



# FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### *Advancement Committee*

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## MEETING MINUTES (DRAFT)

Thursday, October 30, 2025

4:00 – 5:00 pm

Augustus B. Turnbull Conference Center  
555 W Pensacola St, Tallahassee, FL 32306  
Room 201

**Attended In Person** (committee): Trustee Brian Murphy, Trustee Kathryn Ballard, Trustee Peter Jones

**Absent** (committee): Trustee Tim Weisheyer

**Staff** (committee): Dr. Marla Vickers

**Others in Attendance:** FSU Foundation Board Chair Christopher Iansiti, FSU Alumni Association President Julie Decker, and other University administrators and staff.

### **I. Call to Order and Welcome**

*Trustee Brian Murphy, Advancement Committee Chair*

Committee Chair Brian Murphy called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m. The roll was taken, and a quorum was present.

### **II. Approval of Minutes**

*August 28, 2025, meeting minutes*

***The draft minutes from August 28, 2025, meeting of the Advancement Committee were approved as presented.***

### **III. Informational Items and Updates**

*Dr. Marla A. Vickers, Vice President for University Advancement and President of the FSU Foundation, Inc.*

Fundraising performance for the FSU Foundation is 175% ahead of this time last year, well over double where the FSU Foundation was at the end of October last year. When mapping the FSU Foundation against their FY26 goal of \$105M, they are tracking 35% ahead of pace at \$32M.

This has been an extraordinary start to FY26, and the team is ready to carry this momentum as they head into December, which is typically one of the strongest fundraising months of the year.

Dr. Vickers shared how the major gifts and principal gifts fundraising teams are utilizing a weighted metric scorecard to track progress against their goals. The scorecard includes five metrics: total dollars raised, number of at-level proposals solicited, number of at-level commitments, number of meetings, and number of qualification contacts.

This approach, originally developed at Northwestern University and now widely adopted by leading institutions, offers a clearer framework for prioritizing key performance indicators for frontline fundraisers, creating healthy competition and driving results.

FSU Foundation Board of Trustees Chair Christopher Iansiti asked if the weighted metric scorecard is used for individual fundraisers or implemented as a team. Dr. Vickers explained that each individual fundraiser has their own metrics and is tracking progress against them weekly.

Dr. Vickers reviewed the FY26 Annual Fundraising and Performance Goals Matrix printout with the committee and drew a correlation between the ranges set forth in the matrix and the metric scorecard. The committee engaged in discussion.

### **Principal Gifts Performance**

Dr. Vickers presented a year-over-year comparison of key metrics from mid-October 2024 to mid-October 2025. The team demonstrated growth in several areas as shown below:

- Total dollars raised: \$13M
- Number of at-level proposals (\$5M+): 15
- Number of at-level commitments (\$5M+): 11

Trustee Brian Murphy inquired about the decline in qualification meetings compared to the previous year. Associate Vice President of Advancement for Principal Gifts & Gift and Estate Planning, Brad Hastings, explained that the team is newly formed and still in the process of hiring and training, which has impacted the volume of qualification meetings. Trustee Murphy commended the increase in at-level proposals. AVP Brad Hastings emphasized that the recent success in proposals and commitments is largely due to the foundation built through qualification meetings in prior years. Looking ahead, he noted that 50% of the team's meetings will be focused on qualifying new prospects, ensuring a strong pipeline for future principal gift proposals.

Dr. Vickers showcased a recent principal gift that closed to demonstrate the length of time and number of people involved in a gift at this higher level: \$10M gift from Bruce and Tracey Berkowitz to the College of Nursing, the largest gift in the College's history. This transformational gift was the result of three years of cultivation led by Trustee Jorge Gonzalez, involving nine strategic touchpoints, including six interactions with President McCullough.

Trustee Peter Jones asked when a donor's estate gift is counted within the fundraising totals. Dr. Vickers explained that the gift is booked once the gift agreement is fully executed, and the donor receives recognition credit for the full value. However, an estate gift is counted in our fundraising totals based on CASE counting standards as outlined in FSU's Gift Acceptance and

Counting Policy. If there is any overage once the gift is realized, then we would count the difference as “new” dollars (since they weren’t previously booked).

### **Presidential Advancement Work**

President McCullough is strategically involved in our principal gift work. In partnership with him, we have set a goal for him to be involved in the solicitation of 10–12 gifts of \$1M+ to academic and athletic designations during the current fiscal year. The president’s progress to date against this goal includes the following:

- The president is currently engaged in eight gift conversations at the \$1M+ level.
- Two solicitations totaling \$11M have successfully closed, with the president playing a pivotal role.

To support this effort, *Presidential Advancement Dinners* continue to serve as a key cultivation tool, helping to build and strengthen the major and principal gift pipeline.

### **Major Gifts Performance**

Dr. Vickers presented a comparison of key metrics from mid-October 2024 to mid-October 2025, highlighting growth across all categories. For context, the major gifts team defines “at-level” gifts as those ranging from \$50,000 to \$4.9M. During the discussion, Trustee Brian Murphy asked about the total number of fundraisers compared to the previous year. Associate Vice President of Advancement for Colleges, Schools and Units, Susan Glenn, reported that the team has ten more fundraisers this year. Trustee Murphy also inquired about the factors contributing to this year’s increase. AVP Glenn explained that fundraisers are soliciting higher-level gifts, which has positively impacted overall performance.

The committee reviewed the detailed FY26 goal spreadsheet to assess how each college and unit is tracking their fundraising progress for the year. Trustee Brian Murphy asked about the significant increase in the College of Business’s goal. Dr. Vickers explained that the increase is due to a portion of the inclusion of the College of Business naming gift in this fiscal year’s goal as well as a couple other seven-figure proposals of significance.

Senior Director of Development for the College of Communication and Information and Assistant Dean of Development for International Programs, Mafe Brooks, shared a donor spotlight on the touchpoints taken to convert an annual giving donor (\$2,000) to a major gift donor (\$500,000). This donor spotlight illustrated the intentional and thoughtful engagement required to elevate the donor’s giving level, showcasing the importance of personalized stewardship and long-term relationship building leading to a larger gift.

### **Annual Giving Performance**

Annual giving performance is up across all constituencies, including Parent and Family Giving, Faculty and Staff Giving, and Student Giving. The regionally embedded Leadership Annual Giving Officers continue to show strong momentum, with increases in their dollars raised, meetings held, and contacts made when looking at their progress made this year vs. where they were last year at this same time.

Trustee Peter Jones asked what constitutes an annual giving fund. Assistant Vice President of Advancement for Annual Giving, Sarishni Patel, clarified that any academic fund receiving gifts between \$1 and \$49,999 is counted toward annual giving fundraising totals.

Dr. Vickers also shared highlights from Parent and Family Engagement, reiterating that the Presidential Parent and Family Brunch, which occurred during Family Weekend this year will now serve as the signature recruitment event for the Parent and Family Advancement Council going forward.

### **Campaign Progress**

Dr. Vickers reported that as of mid-October, the university has raised \$524M in total campaign dollars. This aggregated figure includes contributions to the FSU Foundation, Alumni Association, Research Foundation, Ringling Museum, and charitable gifts from Seminole Boosters donors. This total represents 26% of the \$2B campaign working goal, as we continue into the second year of the Leadership Gift Phase of the campaign.

The *Campaign Advisory Working Group* met October 27 to discuss the university-wide campaign volunteer structure. This group continues to meet bi-monthly to provide strategic feedback and guidance on key campaign projects. The group engaged in a thoughtful discussion about the significant opportunity that exists among FSU's volunteer leaders and their potential to meaningfully advance fundraising efforts across the university.

FSU's national campaign marketing partner, SimpsonScarborough, completed their third on-campus discovery visit earlier this month. They are now synthesizing insights gathered from 488 FSU stakeholders, including volunteers, donors, staff, university leaders, students, and faculty.

Julie Decker, Associate Vice President of University Advancement for Alumni Engagement and President of the FSU Alumni Association, shared a compelling analogy: alumni engagement is like compound interest. It begins with a student's initial connection and grows over time as alumni deepen their involvement and ultimately become supporters of FSU.

### **Trustee Engagement Plan**

Dr. Vickers explained that the FSU Foundation Board of Trustees launched a Trustee Engagement Plan last year and it has proven to be a valuable tool for her team to deepen Trustee involvement and support meaningful philanthropic conversations, especially tied to the campaign. With the support of Chairman Peter Collins and Trustee Brian Murphy, the FSU Board of Trustees will follow suit by rolling out their own version of a Trustee Engagement Plan for each university trustee. Dr. Vickers invited FSU Foundation Board Chair Christopher Iansiti to share his personal experience with the plan. He highlighted its effectiveness in strengthening trustee engagement and achieving greater clarity for Dr. Vickers and her team around the trustee's philanthropic goals.

### **Upcoming Philanthropy Events**

Dr. Vickers asked the committee to please save the date for upcoming philanthropy events.

- National Philanthropy Day on Nov. 15, 2025
- National Giving Day on Dec. 2, 2025
- FSU's Great Give on March 4, 2026

## **IV. Open Forum for Trustees**

*Trustee Brian Murphy, Chair*

There was no further business to discuss.

**V. Adjournment**

*Trustee Brian Murphy, Chair*

*The meeting was adjourned at 4:56 p.m.*

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