



FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, February 25, 2026
9:00 AM

Herbert Weirtheim Center for Business Excellence
Brian and Renee Murphy Forum West
402 W. Gaines Street, Tallahassee, FL 32301

Attended: Peter Collins (Chair), Vivian de las Cuevas-Diaz (Vice Chair), Maximo Alvarez, Kathryn Ballard, Carson Dale, Jorge Gonzalez, Jim Henderson, Roxanne Hughes, Peter Jones, Brian Murphy, Justin Roth and Tim Weisheyer.

Absent: None.

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Mr. Peter Collins, Chair

Chair Collins called the meeting to order at 9:00 am and welcomed attendees.

Heather Mayo conducted the roll call and confirmed a quorum.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Collins asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION

Chair Collins asked everyone to observe a moment of silent reflection. He acknowledged the recent passing of Professor Robert Schurko, director of the MagLab's NMR facility and a faculty member in the Department of Chemistry. He asked everyone to keep Professor Schurko's family, colleagues at the MagLab, and the Department of Chemistry in their thoughts.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

February 28, 2025, Meeting Minutes – Correction
August 29, 2025, Meeting Minutes – Correction
October 31, 2025, Meeting Minutes
December 22, 2025, Meeting Minutes
January 22, 2026, Meeting Minutes

Vice Chair de las Cuevas-Diaz moved to approve all sets of meeting minutes. Trustee Henderson seconded the motion, and all sets of meeting minutes were approved unanimously by all Board members present at the meeting.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

Chair Collins read the Ethics Conduct Policy.

VI. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Richard McCullough, President

President McCullough began his report by highlighting the previous evening's Little Dinner Series event and welcomed the Board to the Brian and Renee Murphy Forum in the new Herbert Wertheim Center for Business Excellence. He noted Dr. Herbert Wertheim's historic \$65 million gift, including a \$50 million endowment, the largest in university history.

President McCullough acknowledged the proposed three-year contract extension on the meeting agenda and expressed appreciation for the Board's consideration. He thanked Chair Collins, the Board, and senior staff for their leadership and introduced a video highlighting university achievements since 2021.

President McCullough provided an update on national rankings and recognitions. He noted that Florida State University achieved its highest overall national ranking at No. 51 and ranked No. 21 among all public universities (*U.S. News & World Report*). He noted that Niche ranked FSU No. 11 among public universities, Princeton Review ranked FSU No. 2 in Student Experience nationally, and TIME magazine inaugural rankings ranked FSU No. 1 in Florida for innovation and economic impact and No. 35 among all U.S. universities.

He reported continued leadership in student success, citing an exceptional academic profile for admitted students (average GPA 4.5, SAT 1430, ACT 32; 92% in the top 10% of their high school class). He recognized Assistant Vice President Hege Ferguson and the Admissions team for their great work. Record outcomes include a 97% freshman retention rate, among the most elite universities in the United States and up from 94 percent just four years ago; a 99.2% fall-to-spring retention; a 78% four-year graduation rate, a 86% six-year graduation rate, and a 80% transfer student graduation rate, the highest in the history of the State University System in Florida.

President McCullough highlighted growth in the Presidential Scholars, Honors, and CARE programs. He noted the upcoming Horizons Unlimited conference for first-generation students, created and launched by First Lady Vartikar, with Chair Collins serving as keynote speaker and Coach Mike Norvell providing the introduction. He noted FSU's continued low median student

loan debt among research intensive universities. He commended Vice Presidents O’Shea and Hecht for their work with students.

He reviewed the expansion of the university’s research enterprise, including record research expenditures of \$488 million—a 50% increase since 2021—and noted that FSU faculty submitted \$1.22 billion in grant proposals last year. He highlighted major initiatives in aerospace, quantum science, rare earth mineral extraction, and FSU Health, including INSPIRE, supported by a \$98.4 million Triumph Gulf Coast grant, and the university’s \$100 million investment in quantum science and engineering. He provided updates on FSU Health, which was launched in 2022 with a \$125 million appropriation from the Florida Legislature. He thanked Senior Vice President Kyle Clark, Vice President Stacey Patterson, and Vice President Jeremy Slaga for their leadership in FSU Health.

He noted the continued work of the National High Magnetic Field Laboratory, including the setting of 17 world records, and highlighted the Interdisciplinary Research and Commercialization Building supporting the expansion of quantum science and engineering, as well as plans for construction of a new facility for the FAMU–FSU College of Engineering. He further noted that FSU’s strategic research planning aligns with Florida’s economic development goals and priorities of the current administration in national security, defense, health care, nutrition, and technology.

President McCullough noted the current 2026 Legislative Session and expressed appreciation to the Governor and the Florida Legislature for their continued support. He thanked Clay Ingram, Josh Duncan, and Chair Collins for their work.

President McCullough also expressed appreciation for the university’s donors and acknowledged recent philanthropic support across the institution, including Dr. Wertheim’s gift to the Herbert Wertheim College of Business and transformative gifts to the College of Nursing and the Anne Spencer Daves College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences.

He announced the creation of a new Vice President for Communications and Marketing position and the upcoming national search. He thanked Assistant Vice President Dennis Schnittker for his interim leadership. Additionally, he provided updates on the dean searches for the Graduate School and the College of Social Work.

President McCullough concluded by recognizing two recent university achievements: Professor Jawole Willa Jo Zollar’s receipt of both an Obie Award and a Grammy Award, and the launch of women’s lacrosse as FSU’s newest varsity sport.

He closed by reaffirming the university’s strong momentum as it celebrates its 175th anniversary, with efforts led by First Lady Jai Vartikar. He thanked the Trustees for their continued support and expressed his love for Florida State University.

VII. CONSENT ITEMS

- A. Request for Approval:** Proposal to Implement B.S. in Civics and Liberty Studies (Academic Affairs)
- B. Request for Approval:** Proposal to Implement M.S. in Hospitality Management (Academic Affairs)
- C. Request for Approval:** Proposal to Implement Ph.D. in Hospitality Management (Academic Affairs)

- D. Request for Approval:** Proposal to Implement Ph.D. in Entrepreneurship (Academic Affairs)
- E. Request for Approval:** Proposal to Terminate B.S. in STEM Teaching (Academic Affairs)
- ~~**F. Request for Approval:** Amended FSU Regulation 5.098 (Academic Affairs)¹~~
- G. Request for Approval:** State University System Performance Audits: Performance-Based Funding Metrics (Audit & Compliance)
- H. Request for Approval:** State University System Performance Audits: Preeminent Research University Funding Metrics (Audit & Compliance)
- I. Request for Approval:** New External Auditor for Florida Medical Practice Plan, Inc. (Audit & Compliance)
- J. Request for Approval:** 2026-2027 Budget Projections for Auxiliaries with Outstanding Revenue Bonds (Finance & Business)
- K. Request for Approval:** Reimbursement Resolution for Housing, Parking, and Dining Expenditures Related to NW Campus Project (Finance & Business)
- L. Request for Approval:** Regulation Amendment, FSU 2.009, Parking and Traffic (Finance & Business)
- M. Request for Approval:** Regulation Amendment, FSU-4.0015 Attendance and Leave, Hours of Work Requirements (Finance & Business)
- N. Request for Approval:** Campus Master Plan Amendment (Finance & Business)

Trustee Hughes requested that Consent Item F be moved to the regular agenda as an action item. Chair Collins reassigned the item to the Academic Affairs Committee section of the agenda.

Chair Collins then requested a motion to approve the consent agenda as amended.

Trustee Henderson moved to approve the amended consent agenda. Trustee Murphy seconded the motion, and the amended consent agenda was unanimously approved by all Board members present at the meeting.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS AND UPDATES

A. Finance and Business Committee

Trustee Jim Henderson, Chair

Mr. Kyle Clark, Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration

Information Item:

- *DOGE Report*

Mr. J. Ben Watkins III, Director, Division of Bond Finance, State of Florida

Chair Collins invited Mr. J. Ben Watkins, Director of the Division of Bond Finance, State of Florida, to present on the State University System Efficiency Study with a focus on Florida State University at the end of the presentation.

Mr. Watkins began his presentation by commending President McCullough and Chair Collins for their great working relationship. He also acknowledged the work of Senior

¹ Consent Item F was moved to the Academic Affairs Committee section of the agenda as an Action Item.

Vice President Kyle Clark.

Mr. Watkins presented the systemwide efficiency study of the State University System, emphasizing the use of business principles and financial metrics to manage universities and evaluate institutional efficiency and effectiveness.

At the end of the presentation, Chair Collins provided comments and noted that an efficiency scorecard would be completed on a college basis at Florida State University. Trustees Hughes and Weisheyer offered questions and comments.

Following Mr. Watkins' report, Trustee Jim Henderson, Chair of the Finance and Business Committee, thanked Mr. Watkins for his presentation and offered additional remarks in response to the presentation.

Trustee Henderson then provided an overview of the Finance & Business Committee meeting, noting that the committee reviewed a robust agenda. He highlighted items on the consent agenda from Finance & Business and expressed enthusiasm regarding the discussion of the campus master plan. He then reported that the committee received a campus safety update and commended university leadership for their ongoing efforts in this area. He also noted that the committee reviewed the university's 2024–2025 audited financial statements.

Senior Vice President Kyle Clark introduced the university's new Chief Facilities Officer, Zach Newswanger, who provided brief remarks.

Senior Vice President Clark thanked Mr. Ben Watkins for his presentation and work. He stated that he looks forward to continuing efforts toward an FSU-centric report, noted Florida State University's efficiency, and commended the Board for selecting efficiency as FSU's new State University System performance-based funding metric (Metric 10).

B. Athletics Update

Mr. Michael Alford, Vice President and Director of Athletics

Chair Collins introduced Mr. Michael Alford, Vice President and Director of Athletics. Mr. Alford began his report by introducing FSU's new head volleyball coach, Lindsay Allman.

Information Item: Student Athlete Highlight

Next, Mr. Alford introduced student-athlete Kyleene "Ky" Filimaua. Ms. Filimaua shared remarks about her experience as a student-athlete at Florida State University.

Mr. Alford continued his report by giving a Fall 2025 Athletic Department Academic Recap, noting the new highest overall semester GPA of 3.333. Other components of his report included football viewership analysis, a football investment analysis, an NIL Go update including a rules/CSC update, football season ticket sales update, football ticket and annual fund revenues and 2025 NCAA reporting.

A discussion about bond debt and associated revenue streams was had.

C. Faculty Senate Steering Committee

Dr. Jennifer Proffitt, Vice Chair, Faculty Senate Steering Committee

Dr. Jennifer Proffitt, Vice Chair of the Faculty Senate Steering Committee, presented on behalf of the Faculty Senate. Dr. Proffitt shared two faculty concerns which included the public posting of syllabi and the pausing of H1B hires. She continued her report by sharing recent faculty achievements and accomplishments.

Dr. Proffitt invited Dr. Taylor Higgins to share her experience as an Assistant Professor at Florida State University.

Information Item: Faculty Member Highlight

Dr. Taylor Higgins, a third-year assistant professor of Mechanical Engineering in the FAMU-FSU College of Engineering, shared her experience as a faculty member and provided an overview of her lab, the Robotics and Technology for Human Health and Mobility (RTHM). She highlighted the societal impact of her research and discussed her teaching and mentoring of students, expressing gratitude for the work of her graduate students in her lab.

D. Student Government Association

Ms. Natalia Ramirez-Romero, Vice President, Student Government Association

Ms. Natalia Ramirez-Romero, Vice President of the Student Government Association (SGA), delivered a report outlining SGA priorities, as well as updates on student academics and achievements, student campus life and well-being. Ms. Ramirez-Romero expressed her gratitude to Trustee Ballard and her husband, Brian Ballard, for their recent gift to the Food for Thought Pantry.

Ms. Ramirez-Romero expressed gratitude to President McCullough and to the Board.

E. Legislative Affairs

Mr. Clay Ingram, Chief Legislative Affairs Officer

Mr. Josh Duncan, Director of Federal Relations

Mr. Clay Ingram, Chief Legislative Affairs Officer, provided a brief report on the current Florida legislative session, highlighting the Seminole Evening reception and FSU Day at the Capitol in January. He then introduced Mr. Josh Duncan and expressed his appreciation for Mr. Duncan's work in Washington D.C.

Mr. Josh Duncan, Director of Federal Relations, followed with a report on federal relations and FY26 funding received for FSU. He noted that the FY27 appropriation season begins soon in March and highlighted his ongoing work with university leadership, particularly University Research, on formulating federal funding requests.

F. Academic Affairs Committee

*Trustee Vivian de las Cuevas-Diaz, Committee Chair and Board of Trustees Vice Chair
Dr. James Clark, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs²
Dr. Jeanette Taylor, Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement*

Vice Chair Vivian de las Cuevas-Diaz, Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee, opened her report by welcoming the new Dean of University Libraries, Dr. Carrie Zebrowsky Cooper. She continued her report by providing updates on the new visitors center and on the development of a social media policy for FSU employees. She noted that the committee for the social media policy is co-chaired by Trustee Hughes and Dr. Jeannette Taylor.

Vice Chair de las Cuevas-Diaz welcomed Dr. Carla Wood and Dr. Selena Snowden to give their presentation.

Information Item:

- School of Communication Science & Disorders Presentation
*Dr. Carla Wood, Professor and School Director
Dr. Selena Snowden, Director of Audiology Services*

Dr. Wood and Dr. Snowden presented on the work of the School of Communication Science and Disorders, highlighting the school's role in preparing the next generation of health professionals. They noted that the program is ranked first in the state and 18th nationally. Their presentation also addressed the school's outreach to rural communities, faculty development, research excellence, service to the State of Florida, global engagement, audiology services, and strategic growth.

Vice Chair de las Cuevas-Diaz, Trustee Murphy, Trustee Hughes, and Trustee Weisheyer all offered questions and comments. President McCullough thanked Dr. Wood and Dr. Snowden for their work.

Following the presentation, Vice Chair de las Cuevas-Diaz introduced Dr. Jeannette Taylor, Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement, to introduce the first action item. Vice Chair de las Cuevas-Diaz noted that the Committee recommended all six faculty candidates for Tenure Upon Appointment.

Action Item I: Request for Approval: Tenure Upon Appointment

Dr. Taylor began her presentation by providing an overview of the university's faculty hiring process. Candidates who are considered for tenure upon appoint are typically those with an established career at other institutions. She explained that hiring decisions are based on a candidate's record of accomplishments, a clear promise for continued success, and letters of recommendation. Candidates who advance in the process participate in a multi-day interview that includes presenting their research or creative work, meetings with faculty members, students and the dean.

Dr. Taylor reported that six newly hired faculty members were recommended for tenure upon appointment based on their prior experience. She emphasized that all

² Provost Clark was unable to join the meeting.

candidates met FSU's rigorous standards for tenure and were recommended by the standing university committee that reviews Tenure Upon Appointment candidates, as well as by Dr. Taylor, the Provost, and the President.

Chair Collins expressed his appreciation for the process and thanked Dr. Taylor.

Trustee Hughes moved to approve the Tenure Upon Appointment candidates. Vice Chair de las Cuevas-Diaz seconded the motion, and the Tenure Upon Appointment candidates were unanimously approved by all Board members present at the meeting.

Vice Chair de las Cuevas-Diaz noted that for the next action item, the Academic Affairs Committee recommended the approval of the 2025-2026 Tenure Report and invited Dr. Taylor to provide an overview of the item.

Action Item II: Request for Approval: Tenure Report

Dr. Taylor provided an overview of the action item. She emphasized the strategic importance of tenure in attracting top talent to Florida State University, retaining high-performing faculty, and strengthening the university's research enterprise. She also outlined faculty talent development at FSU, describing the progression from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor with tenure, and ultimately to Full Professor. Dr. Taylor further reviewed the tenure pathway, the groups involved in evaluating candidates for promotion and tenure, and the metrics used in the evaluation process.

Dr. Taylor concluded her report by noting that President McCullough recommends 40 candidates for tenure, effective Fall 2026. She stated that all recommended candidates met FSU's rigorous expectations. She also reported that one candidate withdrew from the process, and two candidates were not recommended.

President McCullough provided additional comments, noting that tenure an important action undertaken by the university, as faculty are the talent that drives and sustains the institution's reputation.

Trustee Roth expressed his support for the action item but requested that Trustees be provided with additional time to review candidates in future meetings by receiving the materials separately and earlier. Vice Chair de las Cuevas-Diaz responded that she would work with the provost to address the request.

Trustee Hughes moved to approve the Tenure Report. Vice Chair de las Cuevas-Diaz seconded the motion, and the Tenure Report was unanimously approved by all Board members present at the meeting.

Action Item III: Request for Approval: Amended FSU Regulation 5.098

Vice Chair de las Cuevas-Diaz asked Dr. Amy Guerette, Associate Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement, to introduce the next action item, which had been moved from the consent agenda at the request of Trustee Hughes.

Dr. Guerette explained that the amendment brings FSU Regulation 5.098 into compliance with Board of Governors Regulation 8.003: Textbook and Instructional Materials Affordability and Transparency. She noted that the amended regulation requires a 45-day public posting period for syllabi prior to the start of the semester. Dr. Guerette also reported that she and Dr. Taylor met with the Faculty Senate Steering Committee, and after discussions with the BOG and university leadership, faculty now have the option to exclude the meeting time, day, and location on the syllabi for safety.

Trustee Hughes expressed her gratitude to Dr. Taylor and Dr. Guerette for their collaboration with faculty. She shared concerns raised by faculty regarding the public posting of syllabi, particularly the public-facing nature of the requirement.

Vice Chair de las Cuevas-Diaz, moved to approve the Amended FSU Regulation 5.098. Trustee Roth seconded the motion, and the Amended FSU Regulation 5.098 was approved by a majority vote with 11 yeas (Alvarez, Ballard, Collins, de las Cuevas-Diaz, Dale, Gonzalez, Henderson, Jones, Murphy, Roth, Weisheyer) and 1 nay (Hughes).

G. Advancement Committee

Trustee Brian Murphy, Chair

Dr. Marla Vickers, Vice President for University Advancement & President, FSU Foundation, Inc.

Trustee Brian Murphy, Chair of the Advancement Committee, provided an overview of the committee's meeting. Vice President Vickers presented a fundraising update, noting that the Foundation is experiencing its second-best year since inception, supported by two recent principal gifts. Trustee Murphy thanked Trustee Ballard for the gift to the Food for Thought Pantry and highlighted the upcoming 15th annual Great Give on March 4.

He reported on endowment performance and noted that Dr. Wertheim's recent gift represents the largest endowment gift in university history. He stated that opportunities remain to name additional colleges and provided updates on the Campaign Advisory Group's ongoing work. He also noted that the campaign marketing firm, SimpsonScarborough continues its discovery sessions.

Trustee Murphy thanked the Trustees for their participation in the Trustee Engagement Plans and announced upcoming "FSU Comes to You" engagement events and noted a recent event in Nashville, TN. He concluded by reporting that college-by-college campaign goals are under evaluation.

H. Audit and Compliance Committee

Trustee Peter Jones, Chair

Mr. Undra Baldwin, Chief Audit Officer

Mr. Robert Large, Chief Compliance and Ethics Officer

Trustee Peter Jones, Chair of the Audit and Compliance Committee, provided an overview of their committee meeting. He noted that the Chief Audit Officer, Undra Baldwin, presented three action items, all of which were included on the consent

agenda. Status updates were provided on the 2025-2026 Operational and IT audits.

For Compliance and Ethics, Chief Compliance and Ethics Officer Robert Large presented five informational items: enhancements that are being made to the compliance and ethics program, a student ombuds program update, a Clery compliance program update, a conflict-of-interest disclosure update, and an update on foreign gifts and contract reporting, noting that there were no reportable agreements involving foreign countries of concern.

I. Student Affairs Committee

Trustee Kathryn Ballard, Chair

Dr. Amy Hecht, Vice President for Student Affairs

Trustee Kathryn Ballard, Chair of the Student Affairs Committee, provided an overview of the committee's meeting. She noted that the university is celebrating its 175th anniversary, with activities led by the First Lady. Trustee Ballard highlighted the university's recent Carnegie Classification and provided updates on the DC Away Program and City Bound Events for 2026, the Champions Hall housing renovation, Arq Boutique Fitness, upgrades to the Leach Center's HVAC and equipment, the FSU Childcare Center, the Graduate Student Resource Center, and a highlight from the Congress of Graduate Students.

J. University Research Committee

Trustee Jorge Gonzalez, Chair

Dr. Stacey Patterson, Vice President for Research

Trustee Jorge Gonzalez, Chair of the University Research Committee, provided an overview of their committee meeting. He noted that Vice President Patterson delivered a research presentation that included updates on the federal landscape and highlighted the significant increase in research activity since President McCullough's arrival in 2021. He commended Dr. Patterson for her work and stated that FSU is fortunate to have her on the leadership team.

Trustee Gonzalez also noted that Vice President Jeremy Slaga provided an update on FSU Health, discussing the research-driven model. He expressed appreciation for Vice President Slaga's work and noted that the university is pleased to have him as part of the FSU leadership team.

IX. CHAIR'S REPORT

Mr. Peter Collins, Chair

Action Item: Request for Approval: President's Three-Year Contract Extension

Chair Collins introduced the action item and noted the updated BOG regulation now permits boards of trustees to extend a university president's contract by three years without waiting until the end of the existing term.

Chair Collins proposed that the Board grant a three-year contract extension for President McCullough through August 31, 2029, noting that his current contract would conclude on

August 31, 2026. He then opened the floor for discussion.

Vice Chair de las Cuevas-Diaz, Trustee Gonzalez, Trustee Dale, Trustee Weisheyer, and Trustee Hughes offered supportive comments and expressed their appreciation for President McCullough's leadership. Chair Collins also expressed his gratitude for President McCullough's work and noted his commitment to excellence.

Chair Collins asked for a motion to approve the President's Three-Year Contract Extension.

Trustee Henderson moved to approve the President's Three-Year Contract Extension. Trustee Murphy seconded the motion, and the President's Three-Year Contract Extension was unanimously approved by all Board members present at the meeting.

President McCullough thanked the Board for its support, expressed that he looks forward to continuing to advance his goals at the university, and thanked Chair Collins for his work.

X. OPEN FORUM FOR BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Mr. Peter Collins, Chair

Chair Collins announced upcoming Board dates.

Chair Collins thanked the staff and Trustees for their work and attendance.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Peter Collins, Chair

Chair Collins adjourned the meeting at 1:16 pm.