



FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Student Affairs Committee

MEETING MINTUTES (DRAFT)

FSU Board of Trustees
Wednesday, November 20, 2024
12:30 – 1:45 pm

North Florida Innovation Labs
1729 West Paul Dirac Drive, Tallahassee, FL 32310

Committee Members in Attendance: Chairman Drew Weatherford, Trustee Deborah Sargeant; Trustee Jackson Boisvert.

Committee Members Absent: Trustee Vivian de las Cuevas-Diaz

Committee Staff: Dr. Amy Hecht, Vice President for Student Affairs

Also in attendance: Trustee Birmingham, and other University Vice Presidents and staff.

I. Call to Order and Welcome

Trustee Drew Weatherford, Chair

Trustee Weatherford called the meeting to order 12:45 p.m.

II. Approval of Minutes

Trustee Boisvert moved to approve the committee meeting minutes from September 12, 2024. Trustee Sargeant seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved unanimously by all present committee members.

III. Informational Items and Updates

Dr. Amy Hecht, Vice President for Student Affairs

I. Highlights

a. ESports Updates

- i. As of Fall 2024, the Department of Student Affairs has invested almost half a million dollars into hardware, software, renovation, and staff line for ESports

at FSU. Their goal is to make this project an engagement opportunity that fosters belonging and teamwork among students in the gaming community

- ii.** Dr. Hecht also pointed out that this is an opportunity to bring academic partners in (such as creating a certificate, major, etc.) and that people have shown interest in this early on. She then introduced Matthew Nelson, the new Director of ESports at FSU.
- iii.** Mr. Nelson discussed research that shows 85% of young people enjoy playing video games, and that this demographic is becoming more diverse. He said they are hoping to create a dynamic, inclusive culture for modern gaming. This would involve continued collaboration with the Student Life Cinema at the Askew Student Life Center and expanding the new facility in their current meeting space of Room 101. If they can expand, they would hope to rent the space out for academic purposes in either increments of quarters or halves, or in full.
- iv.** Trustee Boisvert inquired about the profitability and self-sustainability of the space, to which Mr. Nelson responded that they hope to obtain sponsorships from current FSU partners and new ones as the competitive gaming industry grows larger. Dr. Brandon Bowden mentioned that Florida State University Schools (FSUS) has reached out to potentially host tournaments or rent the space for their students. He also discussed the possibility of renting out the space to members of the local community and other gaming communities.
- v.** Trustee Weatherford inquired about ongoing expenses, opening timeline, and how we plan to cover upkeep costs. Trustee Boisvert also expressed interest. Some ongoing expenses would include computer replacement ideally every five years, repairs as needed, parts as needed, and staff expenses. However, these costs would be less than half of the initial cost as that was used primarily for the renovation of the space. Dr. Hecht suggested that the ESports team collaborates with SGA to enact ongoing initiatives for costs of upkeep. Trustee Boisvert agreed that this would be a good idea. The goal is to open the space in January 2025. Trustees Weatherford and Boisvert agreed that they want to make sure this project is sustainable.
- vi.** Trustee Weatherford inquired about competitors in the ESports field. Mr. Nelson mentioned the Full Sale Arena in Winter Park, FL and the Boise State University program, which has been successfully running for seven years.
- vii.** Trustee Sargeant inquired about corporate sponsors, to which Mr. Nelson did not yet have an answer, but expressed that he and others are actively searching for them. Dr. Hecht said that she hopes to have a natural extension of some athletic sponsors such as Coca-Cola, and that we could also use the team's jerseys as an opportunity to advertise.
- viii.** Dr. Zduy Chu suggested limiting student access to the Lab, restricting hours, or enacting a fee to use the space, so that students do not spend too much time playing video games. Trustee Weatherford suggested using a similar policy to a workout class, where you pay to reserve the space and are charged a fee if you do not show up to your reserved time.

b. FSU Flying High Circus

- i.** Dr. Hecht gave updates on the rebuilding of the Circus tent, which they are hoping to open in Summer 2025 for the annual Circus Summer Camp. Due to the recent hurricanes, the contractors will not have the circus tent ready before the summer.
- ii.** Dr. Hecht let everyone know that we still had over 100 students audition, for 60 spots. They will be working on mobile acts and pop - up shows (Halloween show in Union etc.)

c. NPHC Park Final Update

- i.** Dr. Hecht informed those present that construction of the NPHC Park has been completed. The Division of Student Affairs will be hosting a ribbon-cutting opening ceremony on Friday, November 22nd with various donors, DSA staff, and members of NPHC present.

d. FSU Food for Thought Pantry Updates

- i.** Dr. Hecht displayed a graph showing that the Food for Thought Pantry has grown in popularity each year, especially the past few years, with awareness for the Pantry growing throughout campus.
- ii.** The space is currently more of a multi-purpose space, but not practical. In renovating the space, they hope to make it more like a grocery store layout and less like an office space. Dr. Hecht also showed the naming opportunities for the space. She advised they are in the process of obtaining corporate sponsors for this project through the Student Affairs Development Committee and other groups. Other current funding initiatives for this renovation project will be explained by members of the Student Foundation.
- iii.** Trustee Weatherford inquired about the demographics of those using the food pantry and where Florida State's pantry is in comparison to its peers. Dr. Hecht explained that the consumers of the food pantry are primarily international and graduate-level students due to their extreme financial circumstances. As for performance in relation to FSU's peers, Dr. Hecht explained that they will hear about the current initiative involving the University of Florida later. Alanna Kibiloski mentioned that the Pantry received a \$1000 check from Wawa that week.

e. Hurricane Recap

- i.** Dr. Hecht described the success of the evacuation of residence halls and shelter on campus for Hurricane Helene. Overall, there was good feedback from students and parents, but some notes for any future evacuations include: providing more advanced notice, providing transportation from residence halls to shelters, placing orders for snacks and meals, and strengthening the Donald L. Tucker Civic Center more so that there is less exposure to windows in the event of a natural disaster.

f. SGA Reunion Recap

- i. The Division of Student Affairs collaborated with SGA to host a reunion for members of Student Government to commemorate the 75th anniversary of SGA at Florida State University.
- ii. The event was successful in raising funds for SGA, and those present expressed hopes to independently organize a reunion every two years from now on.

II. Student Foundation Board Highlight

Ms. Yasamin Khosh

- i. Dr. Hecht invited representatives of the FSU Student Foundation to share information about their current fundraising initiatives with the Board. Chair Urielle Laurent had to leave the meeting early, so Ms. Yasamin Khosh, the new student foundation chair, spoke on her behalf.
- ii. Ms. Khosh introduced herself and informed the Board that the purpose of the Student Foundation is to encourage giving and philanthropy among students on campus.
- iii. During Spring 2024, they helped fundraise for three members of the Marching Chiefs to attend the first football game of the 2024 season in Dublin, Ireland. This semester, their cause is food insecurity, and their primary initiative is to fundraise for the FSU Food for Thought renovation project. They are collaborating with SGA to bring back the Round Up! Initiative, which encourages students to round up their totals at on-campus dining and retail locations for a good cause. This initiative peaked in 2018 when they generated funds for the FSU Food for Thought Pantry.
- iv. The Pantry is currently competing with UF's Alan and Cathy Hitchcock Field and Fork Pantry in an annual food drive competition entitled "Chop & Chop" to help stock the pantry shelves and raise awareness about food insecurity. Last week, FSU Student Government welcomed members of UF Student Government for a tour of the current Food Pantry.
- v. Student Government also collaborated with the Student Foundation to host four events centered around this competition last week. Their opening event was called Pizza Tuesday, where students were able to enjoy a meal and learn about campus resources for food insecurity. On Wednesday, they tabled at Market Wednesday and then did an EBT class with the Center for Academic Retention and Enhancement (CARE). On Thursday, they hosted a mobile food distribution on Landis Green alongside other organizations on campus. Lastly, on Friday, they gathered volunteers from five student organizations to do a service day at the Food Pantry.
- vi. The events this week were successful in raising funds and awareness for food insecurity in the area. They are also working with Ms. Kibiloski to determine ways of continuing this initiative in Spring 2025. Trustee Boisvert expressed pride and gratitude for the work SGA and SF have done to assist the Food for Thought Pantry. He also brought up a statistic that students facing food insecurity are 60% less likely to graduate within four to six years, highlighting the importance of this cause to our university.

vii. Trustee Weatherford acknowledged the importance of this cause and suggested that the Round Up! Initiative exists perpetually, or at least until the Food for Thought Pantry renovation is completed. He and Trustee Sargeant inquired about changing it from a 25-cent value to a \$1.00 value. Ms. Khosh agreed that this could work, since students are more willing to give than one would expect.

viii. Trustee Weatherford inquired about extending the initiative to Athletic venues. Ms. Knight clarified that this would be a challenge as Athletics uses a different food vendor but that they would love to work with campus partners to work on this.

ix. Ms. Khosh pointed out that initiatives like Round Up! encourage students to begin giving early so that they can become a donor as alumni.

IV. Open Forum for Trustees

Trustee Drew Weatherford, Chair

A. Trustee Weatherford asked for an update on on-campus housing initiatives. Dr. Hecht replied that we are working with facilities and our contractors on the design phase now through next semester. It is likely that this project will not be taking place until Fall 2028 as the process is taking longer than anticipated.

B. Trustee Sargeant shifted back to ESports, clarifying that the games will not be physical (such as a Peloton), to which Mr. Nelson confirmed that it will just be video games.

V. Adjournment

Trustee Sargeant moved to adjourn the meeting. Trustee Boisvert seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned at 1:35 p.m.