



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

BOARD MEETING ■ MAY 6, 2025, 6:30 PM ■ MCCARTHY CENTER, ALUMNI ROOM & REMOTE

MINUTES

Chair Anthony Hubbard called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Roll Call Attendance

Cheri Comeau – present; Lino Covarrubias – present*; Kristen Daly – present*; Mariel Freve – present* ; Dennis Giombetti – present; Anthony Hubbard – present; Jeremy McDonald – present; Susan Puryear – present*; Claire Ramsbottom – present; Antonia Soares Thompson – absent for roll call.

1. Chair's Report

- A. Consent agenda, page 4
 - BOT Meeting Minutes: March 26, 2025, pages 5 – 11
 - Personnel Actions, pages 12 – 13

A motion to approve the consent agenda was moved by Cherie Comeau, Dennis Giombetti seconded the motion.

Roll call vote: Cherie Comeau – aye; Lino Covarrubias – aye; Kristen Daly – aye; Mariel Freve – aye; Dennis Giombetti – aye; Anthony Hubbard – aye; Jeremy McDonald – aye; Susan Puryear – aye; Claire Ramsbottom – aye; Antonia Soares Thompson – aye

—Motion approved

B. Updates

Chair Hubbard presented the following information:

- Introduction of New Student Trustee for AY 2025 – 2026: Luke Yubeta
 - Luke Yubeta was introduced by Student Trustee Jeremy McDonald. Luke is a junior, majoring in Finance, with a minor in Media, Culture and Society, and in Economics. He is a student athlete and is from Arizona.

C. Commencement Reminder

Chair Hubbard reminded trustees of the upcoming graduate and undergraduate commencement ceremonies:

* Indicates remote attendance.

- Graduate Ceremony: Thursday, May 22, Logan Gymnasium; Undergraduate Ceremony: Saturday, May 24, DCU Center, Worcester

D. Presidential Evaluation Committee

- Chair Hubbard and Trustees Comeau and Puryear will be serving on the committee. Work will commence during the summer months for the report to be presented at the September 2025 Board meeting for approval to forward the report to the DHE.

E. BOT Retreat

- Chair Hubbard reminded trustees that the annual spring retreat will be held on Wednesday, May 28, 5:00 – 8:00 PM at the Warren Conference Center and Inn.

F. Presidential Salary

A motion to approve the equity adjustment to the Presidential salary was moved by Claire Ramsbottom, Jeremy McDonald seconded the motion.

Roll call vote: Cherie Comeau – aye; Lino Covarrubias – aye; Kristen Daly – aye; Mariel Freve – aye; Dennis Giombetti – aye; Anthony Hubbard – aye; Jeremy McDonald – aye; Susan Puryear – aye; Claire Ramsbottom – aye; Antonia Soares Thompson – aye

—Motion approved

2. President's Report

President Nancy Niemi reported the following:

A. Updates

- Reports

Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement Report

Vice President of the Office of Diversity, Inclusion, Community Engagement, Jeffrey Coleman directed trustees to his report which included an article from the *Chronicle of Higher Education* which cited strategies to address the executive orders coming from the Presidential Administration. He also noted highlights of professional development opportunities offered to the faculty and staff, as well as programming offered in support of students.

Development and Alumni Relations Report

Vice President of Development and Alumni Relations, Eric Gustafson, reported that the current fundraising campaign is anticipated to finish a year earlier than planned and will exceed their goal at \$35M. A final report will be provided in September and will include where the funds were allocated and will highlight all of the investments that donors have made.

Foundation and Alumni Board Chair Update

Chair of the Foundation and Alumni Board, Michael Gatlin reported on the Foundation's mini-grant program of which applicants may request funding for a wide variety of impactful university activities. He highlighted that over 95% of the initiated programs are still currently active and all have exceeded the original parameters, demonstrating continued relevance in their operations. Mr. Gatlin shared successes of the mini grants including one that sponsored family meet-

and-greets on the FSU campus, as well as an internship program in Washington DC which promoted student retention.

B. American Association of Colleges and University (AACU) Letter

- President Niemi reported that as of April 22, 612 presidents have signed "[A Call for Constructive Engagement](#)".

C. FSU Federal Actions Information Portal

- President Niemi informed trustees of the intranet page which provides information to keep the FSU community updated.

Being the final meeting of the academic year, President Niemi highlighted important FSU accomplishments which took place this past year:

- Community Integration Priorities: the Art School at Danforth reported record numbers of participation throughout the year, recognizing the robust and growing connection to our greater MetroWest community.
- SUCCESS funding of \$1.3 million was awarded for FY25, with strong indications of continued funding in FY26. The University is focusing on initiatives to improve student retention and persistence, including hiring additional academic advisors and mentors, expanding professional development for faculty and staff, and building data infrastructure to better track student progress and deliver targeted, effective support.
- Year-One Strategic Priorities: establishing pathways to growing:
 - Career Development and Work Experience infrastructure and growth
 - Early College Program stability and growth
 - Data-driven decision making
- Efforts to reverse the trend of declining enrollment began in 2023, with increases seen in Fall 2023 and Fall 2024, and continued growth anticipated for Fall 2025. The infrastructure established through SUCCESS funding is expected to support improvements in student retention and persistence through data-informed decision-making across the University.

D. Student-in-the- Spotlight: Cameron Merrill

President Niemi introduced Professor Laura Lamontagne, who teach, advises, and mentors students in the College of Business. Dr. Lamontagne introduced FSU student Cameron Merrill.

Cameron is a first-generation student with a dual major in Finance and Management, and minors in Economics and Business Administration. He has accepted a position with J.P. Morgan in New York City, which he will begin following his graduation later this month.

Cameron shared his experiences at FSU which began in his transferring to the University in search of a more supportive and connected environment. At FSU, he found a strong sense of community both in residence life and academics. He highlighted the accessibility and dedication of his professors, who not only provided academic guidance but also took a genuine interest in students' personal and professional development.

The collaborative spirit cultivated at FSU carried into Cameron's internship at J.P. Morgan, where he initiated daily team sessions among interns to share knowledge and provide mutual support. This approach was credited with the group's collective success and return job offers. As Cameron prepares to graduate, he expressed gratitude for the values and skills

gained at FSU and intends to stay engaged by mentoring students and supporting their career development.

3. Student Trustee's Report

Trustee Jeremy McDonald reported on the following:

A. Updates

- SGA Election results included Caesar Matos, president; Khoa Bui, treasurer; Ana Julia Rubiero, Diversity and Inclusion Officer; and several senators
- Administrator's Forum: The new format of the forum was successful in allowing for better engagement between students and administrators. The article reporting on the forum, included on page 3 of *The Gatepost*, April 11, 2025 Issue was highlighted.
- Careers in Law Panel Discussion: Trustee McDonald thanked Trustees Hubbard, Puryear, Soares Thompson, and Counsel Ann McDonald for their participation in the panel and highlighted *The Gatepost* article on page 13 of the April 4, 2025 edition.
- Letter of Support was issued by SGA in recognition of the transformative nature of public education and support of the commitment to ensuring that it remain accessible to all. The letter was issued for publication in *The Gatepost* and will be posted on SGA's social media accounts.

4. Student Experience Committee

Trustee McDonald reported the following from the April 22, 2025 committee meeting.

A. Committee Report

- The committee discussed the increasing role of family involvement in students' decisions related to finances, careers, health, and relationships.
- The Office of Family Engagement provides support to families through multilingual (English, Spanish, Portuguese) communications and resources.
 - Weekly summer emails and biweekly academic-year updates keep families informed about deadlines, events, and academic processes.
 - Key initiatives include the Family Experience Portal, Family Network Meetings, topical series, and events like Homecoming and Commencement.
 - The office also coordinates with the Family Advisory Council and maintains a presence at major campus events.

5. Administration, Finance, and Technology Committee

A. Committee Report

Vice President of Finance, Technology, and Administration, Robert Totino provided a summary of the items addressed at the April 22, 2025 Finance Committee meeting, including the following:

- Update: FY 2025 Budget
 - The originally projected \$400K deficit is at a breakeven with an increase in projected revenues and below budget expenditures for the remainder of the current fiscal year.
- FY'26 Budget Discussion

- Chair Hubbard informed the trustees that the budget projections will be reviewed in further detail at an upcoming Finance Committee meeting to be scheduled in the coming week.

B. Motion: Delegation of Authority to Finance Committee for Final Approval of FY 2026 Budget

A motion to approve the delegation of authority to the Finance Committee for the approval of the FY 2026 budget was moved by Antonia Soares Thompson, Claire Ramsbottom seconded the motion.

Roll call vote: Cherie Comeau – aye; Lino Covarrubias – aye; Kristen Daly – aye; Mariel Freve – aye; Dennis Giombetti – aye; Anthony Hubbard – aye; Jeremy McDonald – aye; Susan Puryear – aye; Claire Ramsbottom – aye; Antonia Soares Thompson – aye
—Motion approved

Vice President Totino continued in presenting a review of the RFP process and information on the selected investment services manager.

- Trustees shared their experience serving on the selection committee.

C. Motion: Approval of the Recommended Investment Service Manager

A motion to approve CAPTRUST Financial Advisors as the recommended investment services manager was moved by Cherie Comeau, Mariel Freve seconded the motion.

Roll call vote: Cherie Comeau – aye; Lino Covarrubias – aye; Kristen Daly – aye; Mariel Freve – aye; Dennis Giombetti – aye; Anthony Hubbard – aye; Jeremy McDonald – aye; Susan Puryear – aye; Claire Ramsbottom – aye; Antonia Soares Thompson – aye

—Motion approved

6. Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management Committee

A. Committee Report

- Iris Godes reviewed enrollment figures as outlined on pages 28 – 29

Trustee Claire Ramsbottom reported the following:

- Reviewed outcomes of a strategic enrollment investment, including branding and hiring a strategic enrollment manager, linked to recent enrollment success.
- Discussed student retention efforts, with *Rams 101* seminar cited as a key tool—86% of students found it helpful for their college transition.
- Highlighted the *Gen One Next Level* initiative for first-generation students, featuring student and faculty perspectives.
- Board members were encouraged to review presentation materials for additional context.

7. Compliance, Audit, and Risk (CAR) Committee

A. Committee Report

Trustee Mariel Freve provided the following update:

- Internal Assessments and Audit Update: Reviewed and updated the three-year internal assessment plan; added an audit of the Entrepreneur Innovation Center for 2026 and postponed two 2028 items.
- Federal and State Audit Updates: Federal audits showed no major issues; state internal control certification was submitted early despite short notice—commendable staff effort.
- Information Security Updates: Progress reported on the new Governance, Compliance, and Risk system; cybersecurity training reminders issued for board members.
- Future Initiatives: Preparing a full inventory of digital, physical, and cloud technology assets to support audits and infrastructure review.

8. Governance Committee

Trustee Ramsbottom presented the following information:

A. Committee Report

- BOT Self- Assessment Results
 - Reviewed responses from the recent BOT Self-Assessment; survey results will help shape the discussion at the BOT Retreat.
- Committee Assignments for AY 2025 – 2026
 - Each committee will have both a Chair and Vice Chair.
 - Work is ongoing to finalize committee assignments. Final assignments are expected to be ready by the upcoming board retreat.

9. New Business

A. Delegation of Summer Authority

A motion to approve the delegation of authority to President Niemi for the summer months was moved by Claire Ramsbottom, Cherie Comeau seconded the motion.

Roll call vote: Cherie Comeau – aye; Lino Covarrubias – aye; Mariel Freve – aye; Dennis Giombetti – aye; Anthony Hubbard – aye; Jeremy McDonald – aye; Bonnie Mitchell – aye; Susan Puryear – aye; Claire Ramsbottom – aye; Antonia Soares Thompson – aye

—Motion approved

10. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Chair Hubbard encouraged trustees to attend the commencements.

Trustee Kristen Daly thanked Student Trustee Jeremy McDonald for all of his hard work and congratulated him for his accomplishments throughout his tenure serving to represent Framingham State University students.

11. Adjourn Open Meeting

A motion to adjourn the public meeting was moved by Antonia Soares Thompson, Dennis Giombetti seconded the motion.

Roll call vote: Cherie Comeau – aye; Lino Covarrubias – aye; Mariel Freve – aye; Dennis Giombetti – aye; Anthony Hubbard – aye; Jeremy McDonald – aye; Bonnie Mitchell – aye; Susan Puryear – aye; Claire Ramsbottom – aye; Antonia Soares Thompson – aye

—Motion approved

The meeting ended at 8:03 p.m.