



FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Student Affairs Committee

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, February 24, 2026
3:00 – 4:00 p.m.

FSU Westcott Building
Conference Room 201
222 South Copeland Street
Tallahassee, FL 32306

Attended (Committee): Trustee Ballard, Trustee de las Cuevas-Diaz, Trustee Weisheyer, Trustee Dale

Absent (Committee): None

Staff: Dr. Amy Hecht

Others in attendance: Trustee Henderson, Vice President Carolyn Egan, Vice President Joe O'Shea

I. Call to Order and Welcome
Trustee Kathryn Ballard, Chair

Trustee Ballard called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. Chelsea Knight called role and confirmed a quorum.

II. Approval of Minutes

October 30, 2025, meeting minutes

Trustee de las Cuevas-Diaz motioned to approve the minutes of the October 30, 2025, meeting. Trustee Dale seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved unanimously by all committee members present.

III. Informational Items and Updates

Dr. Amy Hecht, Vice President for Student Affairs

a. FSU's 175th Celebrations

- i. Dr. Hecht provided updates on the university's 175th anniversary celebration, which began with a special 175th Birthday Celebration at Market Wednesday and had special guests like President McCullough, the First Lady, and Board of Trustees Members.
- ii. The 175th celebrations will culminate during Homecoming 2026.
- iii. Dr. Hecht also highlighted that the First Lady is hosting the "Sisterhood Legacy Tea" event on April 22nd, 2026. This event is a celebration of FSU as a women's college and honors the modern women leaders today, welcoming all FSU students to attend.

b. FSU Food for Thought Pantry

- i. Dr. Hecht announced a \$1 million gift to support the Food for Thought Pantry, generously provided by Trustee Kathryn Ballard and her husband, Brian Ballard. She appreciated their leadership and commitment to advancing student basic needs initiatives. Discussions are underway regarding relocation to a larger space to better serve students.

c. DC Study Away Program

- i. Dr. Hecht shared updates on the DC Study Away program, noting that seven students are currently participating and that strong interest continues for the summer term, with over 53 students submitting applications so far. The program remains in a collaborative effort with the Career Center and Housing.

d. Housing Updates

- i. The university has acquired Champions Hall, a 145-bed apartment-style facility anticipated to open in Fall 2027 following renovations. Planning priorities include ADA accommodations, community space, and potential graduate or upper-division student housing options.

e. City Bound Noles Programs

- i. Dr. Hecht also provided updates on City Bound Noles and DC Bound programming, which connect students with alumni and employer networks in major cities. Attendance and alumni engagement continue to grow, supported by expanded outreach and marketing efforts.
- ii. Trustee de las Cuevas-Diaz inquired about the timing of the events, specifically whether hosting programming in June rather than in August—when students may already be working in those cities—would increase engagement, and whether alumni participation levels in August would be sufficient to sustain strong attendance.

f. Childcare Center

- i. FSU's childcare program, now in its 90th year, currently serves 133 student families. Dr. Hecht discussed a federal campus grant awarded four years ago that continues to fully subsidize childcare for qualifying students, with 1 year remaining in the grant cycle. The program has significantly enhanced student-parent success and retention.

g. Recreation Updates

- i. Dr. Hecht provided updates on ARQ Fitness, with a soft launch planned for summer and full implementation in the fall.
- ii. Upgrades at the Leach Center and Lakefront Park are ongoing, including HVAC replacements and new equipment.
- iii. Dr. Hecht also discussed new revenue-generation initiatives undertaken by Campus Recreation, including the launch of The Torch Challenge, scheduled for March 7, 2026. The event will feature teams competing in a fitness competition, with a \$50 registration fee per team, helping to address a gap in local large-scale fitness competitions in the Tallahassee community.

h. Staffing Updates

- i. Dr. Hecht introduced Dr. Dei Allard who will serve as Assistant Vice President for Housing, Childcare, Early Learning, DC Study Away, and the Student Affairs portfolio at our Panama City Campus.
- ii. Dr. Hecht invited Dr. Allard to share brief remarks. Dr. Allard expressed appreciation for the warm welcome and shared that she looks forward to working with the Board and campus community.

i. Graduate Student Life Overview

- i. Dr. Hecht concluded with a high-level overview of graduate student life at FSU, noting that Fall 2025 enrollment was more than 11,000. Discussion centered on housing affordability, graduate-specific community space, and increased visibility of campus resources. Trustees discussed opportunities to enhance graduate engagement, including potential lounge space and housing considerations.
- ii. Graduate education is often characterized by ambiguity in timelines, mentorship dynamics, and definitions of progress, increasing the need for structured support, community-building, and proactive outreach.
- iii. Through partnerships across the Graduate School, University Libraries, Career Center, and the Graduate Student Resource Center, the university is expanding academic enrichment initiatives designed to support professional development, research skills, teaching preparation, and career readiness.
- iv. Dr. Hecht invited Dr. Emily Leventhal, Associate Dean of the Graduate School, to share additional insights regarding the graduate student experience and the collaborative efforts underway to strengthen support and engagement. Dr. Leventhal highlighted the continued partnership between Student Affairs and the Graduate School to enhance academic enrichment, professional development, and community-building initiatives for graduate students.

j. COGS Presentation

- i. Dr. Hecht invited COGS representatives Jack Rowan, Nicollette Landen, and Noah Biaz to present an overview of the Congress of Graduate Students and their ongoing initiatives.
- ii. The COGS students provided an overview of their structure, budget, and key initiatives. COGS oversees approximately \$1.45 million in graduate student

- activity fees, funds over one hundred student organizations, and administers significant travel grant support for graduate research presentations.
- iii. Presenters highlighted accomplishments, community-building initiatives, and ongoing challenges facing graduate students, including housing affordability, food insecurity, funding needs, and space for community.
 - iv. Trustees engaged in discussion regarding resource awareness, marketing strategies, and interest in graduate student housing.

IV. Open Forum for Trustees

Trustee Kathryn Ballard, Chair

Trustee Ballard asked the Board if there was anything they would like to discuss in the Open Forum. Dr. Hecht then thanked everyone including the students for coming.

There were no further comments.

V. Adjournment

Trustee Kathryn Ballard, Chair

Trustee Ballard made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Trustee Weisheyer seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned at 4:05 p.m.