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

1.0 Chair’s Report

Chair Kevin Foley asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda that included the following:

- Minutes (September 23, 2020)
- Personnel Actions Report

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On a motion duly made and seconded, it was voted to approve the consent agenda including the minutes from the September 23, 2020 Board of Trustees meeting and the personnel actions report.

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Counsel Ann McDonald (Secretary of the Board) received a request via the Zoom meeting “chat” from a reporter from the Gatepost to record the meeting. Chair Foley agreed, and stated for purposes of public meeting laws, the meeting is being recorded by the FSU Gatepost newspaper.

Chair Foley provided an update on the status of open and anticipated Trustee positions:

- Trustee Dana Neshe will complete her second term, which will end on March 1, 2021.
- Trustee Anthony Hubbard will complete his first term on March 2021. His name will be forwarded to the Boards and Commissions supporting an appointment for a second term.
- Candidates to fill the currently open position have been brought forward, and are under review by the Executive Committee.

Chair Foley then reported about the Department of Higher Education’s recent Statewide Trustee Remote Convening, which along with Ann McDonald and President Cevallos, Trustees Hope Lozano Bielat, Beth Casavant, and Nancy Budwig attended.

- The Trustees reported the webinar to be well produce with insightful content.
- Trustee Bielat found the presentation by Judy Block McLaughlin to be of particular interest, honing the importance of the equity agenda and the overall importance of the board to the university.

*Denotes physical attendance
Trustee Casavant appreciated the opportunity for additional training.
Trustee Budwig found the session on the equity agenda was especially well done.

2.0 President’s Report

President Cevallos reported on the following items:

- Framingham State University has been recognized as a veteran friendly school.
- Camila Wendorff, received the first annual Henri A. Termeer Scholarship, awarded by The Termeer Foundation and the Massachusetts Biotechnology Education Foundation (MassBioEd).
- Changes have been made to the Spring 2021 semester calendar:
  - The Spring semester will begin a week later to assist with onboarding testing and the quarantine of returning and incoming students.
  - Elimination of Spring Break but allowance for one day off during that week for students and staff.
- COVID-19 testing all students prior to leaving for Thanksgiving holiday in compliance of a new state requirement.
  - Encouraging residential students to stay on campus during Thanksgiving Break.
  - Providing residential students with free meals during this time.
  - Campus rate is lower than that of the surrounding community. Keeping students on campus will be safer for all.

Vice President of Diversity, Inclusion and Community Engagement Report

Dr. Constanza Cabello highlighted the following items from her report:

- Ongoing antiracism efforts
  - Offering training; guidance, defining antiracism, understanding racism and change, defining a common language, policy review focusing on Black and Latinx students.
- Ongoing support of employees of color, especially Black employees. Employees of Color Affinity Group working on plans for the spring 2021 term.
- Commended Patty Birch and the CIE; programing included trans awareness, Native American month and creating spaces for processing the election.
- Continuing engagement with the indigenous community. President Cevallos, Dr. Cabello, Dan Magazu (Direct of Communications), and Olivia Beverlie (SGA President) met with Brittney Walley, Anti-Mascot Representative for the Nipmuc community and John Peters Jr., Executive Director for Indian Affairs, to discussed the FSU seal.
  - Importance of engaging in restorative justice with this community.

Development and Alumni Relations Report

Eric Gustafson highlighted the following from his report:
• New endowments:
  o First-generation student and Danforth Art Museum endowment to support the preservation of the museum collection.
• Successful Swiacki Children’s literature Festival.
• Alumni of Color Network panel discussion; great attendance.
• Danforth Art Museum to include three new exhibits; received good press from WGBH.
• Danforth Art School faced challenges with most classes held online, very limited in-person classes for adults.
• Art School staff developing winter programing for children during the December School Vacation week and for Summer 2021.

Student-in-the-Spotlight
President Cevallos welcomed the Student-in-the-Spotlight Evan Prasky.

Introduced by Dr. Lawrence McKenna, Evan Prasky arrived at FSU in 2017 as a veteran of the Army Tank Corp. Mr. Prasky is a double major in Biology and Environmental Science and Policy. The small class size and location of FSU appealed to Mr. Prasky, but the community and peer mentorship helped him become a better student. He demonstrated a genuine love of learning, and has excelled in his studies. He is currently applying to several graduate programs. Mr. Prasky thanked the Board and the many faculty who have helped shape him as a student.

Chair Foley congratulated Mr. Prasky, and thanked him for his service.

3.0 Student Trustee Report

Trustee McKenzie Ward reported on the following items to the Board of Trustees.

• SGA appointments:
  o 5 new senators appointed
  o Possible new appointment for resource ambassador to help make textbooks more accessible.
• The Administrators Forum had a good online turnout in mid-October.
• The renaming of Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day. Changing our wording is important, the SGA will be making this recommendation.
• Planning for Armenian genocide awareness programming. The SGA will be working with Dr. Wheeler to address how the denial can impact people’s lives.
• Resolution passed by SGA for classes after Thanksgiving; urging faculty to move completely online.
  o The SGA understands that it cannot be mandated, but hopes that faculty will accommodate students who decide to remain at home after the holiday.
• Passion Projects:
  o Students presented on sexual and identity education on campus.
Food and housing insecurity. To provide overnight bags to offices on campus with toiletries for students that are housing insecure distribution.

Mental health and counseling center funding, government funding for mental health initiatives in state universities.

Trustee Ward read a letter written by an anonymous student. The anonymous student, who works as a Resident Assistant, wrote of his/her/their distress with resident students participating in off-campus parties and that they have not only contributed to a high level of anxiety but also added workload. This anonymous student also wrote of reporting these incidences to the administration but did not feel they were addressed.

Dean of Students, Dr. Meg Nowak addressed the issues brought up by Trustee Ward in the letter:

- The participants from an off campus party were identified and were spoken to. As a precautionary measure, several students were moved to a different residence hall. Of the 6 students with positive COVID-19 results, most all did not stem from exposure at these parties. Asked that students communicate with her office directly. There are community standards in place.
- Trustee Ward agreed to reach out to this student and voiced serious concerns.

Chair Foley suggested Trustee Ward have a separate conversation with Dean Nowak after the BOT meeting.

4.0 Academic Affairs Committee

The Academic Affairs committee report was given by Trustee Nancy Budwig, and she remarked on the following items:

- Three primary areas of focus discussed in the Committee meeting:
  - Preparation for the spring semester, the extensive thought put on safety, i.e. starting the semester later.
  - Decision to have the spring three-day weekend instead of a full week of Spring Break; a difficult decision but the safest option.
  - Course modalities, retrospective analysis; found the materials very clear and helpful. Nature of hybrid courses next semester, a rate of 15% of courses with some face-to-face component.

- No student evaluations, Pass/Fail grading option; promotion and tenure decisions.
- Preparation that went into creating spaces for students to process election/results and learn more; ethical and promoting good citizenship and right to vote; commended the University on their efforts.
- Academic Affairs accreditation page included in the “about” section of the website; work to promote reputation; helpful for Board members.
- HHMI antiracist training spreading to other disciplines and faculty.
• Grants and funding; good to hear range of projects despite the pandemic.
• Alumni engagement; other ways to better market this work to alumnus and larger community.

5.0 Enrollment and Student Development Committee

Trustee Brian Herr remarked on the most pressing issues discussed in the Enrollment and Student Development Committee:

• Student Counseling Center use is significantly lower than usual, as are other support services, raising concerns that students are not reaching out for assistance.
• Enrollment numbers are down. Discussions surrounding FSU enrollment figures, which are lower than other state universities, brought up good questions, but no clear answers.
• A presentation from David Merwin provided an overview of geographic information on returning and non-returning students.
• Recruitment strategies were discussed to help reverse the numbers.

Trustee Herr invited Dr. Lorretta Holloway to provide further highlights. Dr. Holloway presented on the following:

• Review of admissions numbers: first-time/first-year, transfer, and graduate enrollment figures; overall head count by race/ethnicity; a comparative review of enrollment numbers from 2018-2020 by degree; fall semester head count and class numbers.
  o Dropping numbers of high school seniors. Enrollment data team is reviewing overall enrollment numbers at end of each semester. Monthly reports to review retention.
  o Looking at mapping data to address why FSU may be lagging behind from our sister institutions.
• Traditional admissions recruiting efforts are no longer available to us due to COVID-19; applications are down nationwide; two big open houses will be converted to monthly events; lots of direct/targeting advertising; direct mailing to students based on specific interests; personalized videos. The admissions cycle has been delayed in many ways due to remote activities.

The Trustees engaged in further questions regarding why the University was doing worse in enrollment than sister schools.

Dr. Holloway referred to information presented by David Merwin, which indicated that the MetroWest population has become higher income than in the past, speculating that we may be losing students from the area, because of the changing demographic.

The conversation brought up further questions, such as how do we attract students from this area, are we losing students to other state universities? Suggestions such as further engagement with high school students through unique events, and stronger engagement with alumni and legacy admissions were made.
The Trustees voiced that there is an urgent need to take immediate action, and would like the Board to review the details on the enrollment reporting coming from Enrollment and Student Development Committee.

6.0 Compliance, Audit and Risk Committee

Ann McDonald reported on the following:

- CAR: September 29th meeting:
  - Tammy Till provided an update of internal assessments and planned assessments.
  - Counsel McDonald provided an update on audit and risk, COVID-19 preparations. A review of a workflow model for the approval of policy and procedures was presented; Trustee Neshe asked that it be moved to the Governance Committee for review and approval.
  - Mr. Roy Galang presented on the support of all remote work and cyber security.

- CAR/Finance meeting:
  - Both committees heard from external financial auditors, unrestricted opinion was issued. The CARES Act funds have not been reviewed since the final rules have not yet been promulgated to them to audit against. The Auditors will return to complete that work and the joint committee meeting will be reconvened when the report on this is complete.

6.0 Governance Committee

Trustee Anthony Hubbard highlighted the following from the October 2nd meeting:

- University seal:
  - Provision in the University’s by-laws is detailed in describing the seal
  - Possible alternatives were reviewed to adopt a new seal quickly; minimum parameters of what the seal will include such as the name and founding date, “Live to the Truth” motto. Proposed by-law amendments to be reviewed.

- University policies:
  - Discussions surrounding the type of policy should be brought to the Board for review and approval, suggesting most major policies be reviewed by the Board prior to implementation. Further discussion required to define these issues; all University policies are always available to the Board.

- Proposal of a new subcommittee to participate in the University’s commitment to diversity, community engagement, and antiracism:
  - A number of different ways to approach were addressed. The Governance Committee recommended not to establish another subcommittee. The group agreed to have each existing BOT committee charged to consider these issues under their current mission, and further be addressed by the Executive Committee noting the widespread importance of the work to the institution.
6.0 Administration, Finance and Information Technology Committee

Trustee Mike Grilli reported the following:

- The committee approved and advanced the results of the financial audit within the required timeframe.
- The state budget for the University was level funded resulting in a balanced operation budget.
- Residence hall/food service, and Warren Center will operate at a loss. However, previously canceled events at the Warren Center are being rebooked for a full spring/summer schedule.
- Meeting with Boston Trust revealed the institutional attitudes of the investment company, which is very conservative. We will be looking more carefully at how they handle our funds and hope they will do better.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was voted to approve the Board of Trustee’s Finance Committee reaffirmation of the following Investments Class Allocation Target Ranges as referenced in the FSU Investment Policy document.

**Investments Class Allocation Target Ranges:**

- **Equities:** 35%-65%
- **Fixed Income:** 20% - 35%
- **Alternatives:** 0% - 5%
- **Cash Portfolio:** 10% - 35%

Patrick Laughran, Associate Vice President and Chief Information Officer, was invited to present information relating to the Information Technology Services department.

Mr. Laughran reported on the following:

- Efforts that went into supporting the resources necessary to bring the University online; supporting remote work, online classes, hybrid and on-campus support.
- Having to transition operations, services and support staff/ cross-training, with a large amount of student employees (50%) required a great deal of commitment from the ITS staff.
  - The challenge was to keep up with all of the various needs of the University. Faculty, staff, and facilities were all helpful in the process.
- Planned initiatives: implemented new policies/procedures and new systems for remote access; equipping the classroom for a hybrid mode of instruction.
Programmatic initiatives: less reactive; ensuring that the students have what they need, i.e. Wi-Fi access, computers. Outreach to people who are trying to find ways to create labs remotely.

Recommendation for initiatives: implementation of an IT governance; optimizing efficiency through analysis of service interactions, automation, and implementation of changes to support the way we operate and service the University as a whole.

Trustee Hubbard asked if provisions have been made to all students? Mr. Laughran stated that they were, and that they have been working closely with Dr. Holloway to elicit where that need would exist and to assure that any issues are addressed. Given the experiences gained from the past spring and current semester, he assured Trustee Hubbard that we are in an even better position for the upcoming spring.

Chair Foley thanked Mr. Laughran for the efforts in the reactionary mode required from ITS, and congratulated he and his team for the good work done.

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

Chief of Staff, General Counsel and Secretary to the Board of Trustees, Ann McDonald, Esq. reported on the following:

- The Department of Higher Education in collaboration with the Inspector General’s Office and the Attorney General’s has developed training for Trustees.
  - Requirement of 8 modules, once every 4 years; new appointees must complete the training within the first 6 months of their appointment. All currently seated Trustees must have completed by next November 2021.
  - The trainings are live and synchronous online. Acknowledging that this schedule may be challenging, we are encouraging to have these trainings provided in a recorded/asynchronous format.

Trustees raised questions regarding the training schedule, if a schedule would be available in the summer. Many were concerned about their availability to take all of these training sessions within the given schedule.

- Board assessments (assessment results were included with the meeting materials).
  - Issues that came up with split option or areas that may require strengthening of efforts involved the development of polices, philanthropy and fund raising. Others lacked consensus, such as the role of the Board.
  - The policy approval workflow has been proposed to CAR and Governance Committees for their review and approval.

Counsel McDonald suggested that the review of the BOT self-assessment results would be a good conversation for the BOT retreat and asked the Trustees to review the full assessment report.
Chair Foley agreed that the assessment results would be worthy of a more of an in-depth conversation. Trustee Budwig suggested a virtual retreat, to which Chair Foley agreed and asked that the Board meet prior to the January meeting. Ann’s office will coordinate details of the retreat.

9.0 New Business: There was no new business

Public Comments: There was no public comment.

Adjourn Open Meeting

The open meeting adjourned at 9:42 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kevin Foley
Chair
Framingham State University, Board of Trustees

Dr. F. Javier Cevallos
President
Framingham State University