



Framingham State University

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

BOARD MEETING ■ MARCH 23, 2022 7:15 P.M. ■ REMOTE & ALUMNI ROOM, MCCARTHY CENTER

MINUTES – DRAFT

In Attendance: Hope Lozano Bielat*, Nancy Budwig*, Beth Casavant, Diane Finch, Kevin Foley, Mike Grilli, Anthony Hubbard, Hillary Nna*, Claire Ramsbottom*

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 p.m.

Roll call of attendance: Hope Lozano Bielat – yes; Nancy Budwig – yes; Beth Casavant – yes; Diane Finch – yes; Kevin Foley – yes; Mike Grilli – yes; Anthony Hubbard – yes; Claire Ramsbottom – yes; Hillary Nna – not in attendance at the time of the roll call.

1.0 Chair's Report

Chair Foley presented a motion to approve the consent agenda:

- Minutes (January 26, 2022)
- Personnel Actions Report
- Authorization of Signatory

The motion was moved by Mike Grilli; Diane Finch seconded the motion.

Roll call vote: Hope Lozano Bielat – yes; Nancy Budwig – yes; Beth Casavant – yes; Diane Finch – yes; Kevin Foley – yes; Mike Grilli – yes; Anthony Hubbard – yes; Hillary Nna – yes; Claire Ramsbottom – yes

- Motion approved

Chair Foley continued his report with the following updates:

- Board of Trustee Retreat, is scheduled for May 25, 2022 at the Warren Center.
- There are currently two trustee vacancies. Trustee appointments are forthcoming.

2.0 President's Report

President Cevallos provided the following updates:

- *The Gatepost* student journalists, Leighah Beausoleil and Sean Cabot were recognized by the Society of Professional Journalists, with a region one, Mark of Excellence awards.
 - Trustee Diane Finch suggested a congratulatory letter be sent to the students on behalf of the Board of Trustees.

* Notates remote attendance.

- An email from the President was sent on March 21, informing the University community that an individual from the general public had come to the FSU campus with the intent to incite students by making homophobic/transphobic statements. This individual, using a body-camera, had filmed and posted on social media, the confrontations he had with students on the campuses at FSU and had previously visited a number of other state universities.
 - President Cevallos commended the University staff and police for their response.
 - Students were supported by a meeting convened by the CIE to discuss to debrief the situation.
- The Provost/VP of Academic Affairs and VP of Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement (DICE) search updates:
 - The Provost/VP of Academic Affairs search is currently underway.
 - The review and preliminary interviews of candidates will be conducted between April 8 and 18.
 - Finalists will be brought to campus in May.
 - The VP of DICE search is taking a slower track to allow for sufficient time for the search firm to recruit and the FSU community to fully participate in the search process.
 - Interviews of candidates will begin in the fall.
 - President Cevallos asked a member of the Board to participate in the search.
- The Richard C. Logan Gymnasium dedication will be held on April 9, at 5:30 p.m.
- COVID updates:
 - Masks have become optional in most areas of the campus, with the exception of classrooms and the Library and RamTrams.
 - Testing will continue to be held weekly for those with vaccine exemptions. Asymptomatic testing will be voluntary, for vaccinated students and employees.

Dr. Lorretta Holloway provided the following highlights from the Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement (DICE) Report:

- The director of the Center for Inclusive Excellence (CIE), in collaboration with the director of Student Involvement and Leadership Development and deputy director of Athletics, led an initiative to review the University's regalia policy.
 - This resulted in a more inclusive policy for students holding multiple affinity identities.
- Illustrations included in the report are examples of artwork submitted by students.
 - A grant from the Sudbury Foundation aided the purchase of student artwork to be displayed in the CIE.
 - Thirty-one pieces of artwork were submitted, and will be showcased in the CIE this spring.
- The director of the CIE will serve on a panel discussing diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives in higher education as part of Rotary District 7910's inaugural Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Summit on March 26, 2022.

Eric Gustafson reported the following from Development and Alumni Relations:

- Fundraising efforts have raised \$1.49M as of this month for FY '22.

- Notable gifts include: A \$50K donation gift to support the operations of the Danforth Art Museum; a \$25K gift to support operations at the Danforth Art School; a \$20K gift to an existing endowed scholarship fund; a \$10K gift to an existing endowed scholarship fund; and an additional \$10K gift to support operations of the Danforth Art Museum.
- Continued offerings of a mix of in-person and virtual events and engagement opportunities.
 - Forthcoming events include a farewell reception for President Cevallos in May, Reunion Weekend in June, and Homecoming and a celebration of the 50th anniversary of football at FSU in October.
- The Danforth Art Museum Updates:
 - The installation of new exhibits, will host an opening reception on Saturday, March 26 from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
 - “Drop into Art” programs for children and families are held on the second Sunday of each month.
 - The Art School spring program registration has been strong. Registration numbers have been exceptional for the School’s Summer Arts program for youth and teens.
 - New scholarship opportunities for both youth and adults has been established, expanding the reach of the School to families who cannot afford the class fees.

President Cevallos invited Dr. Sandra Rahman to introduce the Student-in-the- Spotlight, Alex Hooper.

Dr. Sandra Rahman introduced Alex Hooper as someone who is humble, incredibly honest, and as a student that “quietly carries the team” – someone who is supportive of his fellow classmates, and listens to constructive advice. She concluded by stating that the department is very proud of Alex and that he is a shining star.

Alex Hooper began by expressing his gratitude for all of the help he has received from his professors. He specifically thanked Dr. Rahman, Dr. Michael Harrison, and Dr. Warner Cranes.

Alex explained that the community at FSU provided him with the environment to succeed. He noted that he did not excel academically in middle or high school. He was enrolled in CP2 classes in high school, as he required extra academic assistance. Alex stated that he didn’t believe in himself much, and focused on what he couldn’t do, instead of what he could. At FSU he found that support and encouragement which has helped him to succeed, stating that Framingham gave him the chance to shine. He didn’t think he could get into college, but now is a senior with a high GPA, and is a member of three honors societies, including Phi Kappa Phi.

During the pandemic, Alex was required to undergo surgery to repair his rotator cuff, which required a significant amount of post-surgery physical therapy. He noted that if he were elsewhere, he may have been overlooked. At one point he didn’t think he would be able to complete his classes due to his physical therapy schedule, but the faculty cared and supported him throughout his ordeal.

Alex concluded by stating that while he looks forward to the next chapters in his life, FSU will always hold a special place for him.

3.0 Student Trustee Report

Trustee Hillary Nna presented the following updates:

- Student engagement events included a Black Lives Matter Banner signing, Administrators Forum and Safety Walk.
- Upcoming events to include a community gardening session.
- SGA Elections have been scheduled for April 28.

4.0 Academic Affairs Committee

Trustee Nancy Budwig provided the following report from the Academic Affairs Committee meeting.

- Student engagement and retention, as well as community and public facing engagement, were thematic issues woven into all of the five presentations from the committee meeting.
- New academic initiatives included:
 - New general education program and advising system.
 - An advising model which provides first-year students with immediate access to faculty advisor.
 - Progress on a Center for Civic Engagement and Service Work.
 - McAuliffe Center redesign and Planetarium plans for student involvement.
 - Faculty Research on Student Success
 - Teaching scholarship which also allows for student participation in faculty research work.
 - Antiracism initiatives:
 - Fellow Search promoting the recruitment of a more diverse faculty for fellow positions.
 - Faculty of Color mentoring program.
- Approval of a motion to bring forth a resolution to the full BOT to recommend the new academic program: Fashion Merchandising.

Dean Marc Cote was invited to provide a summary and to give context to the proposal, which included the following:

- Currently the Fashion Design and Retailing major hold two concentrations: 1) Apparel Design and 2) Fashion Merchandising.
- The intention of the resolution is to elevate the two concentrations into two distinct majors.
 - This action will require the approval of the Board of Higher Education (BHE).
- Creating the new majors will serve as a good recruitment tool. There is high interest in both areas of study; and the creation of the majors will assist in targeted marketing.

Trustee Budwig brought forth a motion for the Board of Trustees recommendation for approval of Fashion Merchandising program by the BHE.

The motion was moved by Mike Grilli, seconded by Diane Finch.

Roll call vote: Hope Lozano Bielat – yes; Nancy Budwig – yes; Beth Casavant – yes; Diane Finch – yes; Kevin Foley – yes; Mike Grilli – yes; Anthony Hubbard – yes; Hillary Nna – yes; Claire Ramsbottom – yes

- Motion approved

5.0 Enrollment and Student Development Committee

Chair Foley introduced the items addressed in the Enrollment and Student Development Committee meeting. These included the COVID mitigation work, University Police's antiracism commitments and initiatives, an annual Financial Aid update, and the strategic enrollment initiatives. He invited Dr. Holloway to present further on the items.

Dr. Holloway presented the following updates:

- COVID-19 Work Update:
 - Preparations were made to address the Secretaries of Education's letter encouraging institutions to roll-back mitigations.
 - Post-spring break onboarding testing was conducted.
 - Making FSU a mask friendly campus.
- A response from the new Chief of Police, titled New Leadership Plans for Anti-Racism Commitments and Initiatives created in response to questions posed during the interview process and in response to the racially just policing policy and 21st century policing was included on page 5 of the Enrollment and Student Development Committee materials
 - Staffing of the University Police Department continues to be a challenge due to turnover of officers and law applicant numbers.
- Carla Minchello discussed financial aid disbursement – Annual Financial Aid update document.
- Timeline for Strategic Enrollment Initiatives – page 7, Enrollment and Student Development Committee materials
 - Addressed concerns: website redesign and RFP process.
 - Discussed ways to cut the timeline down while allowing more campus engagement.

Trustee Finch asked Dr. Holloway what steps are being taken, to encourage first generation, BIPOC, and transfer student at these accepted student events and to choose Framingham over other institutions.

Dr. Holloway responded that efforts are made to showcase not only the wide variety of academic opportunities, but also the variety of students at FSU. Representatives from the CIE, and students representing various offices and programs are also present at these events. Monthly scheduled evening virtual open houses have been hosted by Dr. Holloway and Dean of Enrollment Management, Jeremy Spencer. The most recent virtual event included Carla Minchello, Director of Financial Aid, as a guest. The virtual events have been successful with attendance ranging between 30 to 35 individuals.

6.0 Administration, Finance, and Information Technology Committee (Trustee Grilli)

Trustee Mike Grilli summarized the items discussed in the Finance Committee meeting.

- Current year updates and future year analysis.
- Allocation of \$1M for student enrollment enhancements; \$3M allocated to balance the FY22 budget; \$3M will be reserved for FY23.

Trustee Grilli commended all of the efforts being made, but noted that enrollment issues must be addressed.

He continued by inviting Dr. Dale Hamel to further outline the details on collective bargaining and Governor's budget proposal.

Dr. Hamel presented the following updates:

- HEERF funds in conjunction with the release of the debt service reserves will address a large portion of the deficit currently projected for FY23.
- Five-year pro forma context assumptions: 1) enrollment must meet projections as modeled, 2) State appropriations: assuming a 2% collective budget; 2% from formula funding (currently at 1%).
 - The University will be required to address the larger term outlook, if enrollment does not meet the prospectus.

Chair Foley commented that the out-years are of concern, adding that a realistic view of University expenses must be taken into consideration to adjust for declining revenues.

Trustee Anthony Hubbard asked for more information to be presented on the next key steps to be taken in developing the capital budget, as was covered in the Finance Committee meeting.

Dr. Hamel stated that they will be undertaking, through the Department of Capital Assets Management and Maintenance (DCAMM), a facilities condition index evaluation.

- This will include components of capital repairs, projects outstanding, and a space utilization study.
 - The findings from the report will inform allocations of the next 5-year critical repair program of the Commonwealth.
- The Governor's budget has been sent to the legislature for another round of reviews and for approval.
 - This will inform the budget allotted to the College operations funding, as well as use of the critical repair program funding.
- As part of the bond restructuring arrangement, we've built in the option of using savings to fund the operations budget, should there be a deficit in the 5th and out years.

Trustee Budwig stated that it will be important for all sectors of the University to work together for us to meet our goals. She further clarified that the efforts being made, including the continued updating of academic programs, facilities, and offering the kinds of experiences that students want and need, are what will ultimately produce the desired results.

7.0 Governance Committee (Trustee Casavant)

Trustee Casavant reported the following from the Governance Committee meeting.

- Succession planning:
 - Trustee Claire Ramsbottom has agreed to join the Governance Committee.
 - With the passing of Richard Logan, the vice chair position must be filled.

Trustee Casavant moved a motion to recommending Anthony Hubbard for Vice Chair. Mike Grilli seconded the motion.

Roll call vote: Hope Lozano Bielat – yes; Nancy Budwig – yes; Beth Casavant – yes; Diane Finch – yes; Kevin Foley – yes; Mike Grilli – yes; Anthony Hubbard – abstained; Claire Ramsbottom – yes

- Hillary Nna did not vote.
- Motion approved

Trustee Casavant continued her report in proposing a motion to recommend a change to the by laws. She provided background, on the resolution.

Beth Casavant moved the motion; Mike Grilli seconded the motion.

Trustee Casavant read the proposed change aloud – page 46, Board of Trustees materials.

Roll call vote: Hope Lozano Bielat – yes; Nancy Budwig – yes; Beth Casavant – yes; Diane Finch – yes; Kevin Foley – abstained; Mike Grilli – yes; Anthony Hubbard – yes; Claire Ramsbottom – yes

- Hillary Nna did not vote.
- Motion approved

Trustee Casavant presented a motion recommending the 2022-2023 Slate of Officers.

Kevin Foley moved the motion, Anthony Hubbard seconded the motion.

Roll call vote: Hope Lozano Bielat – yes; Nancy Budwig – yes; Beth Casavant – abstained; Diane Finch – yes; Kevin Foley – yes; Mike Grilli – yes; Anthony Hubbard – yes; Claire Ramsbottom – yes

- Hillary Nna did not vote.
- Motion approved

Trustee Casavant presented the motion recommending the Board of Trustee meeting dates for the 2022 – 2023 academic year.

The motion was moved by Beth Casavant; Mike Grilli seconded the motion.

Trustee Grilli asked that the March BOT meeting be scheduled to a date closer to the beginning of April. Trustee Casavant suggested the Board continue to vote on the resolution for the schedule as proposed, but will review the March date. Should there be no conflicts, the March meeting will be moved to March 29, 2023.

Roll call vote: Hope Lozano Bielat – yes; Nancy Budwig – yes; Beth Casavant – yes; Diane Finch – yes; Kevin Foley – yes; Mike Grilli – yes; Anthony Hubbard – yes; Claire Ramsbottom – yes

- Hillary Nna was not present.
- Motion approved

8.0 Chief of Staff, General Counsel and Secretary to the Board of Trustees Report

Counsel Ann McDonald reminded the Trustees that the close date for completing the Self-Assessment survey is April 15, 2022. Results will be presented at the Board of Trustees retreat.

9.0 New Business

Trustee Hope Bielat informed Chair Foley of her resignation, as her term has expired. Changes in her career path and family obligations requires that she step down. Trustee Bielat thanked Chair Foley, President Cevallos, and Trustee Budwig.

Chair Foley and President Cevallos thanked Trustee Bielat for all of her support and the contributions made to the committees she had served on, as well as to the full Board.

10.0 Public Comment

Francesca Cerutti-Harris promoted an Alumni House event. She welcomed Dr. Niemi and invited her to meet the organization as she begins her role as President.

Dr. Niemi thanked Francesca Cerutti-Harris and accepted the invitation.

11.0 Adjourn Open Meeting

A motion to adjourn was moved by Mike Grilli; Diane Finch seconded the motion.

Roll call vote: Hope Lozano Bielat – yes; Nancy Budwig – yes; Beth Casavant – yes; Diane Finch – yes; Kevin Foley – yes; Mike Grilli – yes; Anthony Hubbard – yes; Hillary Nna – yes; Claire Ramsbottom – yes

- Motion approved

The meeting ended at 8:39 p.m.

Pages referenced from the Board of Trustees, Academic Affairs Committee, and Enrollment and Student Development materials are available upon request from the Office of the Chief of Staff, General Counsel, and Secretary to the Board of Trustees.