



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Approved 06.03.25

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

February 12, 2025
8:30 A – 12:00 P

Florida Polytechnic University
Barnett Applied Research Center (BARC)
and Virtual via Microsoft Teams

I. Call to Order

Chair Beth Kigel called the Board of Trustees meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

II. Roll Call

Kristen Wharton called the roll: Chair Beth Kigel, Vice Chair Jesse Panuccio, Trustee Ilya Shapiro, Trustee Patrick Hagen, Trustee Dorian Abbott, Trustee Lyn Stanfield, Trustee Cliff Otto, Trustee Sidney Theis, Trustee Christos Tsetsekas, and Trustee Brad Towle were present (Quorum).

Board Trustees not present: n/a

Staff Present: President Devin Stephenson, Interim Provost Brad Thiessen, Dr. Allen Bottorff, David Fugett, Bryan Brooks, Mike Dieckmann, Kelli Stargel, David Blanton, Maggie Mariucci, David Calhoun, Melaine Schmiz, and Kristen Wharton

III. Public Comment

There were no requests received for public comment.

IV. 2024-2026 Board of Trustees Work Plan

Chair Kigel reviewed the Board of Trustees Annual Work Plan. There was no discussion on this agenda item.

V. Resolution: President Emeritus

Chair Beth Kigel delivered remarks on the recommendation from the Governance, Audit, and Compliance Committee to approve Dr. Randy K. Avent as President Emeritus of Florida Poly. Corporate Secretary Kristen Wharton read the resolution into the minutes, with a copy to be attached to the official written record of this meeting.

A motion was made by Trustee Ilya Shapiro to approve the Emeritus Resolution, designating Dr. Randy K. Avent as President Emeritus of Florida Poly. Trustee Lyn Stanfield seconded the motion; a vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

Following a photo taken with Board trustees, Dr. Avent provided a few brief remarks.

VI. Chair's Remarks

Chair Beth Kigel urged Board trustees to prioritize the key components of the 2025-2030 strategic plan in all interactions with their communities, and state and national legislators. She emphasized that this plan will be the central topic of discussions during Florida Poly Day in Tallahassee on March 20.

VII. President's Remarks

President Devin Stephenson provided a brief report on recent institutional activities including participation in local community events, meetings and speaking engagements with industry, interactions with students, and the work of faculty. He noted the renewed relationship with Catapult and the 70 companies that participated in Career Fair earlier in the week.

VIII. Faculty/Student Presentation: Role of 3D Printed Induced Microstructural Defects on the Service Life of Inconel 718 for Use in Aircraft Jet Engines

Dr. Sanna Siddiqui, Assistant Professor in Mechanical Engineering and Sydney Wickett, master's student in Mechanical Engineering, presented their research on 3D printed components for use in the aerospace industry.

IX. Legislative Update

Kelli Stargel, Vice President of Strategic Relationships, presented an update on state legislative activities. During this legislative session, Representatives Josie Tomkow and Jennifer Canady, along with Senator Colleen Burton, will request the funding as laid out in the University's Legislative Budget Request (LBR). Stargel also provided an overview of activities planned for Florida Poly Day on March 20, 2025.

X. Faculty Senate President Report

Trustee Brad Towle, president of the Faculty Senate, reported that the Faculty Representative Committee (FRC) is organizing a Florida Polytechnic Research Day on April 21, 2025. He also highlighted significant enhancements in both undergraduate and graduate curricula across all departments and mentioned that search committees for new faculty members are actively engaged in the recruitment process. Additionally, the FRC has been tasked with reevaluating certain committees and policies that may no longer be necessary.

XI. SGA President Report

Trustee Christos "Taki" Tsetsekas, SGA president, reported on the Florida Student Association's advocacy trip to Tallahassee, Student Senate achievements, an RFP initiative which aims to provide additional funding to RSOs, leadership development programs, progress on the remodel of "The Nest" student space, and plans for Florida Poly Day at the Capitol.

XII. 2025-2030 Strategic Plan: *Progress 2025*

President Stephenson updated trustees on three specific areas of progress the University has

made since the Board met last November. The first area relates to relationship building activities with local, state, and national legislators as well as industry partners. The president also shared that he consolidated external and international relations, strategic initiatives, and development under one umbrella, led by Kelli Stargel, to create a more efficient and dynamic department.

In the area of Academic Affairs, President Stephenson noted the University is on-track to launch two new undergraduate majors in Physics and Applied Sciences, as well as an online master's degree in Engineering Management, pending review by SACSCOC. To prepare for the increase in enrollment, 12 full-time faculty have been hired, and the evaluation process is underway for 28 current faculty who are eligible for reappointment and/or promotion this year.

In the ITS division, President Stephenson stated that Ellucian considers Florida Poly an early adopter of their Banner SaaS program, a student information system. In April, Ellucian will host a global conference in Orlando, featuring Florida Poly staff and students as presenters in five sessions. Additionally, PhoenixAI, a ChatGPT-like environment tailored specifically for Florida Poly, will launch in late February to enhance the efficiency of operations and services. President Stephenson announced the upcoming launch of an administratively led, student-staffed security operations center in fall 2025, with a submission for federal funding scheduled for July 2025.

Vice Chair Jesse Panuccio raised questions about AI policies and protections. In response, Mike Dieckmann explained that several academic and non-academic university committees are actively addressing these issues. They are exploring questions such as 'How do our values align with AI?' and 'What is our AI strategy?' while also working on the development of guidelines and risk management principles.

Trustee Lyn Stanfield requested more details about the University's partnership with Ellucian. President Stephenson highlighted his prior collaboration with Ellucian leadership at his former institution. Dieckmann elaborated on his daily engagement with Ellucian during Florida Poly's transition to the Banner SAAS system, emphasizing the opportunity to influence other institutions, particularly on Florida-specific challenges.

XIII. Consent Agenda

Chair Kigel brought forward the consent agenda for trustee approval.

A. Governance, Audit, and Compliance Committee

- 1. Approve Performance Based Funding (PBF) Audit and Data Integrity Certification**
- 2. Approve FPU-1.003 Use of University Facilities and Property (Amended)**
- 3. Approve FPU-1.007 Campus Free Expression (Amended)**
- 4. Approve FPU-5.003 Textbook and Instructional Materials Selection and Affordability (Amended)**

B. Board of Trustees Meetings

- 1. Approve Board of Trustees Retreat minutes from November 19, 2024**
- 2. Approve Board of Trustees Meeting minutes from November 20, 2024**

As each of the consent agenda items comes before the Board with unanimous approval from the respective Committees, there is no need for a second. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

XIV. Committee Reports

A. Governance, Audit, and Compliance Committee

Committee Chair Cliff Otto reported that the Committee heard David Blanton provide summaries on the various audits that have been conducted. They also received the bi-annual review of employment practices from President Stephenson, and reviewed, approved, and recommended Board approval for the following items which were approved on today's consent agenda:

1. FPU-1.003 Use of University Facilities and Property
2. FPU-1.007 Campus Free Expression
3. FPU-5.003 Textbook and Instructional Materials Selection and Affordability

B. Finance and Facilities Committee

Committee Chair Lyn Stanfield stated that the Committee received the University's and the Foundation's second quarter financial update for the period ending December 31, 2025. They also received updates on the Florida Poly Student Housing System for Fall 2024, the five major campus construction projects currently underway, and Advancement and Foundation activities. In addition, the Committee recommended Board approval for the reappointment and appointment of two Foundation board directors, which were approved on today's consent agenda.

C. Academic and Student Affairs Committee

Committee Chair Sidney Theis summarized the items presented by Vice President and Interim Provost Brad Thiessen and Vice President Bryan Brooks. He highlighted the Committee's discussions on Florida Poly's 2025 performance-based funding score projection, Fall 2024 academic performance, and regional and program accreditation. Additional topics included Fall 2025 admissions numbers, the new online tutoring platform Knack, and initiatives for student leadership development.

XV. Immersion Experience: Lab with Dr. Onur Toker

At this point, Chair Kigel adjourned the meeting, and the Board trustees left the room to participate in a demonstration in the Electrical Computing Engineering (ECE) Lab with Professor Onur Toker. Upon their return, Chair Kigel reconvened the meeting at 11:15 a.m.

XVI. Board of Trustees Meeting Calendar

Chair Kigel reminded trustees of a virtual Board meeting on Tuesday, February 18, to review and approve the firm for the Student Achievement Center design services. She also highlighted the upcoming Board calendar, including a virtual Board of Trustees meeting on Thursday, April 24, and Committee and Board meetings in late May and early June 2025. Due to a scheduling conflict for both President Stephenson and Chair Kigel with the June 4 Board meeting, Chair Kigel proposed moving it to June 3.

A motion was made by Trustee Patrick Hagen to approve moving the June 4, 2025, Board of Trustees meeting to June 3, 2025. Trustee Sidney Theis seconded the motion; a vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

Chair Kigel also reviewed the proposed 2026 Board meeting schedule. Kristen Wharton will poll trustees again to help determine if Wednesday or Friday is the best weekday to hold Board meetings.

XVII. Board of Governors Meeting Calendar

Chair Kigel shared that the next Board of Governors meeting will be held virtually on Thursday, February 20. The next in-person BOG meeting will be held at FAMU on March 25-26.

XVIII. Update on Feasibility and Use of 360-Acre Property

Dr. Allen Bottorff, Vice President and CFO, presented the findings of a feasibility study on the University's 360-acre property, conducted by civil engineering firm Kimley Horn and Associates.

Based on preliminary findings, Bottorff outlined that bringing the property to full site pad-ready status would cost over \$204.25 million, while normalizing the site conditions alone would cost approximately \$190.5 million. He also reviewed two alternative options focused on developing only a small portion of the property.

Trustees engaged in discussions about the study, the potential for a land swap, and other possible uses for the property. President Stephenson noted that the Williams Company likely expects the University to conduct its own due diligence. He requested the Board's approval for University staff to meet with the Williams Company again to share the study's findings and explore potential options.

XIX. Mechanical Engineering Highlight: Patent-pending Police Body Cam Device Presentation

David Fugett, Vice President and General Counsel, introduced an inspiring team behind an innovative police body cam device. Matthew DeCicco ('24), a visionary student, Mike Kalman, a skilled fabrication specialist, and Lakeland Police Department (LPD) Assistant Chief Hans Lehman shared the journey of this groundbreaking device—from its initial concept to its current patent-pending status and successful implementation by LPD officers.

XX. Closing Remarks and Adjournment

With no further business to discuss the meeting adjourned at 12:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Kristen Wharton
Corporate Secretary

**RESOLUTION OF THE FLORIDA POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
DESIGNATING FORMER PRESIDENT RANDY K. AVENT AS
PRESIDENT EMERITUS**

WHEREAS, Former President Randy K. Avent (hereinafter, Former President Avent) has served with distinction as the founding President of Florida Polytechnic University (Florida Poly) from 2014 to 2024, playing a key leadership role in the establishment and development of the University; and

WHEREAS, under Former President Avent's leadership, Florida Poly has grown into a respected institution of higher education, renowned for its focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education and its commitment to innovation, research, and the advancement of technology; and

WHEREAS, Former President Avent has demonstrated exceptional dedication to Florida Poly, guiding the institution through its critical formative years, establishing its academic programs, expanding its campus, and cultivating partnerships with industry leaders, thereby enhancing the University's reputation locally, nationally, and internationally; and

WHEREAS, Former President Avent's vision, leadership, and commitment to excellence have made an enduring impact on Florida Polytechnic University, ensuring its continued success and position as a leader in higher education; and

WHEREAS, the Florida Polytechnic University Board of Trustees wishes to honor Former President Avent for his exemplary service and commitment to the University's mission and values.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Trustees of Florida Polytechnic University, that:

1. **Randy K. Avent is hereby designated as President Emeritus of Florida Polytechnic University**, in recognition of his outstanding contributions, leadership, and dedication to the growth and success of the University.
2. **As President Emeritus**, Randy K. Avent shall be entitled to all honors, privileges, and recognition appropriate to this position, and the University will continue to value and appreciate his counsel and support in the years to come.
3. **This resolution** shall be duly entered into the minutes of the Board of Trustees and a formal copy provided to Former President Avent as a lasting symbol of the University's gratitude for his service.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Florida Polytechnic University Board of Trustees on this 12th day of February 2025.