trustees

Governance Committee Minutes **September 17, 2025** **3:00 pm**

CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

Committee Chair Belvin Perry called the Governance Committee meeting to order. Trustees Dopson-Rodriguez, Figgers, Gainey, Harper, Perry, and White were in attendance and established a quorum.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There were no corrections to the June 11, 2025 meeting minutes were posted on the board's website and provided in the meeting material. Trustee Harper moved approval of the minutes and Trustee Figgers seconded. The motion carried.

PRESIDENT BEARD'S BONUS

Chair Perry opened discussion on President Beard's bonus by stating, pursuant to his contract, he may be eligible to receive an annual performance bonus of up to fifteen percent (15%) of the annual base salary then in effect, as provided for in subparagraph 8 (b), contingent upon the availability of funds from the FAMU Foundation. The award of a performance bonus is discretionary and shall be awarded based on the Board's assessment, in its sole and absolute discretion, of the President's performance of the mutually agreed upon specified goals and objectives. The Board may award any amount of performance bonus from zero to the maximum of fifteen percent of his annual salary, which was \$400,000. Afterwards, Trustee Harper was recognized to the recommendation for Dr. Beard's bonus. She presented a quantitative evaluation metric translated by the University's Strategic Planning and Analysis team derived from the qualitative evaluation that was presented to the Board and recommended the committee consider a 10-12% instead of 15% bonus for former President Beard. Trustees debated the accuracy and appropriateness of the translated evaluation metrics, with some trustees expressing concerns about the data inconsistencies and the fairness of the process. After thorough discussion on the initial proposed bonus and concerns about the low evaluation scores, Trustee Harper moved approval of a 7.5% bonus for Dr. Beard and Trustee Perry seconded. A roll call vote was conducted Trustees, Dopson-Rodrigues, Figgers, Harper, Perry and White voting "yes" and Trustee Gainey voting "no". The motion carried. The Board also acknowledged the need to improve the evaluation process for future presidents, including better goal-setting and data quantification. Brief discussions also ensued on performance metrics and bonus structures for President Johnson, with recommendations to tie quantitative metrics to bonuses and establish clear weighting systems for different outcomes.

BOARD NORMS

Board norms proposed by Dr. Silver were discussed but tabled for future consideration for incorporating them into existing operating procedures rather than adopting them as separate norms. Some of the norms discussed included:

1. Fiduciary responsibilities and stakeholder alignment
2. Conflict of interest disclosure
3. Commitment to responsible oversight
4. Active advocacy for the University mission
5. Recognition of the Board's administrative excellence
6. Embracing a learning-oriented mindset
7. Upholding ethical standards

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET REQUEST

Vice President of Government Relations, Michelle Robinson provided an update on legislative budget requests, outlining changes including a new \$100 mill non-recurring request for optimizing facilities and land utilization around Bragg Memorial Stadium, \$3 million in recurring funds for enhanced student mental health services, and \$700,000 recurring for a new center for real estate and community development. VP Robinson emphasized that the requests aligned with state priorities and strategic plans. Trustees provided feedback on the legislative budget request, suggesting a focus on non-recurring funds given budget uncertainties and recommended prioritization of must-have items. They also addressed concerns about maintaining access to Tallahassee Memorial Hospital facilities during its possible transition of ownership to Florida State University. Chair Harper informed the Board, after conversations with leadership at both institutions, the commitment to and access of FAMU students and faculty members currently in place at Tallahassee Memorial Hospital will not only stay as is, but continue to rise to the next level. Trustee Harper moved to approve revisions to the legislative budget request as presented and seconded by Trustee Gainey. The motion carried.

BOARD OPERATING PROCEDURES UPDATE

Chair Perry and President Johnson reported that the Board of Governors declined the proposed amendment to the Board Operating Procedures that would have removed clauses 4.2 (vi and vii), which grant the University President sole authority over athletic employment agreements that was approved by the Board during the summer retreat. As a result, the procedures will remain unchanged. President Johnson informed the committee that a comprehensive review of the operating procedures will be conducted at a later time and, at that time, the issue will be revisited.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES GOALS

Chair Perry opened the floor for members to engage in a strategic discussion around goal-setting for 2025-26 and proposed the following initiatives:

- Incorporate milestone-based metrics into the Strategic Plan
- Conduct a comprehensive policy review
- Enhance philanthropic efforts and fundraising strategies
- Reevaluate committee charters
- Foster student engagement through informal lunch meetings
- Increase interaction with individual schools and colleges to maintain mission alignment
- Develop a performance scorecard tracking enrollment, more-detailed graduation rates, retention, financial indicators, etc.

- Conduct a midyear assessment of the Board as well as at the end of the year after revising the assessment tool

Trustees are encouraged to submit additional goal suggestions to Mrs. Taylor within two weeks. These will be compiled and distributed ahead of the next board meeting.

PRESIDENT'S GOALS

Chair Perry announced the President's goals will be formally presented at the December Board Meeting.

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS UPDATE

Vice President Robinson provided a federal update on student aid programs, highlighting potential impacts of proposed funding changes and recent positive news about a reinstated National Institute of Health grant. She also provided an overview of key government relations topics, including:

- Florida and federal legislative session calendars
- Overview of the Florida Board of Governors
- Legislative funding mechanisms
- State budget and Joint Legislative Budget Commission updates
- Federal budget process and current proposals related to student aid
- Discussion of items added and removed in the amended budget request

CANDIDATES FOR OFFICE

Chair Perry stated the Governance Committee will forward the following candidates who declared their candidacy or were nominated for office during the June 2025 meeting to the full Board for consideration on September 18:

- Chair: Deveron Gibbons
- Vice Chair: Michael White

Chair Perry will oversee the election process.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, Committee Chair Perry the meeting adjourned.