



Item: CG: A-M

COMMUNITY AND GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Tuesday, October 15, 2013

SUBJECT: ROLL CALL AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

PROPOSED COMMITTEE ACTION

Initiate roll call to document member participation and ensure quorum.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mr. Robert Rubin, Chair _____

Dr. Jeffrey Feingold, Vice Chair _____

Mr. Anthony Barbar (ex-officio) _____

Mrs. Mary Beth McDonald _____

Dr. Ronald Nyhan _____

Mr. Robert Stilley _____

Mr. Paul Tanner _____

Mr. Thomas Workman (ex-officio) _____

PARTICIPATING BOT MEMBERS

Mr. Peter Amirato _____

Mr. Daniel Cane _____

Mr. David Feder _____

Mr. Abdol Moabery _____

Dr. Julius Teske _____



COMMUNITY AND GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes of April 16, 2013

CG: A-M Roll Call and Approval of Draft Minutes for the April 16, 2013 BOT Community and Governmental Relations Committee meeting:

Trustee Robert Rubin, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order and initiated the roll call. In addition to Trustee Rubin, the following committee members were present: Trustee Jeffrey Feingold, Vice Chair; Trustee Chair Anthony Barbar; Trustee Angela Graham-West; Trustee Robert Stillely; Trustee Paul Tanner; and Trustee Thomas Workman (ex-officio).

Other Trustees attending the meeting included: Trustee David Feder; Trustee Robert Huffman; Trustee William McDaniel; Trustee Abdol Moabery by telecom; and Trustee Julius Teske.

A quorum was present and the committee was called to order.

The following university officials participated: Dr. Mary Jane Saunders, University President; Dr. Jennifer O'Flannery Anderson, Vice President of Community Engagement & Executive Director, FAU Foundation, Inc.; and Mr. David Kian, General Counsel.

Trustee Rubin called for approval of the February 19, 2013 meeting minutes. A motion was made and seconded to approve meeting minutes without change or correction. No discussion or commentary followed. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Trustee Rubin commented on how far the committee has come and the progress of the committee's annual work plan. He complimented the monthly Legislative Update email.

Trustee Rubin mentioned the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance visit to the FAU Boca Raton campus. Bob Swindell, the President and CEO, along with Board members and staff, spent the afternoon visiting the Colleges of Business, Engineering and Medicine. They were amazed at the growth of the campus.

The University Relations team had meetings with over 30 elected officials in the last three months and staff recently added Heather Kurstin, who will be representing FAU with the local constituents. Thanks to Chair Barbar and Trustee Workman for visiting Tallahassee to spend time with our legislatures. In addition, our students, led by Trustee Huffman, also went to

Tallahassee with other SUS counterparts for a statewide initiative called “Rally in Tally.” Trustee Rubin thanked Trustee Huffman and his fellow students for representing FAU so well. Several lawmakers were recognized for supporting and advocating for FAU: Senators Sachs, Grimsley, Sobel, Negron, Abruzzo and Representative Mayfield. These elected officials have done a great job for FAU in Tallahassee. Trustee Rubin announced Jon and Bonnie Kaye will receive the Board of Trustees’ Community Award on April 22 for their great work organizing the Medical School’s Gala this past January. It was the first time for this event and raised more than \$230,000. Jon and Bonnie have been wonderful advocates for FAU.

Dr. O’Flannery Anderson then gave her presentation.

CG: I-1 Update on Community Engagement:

1. University Relations / Legislative Sessions

The Committee’s Work Plan provided in the background materials listed federal efforts; however, this portion of the report is deferred.

For the second year in a row, the Greater Ft. Lauderdale Alliance awarded their World Class Faculty Award to an FAU faculty member. This year the recipient is Nwadiuto Esiobu. Her research is focused on Microbial Biotechnology directed at improving health, enhancing bio-security and homeland security as well as protecting and preserving the environment.

There was a Board of Governors meeting at the end of March with much discussion on the State Budget in regard to restoring the \$300m to the higher education budget.

The House and Senate are both committed to increasing the budget to education in general. It appears FAU is in line for possible funding at HBOI, the Medical School Simulation Center, Memory & Wellness, Center, and the CARD Center.

2. Alumni Relations

Currently the Alumni Association has 8300 alumni members and is on pace to meet goals for growth this year. The Hall of Fame recipient is Dr. Gene Kinney, who is working on vaccines for Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s. He studied under Dr. Kelso at FAU.

3. FAU Foundation and Fundraising Update

There has been an increase in mobile devices used to access FAU Foundation websites and make donations. We are working to develop more apps to be readily available for this mobile device engagement.

There has been stable growth the last few years in giving to FAU, which corresponds to the improving economy. The FAU Foundation's net returns are very much in line with NACUBO average. Our endowment returns are also in line with other Florida state universities.

The fundraising goal for 2012-2013 is \$17.5m. Currently we are at \$15.6m, which is \$1m more than last year. We see more growth in scholarship fundraising. Although we experienced the reversal of the GEO Group gift to the football stadium, our fundraising efforts are still on pace to meet this year's fundraising goal, which is a great testament to our fundraising team.

We are continuing to identify and narrow down key naming opportunities for buildings, programs and departments, university wide, which align with the strategic plan and signature themes which will help elevate the institution.

At the conclusion of her presentation, Trustee Feingold commended Dr. O'Flannery-Anderson on the stellar job her team is doing.

President Saunders then discussed the GEO Group gift to the football stadium, which was a relationship gift, and expressed disappointment that the gift was withdrawn. There are other relationships that will afford FAU opportunities to pursue renewed interest in naming rights by other companies. President Saunders reviewed incidents related to the negative reaction to the GEO Group gift and naming of the stadium. The climate for escalating violence related to threats and hostility had to be taken seriously to ensure the safety of the entire FAU community, which includes an elementary school and high school on campus. A classroom episode also escalated into hostility. Unfortunately, social media misinformation can escalate and then legitimate media tends to take over and reproduce as fact without confirming the facts. Federal laws protect the privacy of our students, which restricts information the administration can release. The threats and feelings of hostility expressed caused concern for her personal safety and protective measures were taken.

President Saunders said that going forward there needs to be better communication between university units so we are prepared to present an accurate and full rendition of our decision making. Stacy Volnick has been brought into the President's area as Vice President of Executive Operations. There were tens of thousands of emails and telephone calls received related to these incidents and FAU is very pleased to be able to say the incidents were diffused without any violence occurring. Many members of the public and business communities, donors, students, faculty, staff and parents reached out to us showing support for the University. The incidents actually involved a small number of people, but were picked up by national activists for their own agendas. President Saunders is very grateful to Chair Barbar who stood by FAU's side and gave excellent counsel working with our internal administrative team and the external community. President expressed thanks to Pastor Coy who held his

Calvary Church Easter service in the FAU stadium during this time and also thanked the Jewish Federation for strong statements of support for this institution. We need to be active and aggressive in getting out our wonderful story about our students, faculty and staff.

Trustee Feingold thanked Chair Barbar and President Saunders for their steadfastness during these incidents. He said the Board of Trustees has a responsibility for the safety of the students, faculty and reputation within this community. There should be respect shown to and by everyone on FAU campuses. Trustee Feingold supports the freedom to protest in an appropriate manner, but he does not support the choice to threaten or harass someone in their personal or business life. He hopes there will be a return to civility by all with thought and understanding of what is represented by one's actions and the potential for danger in causing an escalation of emotions and actions. He is disappointed in the attacks on the GEO Group and against its gift and naming of the stadium, which would have benefited the university and students. Students should consider the consequences of their actions.

Trustee Feder voiced his support of President Saunders. He thinks what happened to the GEO Group is unfortunate. FAU needs to get the message out about the good things happening at FAU. A chief marketing officer should be considered. So, as we move forward, the structure needs to be looked at – individuals are needed who can advise the President, the deans, the staff, plus communicate with the faculty and students, as well as nationally and locally.

Trustee Teske expressed his agreement with President Saunders' comment that FAU needs to come to a decision on what the statement in response to an incident should be, release the statement to the media and stand behind it without any changes.

Trustee Tanner thanked the President for thoughtfully reviewing everything. He wished this discussion had taken place earlier. When things brew, they become extended. Social media is now the way that messages are distributed. In his opinion, disclosure issues do not exist which would prevent the President from posting or tweeting messages of her thoughts related to incidents or discussions of interest; however, she would withhold naming individual students so as to not break federal privacy laws related to student confidentiality. He recommended a media person as part of her staff to facilitate this new way of opening barriers of communications across generations.

Trustee Stille expressed his appreciation of the GEO Group for stepping up with a \$6m gift which did not include any quid pro quo. He expressed concern that some instances at FAU, which should have remained as small issues and press stories, very quickly turned into state, national and international issues. Whenever he called FAU concerning an issue, the first response always seemed to be the same - to blame someone else. This cannot continue to happen - time needs to be taken to look at each issue in a thoughtful, clear minded approach. FAU has great stories to tell – growing research, students are fantastic, FAU faculty continues

to improve; however, we can't focus on these positive stories while we have clouds of these other issues hanging over us. At the last meeting, Chair Barbar suggested we do a 360 and Trustee Stillely thinks it is time to look at what is going on inside the university's administration so we can try to repair it and move forward. The Board of Trustees does not get involved in the day to day operations of the university, but if we don't take a look and something tragic does happen down the road, then it falls on us.

Trustee Hoffman gave the students' perspective to the board. Although there have been protests, all students do not disagree with accepting the GEO Group's gift. Some students expressed regret when the GEO Group withdrew its gift. Students realize it takes funds to grow. The students are still excited to be part of FAU and to call themselves Owls. He thinks Trustee Tanner's suggestion to reach out to students on Facebook and Twitter is a good idea. Communication with students has been missing and to reach out them on their level would go a long way in making them feel a part of FAU. The twenty-two students who protested do not represent the student body. Trustee Hoffman received many positive comments in support of the GEO Group's gift.

Trustee Moabery felt the media sensationalized the GEO Group story. No one has pointed out that the largest funder to the university, the State of Florida, runs more prisons than the GEO Group, yet no one complains about accepting money from the State of Florida. Trustee Moabery feels President Saunders handled the situation the best way possible. The Board of Trustees unanimously approved accepting the gift and viewed the gift in a positive light. He feels the Board should reinforce with the community how important it is to accept gifts, the difficulty in recouping lost funding. Moabery also thinks the incident on the Jupiter campus was unfortunate, plus unfair in the portrayal of President Saunders.

Trustee Workman reminded everyone of the desire to develop FAU into a destination college. The university has grown substantially in the past five to seven years and has changed the direction in which it has gone. Great things have taken place over those years, but the PR has not been what it should be to highlight the good accomplishments. Now there are 30,000+ students with 3,000+ faculty members doing fantastic work with amazing stories to tell, but FAU is suffering growing pains from negative press. Trustee Workman agrees with Trustee Feder's statement that FAU's public relations and sources to reach out need to be improved. FAU should be using social media to spread the good news taking place at FAU. FAU will recover from these "bumps in the road" and learn from them.

Trustee Rubin stated he has a different take on past events. He is concerned that the FAU Administration's initial reactions and subsequent changes of stance in reaction to outside forces brought further negative attention to the university. FAU is doing great things, but the negative publicity has hurt FAU greatly. The Administration seemed to be more concerned with what outside agitating groups thought about FAU than FAU donors, students, other

stakeholders and even members of the BOT. Trustee Rubin reported the *American Association of University Professors* states teachers are entitled to freedom in their classrooms in discussing their subject, but they should be careful to not introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to the subject. From the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Trustee Rubin shared information that the practice of citing academic freedom to condone a limitless range of bad behavior is beginning to take on the flavor of “the dog ate my paper”. The incantation of “I’m protected by academic freedom” is thought to offer instant immunity. In reality, academic freedom, like tenure itself, is not blanket protection.

The FAU faculty handbook says an employee can be terminated for questionable conduct, professional or personal. Some would say it is difficult to take on a tenured professor, but it does happen and at some universities more liberal than FAU. The University of Colorado at Boulder fired a controversial professor; counter suits followed; but ultimately the University of Colorado at Boulder won its appeals. The University of Colorado at Boulder had the guts to stand up and say “NO”, this behavior was not acceptable.

Trustee Rubin stated the GEO Group situation was handled in a weak and ineffective manner, and the GEO Group finally pulled its donation in response to FAU not being supportive of it. Chair Barbar briefly interjected his disagreement with Trustee Rubin’s remarks that the FAU Administration did not give support to the GEO Group. Trustee Rubin responded that FAU should have been better able and prepared to handle controversy.

Trustee Rubin stated that the sequence of negative events had not been good for the university. There are too many good things happening at the university to let negative media build. Good things don’t always happen, sometimes bad things happen. How you react defines you as a person and it is no different as an institution. The collective reactions by the FAU Administration have not been helpful to this great university. In conclusion, a pattern has developed of weak, ineffectual responses – what happens when the next event takes place? Trustee Rubin thinks that is the predicament this administration has put FAU and the Board of Trustees in.

Chair Barbar commented that he gave the GEO Group full support on behalf of the Board of Trustees and appreciated the GEO Group’s gift throughout the negative actions and press.

Trustee Rubin agreed that support was given to the GEO Group; however, not enough, especially not enough at the beginning of the controversy surrounding the gift.

Trustee Rubin requested a motion to adjourn the committee meeting, and a motion was made and seconded. **The motion to adjourn was approved.**