

# FLORIDA **A&M** UNIVERSITY

## Meeting Minutes August 21, 2025

### **CALL TO ORDER**

The Special Board Meeting opened with Chair Kristin Harper welcoming attendees and highlighting the start of the new academic year, emphasizing the University's commitment to student success and core values. A quorum was established with the presence of Trustees Brown, Bryant, Crossman, Gainey, Gibbons, Harper, Perry, Reed Washington, and White. Prior to beginning the meeting, Chair Harper asked trustees if there were any conflicts of interest with the agenda item. There were none.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no requests for public comments.

### **2025-2026 FAMU FOUNDATION BUDGET**

Dr. Brandi Tatum-Fedrick, Acting Vice President of Advancement presented the amended fiscal year 2025-26 Foundation Operating Budget. Under Revenue and Support, the endowment and administrative fee and operating fees increased to \$4,016,524 due to an increased projected fundraising goal for the fiscal year. Under expenditure, the major changes are University President Compensation of \$35,500. This line item represents President's Beard's salary for the period of July 1 - August 4, 2025, which is the term that his interim presidency ended. Next, Interim President Compensation, Post-President faculty position, \$252,000. This line item represents former President Robinson's sabbatical and post-presidency faculty position salary. The Office of the President received \$200,000 for Fundraising and Student Success Initiatives. The Division of Athletics received \$400,000 for supplemental support. The Marching Band's original supplement of \$400,00 was zeroed out since it will receive \$800,00 from University carry-forward funds. University Executive Support increased to \$780,000 to cover salaries and benefits for five executive positions that make over the \$250,000 threshold allowed from the state. Those executive positions include Vice President/Athletics Director, Provost, Chief Operating Officer, Chief of Staff and Executive Vice President for Health Sciences.

Trustee Gibbons moved approval of the fiscal year 2025-26 Foundation Operating Budget. Trustee Perry seconded the motion. Prior to the vote, Trustee Bryant requested clarification on the \$800,000 disbursement for the band. Acting Vice President/Chief Financial Officer Murry and Vice President of Student Affairs William Hudson, Jr. discussed the timing and allocation of the funds in University carry-forward, which will be distributed as financial aid starting September 14<sup>th</sup>, with scholarships to be awarded by Dr. Chipman and his team before disbursement. Next, Trustee Bryant asked for a clearer explanation for the budget increases. Dr. Tatum – Fedrick explained the University Executive support budget increased to \$200,000 to support President Johnson's student success initiatives and to increase fundraising efforts. The University Executive Support increased so that the University Foundation could cover the salaries above the \$250,000 threshold of the previously mentioned executives, and the Marching Band received an \$805,000 allocation including scholarships and band performance, with plans to increase the band size from 275 to 330 members. Chair Harper requested confirmation that the \$800,000 allocated to the band was exclusively for scholarships and wanted to know what would happen in other years since this year's funding was from carry-forward funds. President replied the \$805,000 proposal received from Dr. Chipman included scholarships and an additional band performance not included in the budget as well as increasing the band's size. She explained that while the program was previously funded through the foundation, they would work to build it into the regular budget with foundation support, if needed.. Chair Harper

then asked the exact amount of the \$800,000 that would be used for scholarships and President Johnson agreed to follow up with the Board after speaking to Dr. Chipman on the scholarship numbers as well as future funding intentions since she did not have his proposal available at the time. She also emphasized the program's importance for marketing and branding, while also committing to manage safety concerns. Trustee Brown raised concerns about band students' reactions to budget changes, leading Trustee Bryant offering to serve as a student liaison to meet with the band and highlight steps taken on their behalf. Chair Harper suggested that the President's team could provide more detailed information to address student fears. President Johnson agreed to work with Acting CFO Murry and Trustee Bryant to provide a transparent breakdown of the \$805,000 allocation, including details about added events and scholarships. Further discussion by the Board included the need to better monetize the Marching 100's brand and activities, with Trustee White challenging President Johnson and Acting VP Tatum-Fedrick to ensure the band becomes an economic driver for the University. Trustees Gibbons and Washington echoed Trustee White's concerns about return on investment and suggested the band should contribute to fundraising and be included in athletic contracts. Chair Harper acknowledged the new role established to secure funding for the band and athletics department, and expressed excitement about the additional university support for the band's budget. She also acknowledged President Johnson for the creation of the Executive Vice President of Health Sciences position with Dr. Donald Palm leading the effort to further the University's aspirations in relations to R1 Carnegie classification, as well as advancing the mission of research and contributions to society. She then stated, for the records, that the president has full discretion as it relates to any personnel decision, but she found it egregious that a former trustee, who voted for the president has now been hired as the second in command, and has the second highest salary at the university. She has talked directly to President Johnson and, again, she has full discretion, but wanted to state her concern for the record. Afterwards, Trustee Brown praised the University's strong leadership team and the strategic move to create the new position in health sciences to support the University's advancement to R1 classification. He also welcomed COO Lawson in his new role. Finally, the roll-call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously by 10 yeas, with Trustees Dopson-Rodriguez, Figgers and Vazquez absent.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

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