FAU
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Florida Atlantic University

Item: AS: A-1

COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS
Tuesday, December 9, 2014

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF IMPROVEMENT PLAN MID-YEAR MONITORING REPORT

PROPOSED COMMITTEE ACTION
To request approval of the 2014-2015 Improvement Plan Mid-Year Monitoring Report.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION
As part of the Board of Governors' (BOG) performance based funding allocations, all universities that fell below the threshold of the benchmarks for new funding shall submit a plan to the BOG that specifies how their base funding will be expended to improve upon the metrics that disqualified the universities from receiving new funding. In June 2014, the BOG approved FAU's improvement plan and developed a timeline for monitoring the progress of the measures specified in the plan. FAU is required to submit a mid-year monitoring report to the board no later than December 31, 2014. A university that is determined by the BOG to be making satisfactory progress on implementing the plan shall receive a pro rata share of its base funding being withheld under the performance funding model.

The attached documents provide additional information regarding the state system's improvement plan guidelines, as well at the mid-year monitoring report for FAU's improvement plan, which shows that the University has met and/or surpassed all targets established in the plan.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN/DATE
Upon approval by FAU's full Board of Trustees, the report will be submitted to the BOG by December 31, 2014 for review at its January 22, 2015 meeting.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS
The BOG will review the monitoring report and determine if satisfactory progress has been made. If so, up to 50% of the funds ($3.5M) being held will be released to FAU.

Supporting Documentation: **BOG's Guidelines for Improvement Plans**
Improvement Plan Mid-Year Monitoring Report

Presented by: Dr. Gary Perry, Provost and VP for Academic Affairs   **Phone: 561-297-3062**

University Performance Funding Improvement Plan Guidelines

May, 2014 -
- Universities will develop an improvement plan based on the March performance funding presentation and outline <u>specific</u> initiatives that will be undertaken during the 2014-2015 fiscal year. Although the goal is to show improvement on the ten performance funding metrics, the gains realized on these metrics will not be available for at least a year, therefore the specific initiatives in the improvement plan must be measurable and verifiable. For example, the initiatives may include hiring of advisors, faculty, purchase of student academic tracking software, percentage of undergraduate students receiving advisement services, development of internships, etc.

June -
- June 9 (Monday) - Universities will submit an improvement plan approved by their respective boards of trustees to the Chancellor.
- June 17-19 - Universities will present the improvement plan as a part of the work plan presentation to the Board. Up to two additional slides may be added to the work plan PowerPoint to explain the improvement plan. In most cases, focus areas addressed in the Work Plan are most likely the same issues that the institution is addressing in its Improvement Plan.
- The Board will consider approval of the Work Plan, along with separate approval of the specific components identified in the improvement plan.

July to December –
- Universities will implement the improvement plan.

December 31 –
- Universities will submit a monitoring report to the Chancellor that documents the progress made on the initiatives identified specifically in the improvement plan.

January 22, 2015 –
- The Board will review the monitoring report and determine if satisfactory progress has been made. If so, **no more** than 50% of the funds being held will be released to the university.

January to May –
- Universities will continue to implement the improvement plan.

June -
- June 1 (Monday) – Universities will submit the final monitoring report to the Chancellor that documents the progress made on the specific initiatives.
- June 16-18 – the Board will review the final monitoring report and determine if the improvement plan was successfully implemented. If so, then the remaining funds being held by the Board will be released to the university. However, if the improvement plan was not 100 percent successfully implemented, then all or a

Source: Florida Board of Governors - Budget and Finance Committee
(June 18, 2014, BOG Meeting at UCF in Orlando, Florida)

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portion of the remaining unreleased funds will be distributed to the universities that demonstrate the most improvement on the performance funding metrics for the 2013-2014 year.

Legislative Proviso:

From the $200,000,000, which includes $100,000,000 new funding and $100,000,000 redistributed from the base, for State University Performance Based Incentives in Specific Appropriation 143 from the General Revenue Fund, the Board of Governors shall allocate all of such appropriated funds pursuant to the performance funding model approved by the board on January 16, 2014, subject to the following modification:

> (1) all universities eligible for new funding shall have their base funding, including the performance funds allocated by the Board during 2013-2014, to be restored as provided in the Board of Governors' model; and

> (2) all universities that failed to meet the board's benchmarks for new funding shall submit a plan to the Board of Governors that specifies how their base funding, including the performance funds allocated by the Board during 2013-2014, will be expended to improve upon the metrics that disqualified the universities from receiving new funding.

The Board of Governors shall review the plans, and if approved, shall monitor the universities' progress on implementing the measures specified in the plans. The universities shall submit monitoring reports to the board no later than December 31, 2014 and May 31, 2015.

A university that is determined by the Board of Governors to be making satisfactory progress on implementing the plan shall receive a pro rata share of its base funding held by the board under the board's performance funding model. The Chancellor of the State University System shall withhold disbursement of the funds until such time as the monitoring report for each university is approved by the Board of Governors.

Universities that fail to make satisfactory progress shall not have their full base funding restored, and any funds remaining shall be distributed to the three universities that demonstrate the most improvement on the metrics based upon those universities' proportional share of the new funding allocated under the board's performance funding model.

FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY™

Mid-Year Monitoring Report
of Florida Atlantic University's Improvement Plan

December 31, 2014

In June 2014, the State University System of Florida's Board of Governors (BOG) approved the *Improvement Plan for Florida Atlantic University's Performance Based Funding Model Scores*. At this time, the newly-appointed president of Florida Atlantic University (FAU), John Kelly, assured the Governors that the University embraced accountability measures and would be committed to improving its baseline scores in the BOG Performance Based Funding Model.

The BOG then established guidelines for the universities to develop an improvement plan that would be undertaken during the 2014-2015 fiscal year. The foundational theme for the guidelines was that "gains realized on these metrics will not be available for at least a year," and as such, "specific initiatives in the improvement plan must be measurable and verifiable" (BOG Budget and Finance Committee). By December 31, 2014, universities must submit a monitoring report to the Chancellor that documents the progress made on initiatives, as specified in the University's individual improvement plan. The Governors will review the report and determine if satisfactory progress has been made, subsequently releasing up to 50% of the baseline allocations that the state withheld ($3.5 million). FAU will submit a final report for review in June 2015.

As a reminder, FAU placed a strategic emphasis on improving the following two metrics:

> **Metric 4** - 6-year graduation rate for First-Time-In-College (FTIC) students; and

> **Metric 5 -** Academic progress rate, which is measured by the 2nd year retention of students with at least a 2.0 grade point average

FAU's broad goal for the year ahead was to enrich the educational experience in a manner that supports an organizational culture in which all units are dedicated to student success. Subsequently, FAU implemented six specific, actionable strategies with measurable targets.

A. Increase the number of academic advisors
B. Purchase and implement advising software
C. Launch "Jump Start" pilot for undergraduates admitted in summer
D. Develop study plans for undergraduates, also known as "Flight Plans"
E. Launch bachelors of general studies degree program
F. Launch "Major KnOWLedge" early career exploration module

Reporting on Improvement Plan Strategies

As is evidenced in the following report, FAU can confirm that it has met every single mid-year target as established by the University's Board of Trustees and as approved by the Board of Governors. This monitoring report provides up-to-date data on the December 2014 expectations, as well as supplemental information and forecasting for the final targets in May 2015.

A. **Increase the number of academic advisors**

December 2014 – Expectation	December 2014 - Status Report
13 new academic advisors are hired and strategically placed in FAU's University Advising Services (5) as well as FAU's colleges and departments (8)	23 new academic advisors have been hired and strategically placed in FAU's University Advising Services (7), as well as FAU's colleges and departments (16)

As mentioned in FAU's original improvement plan, the National Academic Advising Association recommends a 300 student to 1 advisor ratio in order to offer students a personal connection to the institution. Before the hiring push, FAU was at roughly 400 students to every 1 advisor. In addition to the 7 placements in the central office, 16 advisors have been hired to work in academic colleges and departments.

Adding new hires has increased raw advising capacity, but FAU also had a clear need to increase the *effectiveness* of advising. The institution is improving efficacy by revitalizing the central advising office with a new mission, reorganizing staff, and revising position descriptions. A new Director (Mr. Joe Murray) hired in 2013 has been instrumental in effecting these changes. Our Freshmen Academic Advising Services became University Advising Services (UAS), a center for the advising of first and second-year students. All incoming freshmen are connected to a personal advisor prior to attending orientation, and that advisor stays with the students throughout their first two years. The Advisor also serves as an academic coach for students at risk. Advisors provide career guidance by connecting students to academic disciplines and promoting early selection of majors.

All advisors in UAS are certified as having completed *training* in Appreciative Advising, which is the intentional collaborative practice of asking positive, open-ended questions that help students optimize their educational experience and achieve their potential. The advisee and advisor, *as partners*, work together to discover the student's passions, design a plan to achieve their dreams, deliver on that plan, and make changes as necessary. FAU has become a national leader in Appreciative Advising; the director and staff have conducted webinars and presented at national conferences. Another significant innovation is the reach of advisors into the residence halls. *Every* first-year residence hall floor now has a UAS advisor assigned to it, and resident assistants are being trained in the proper referral information and skills needed to identify students in academic difficulty. In January 2015, FAU will launch a new academic and career counseling resource center in one residence hall, known as Get Wise @ GPT (Glades Park Tower). FAU is committed to hiring an adequate number of personnel to support our students, but the most important commitment is to *improving* the overall advising experience. The university advising experience is now exponentially more *effective*, as it has been improved through innovative advisor training and by promoting nationally-accepted best practices.

B. Purchase and implement advising software

December 2014 – Expectation	December 2014 - Status Report
Starfish advising software is installed on university servers, and training is coordinated	Starfish advising software is installed and operating on university servers; 100% of undergraduate advisors have completed training

While FAU's advising capacity is growing and the institution has implemented a number of measures to improve the overall effectiveness of academic advisors, it was also imperative that the advising system become more *streamlined*. After completing the procurement process per Board of Governors Regulations 18.002, 18.003, and University Regulation 6.008, the institution purchased software and installed it on university servers. FAU's "Success Network" advising system, powered by Starfish Solutions, launched at the start of the fall 2014 semester. Since then, the institution attained the goal of training 100% of undergraduate advisors, as established in the improvement plan. The system is now available to *all* FAU undergraduates.

Previously, there was no common advising software in use university-wide. The first-year advising office and some of the colleges used one software system, but they operated independently of one another. Advisors were unable to view notes on students maintained by other offices. Now, regardless of the level of student or whether or not they have already declared a major, students use the Starfish "Success Network" system throughout their entire collegiate experience. Digital notes on the students will stay with them as they progress in their studies. Students can schedule advising appointments, communicate with advisors, track their academic progress, and learn how and where to find increased support, such as tutoring. FAU also launched a pilot study of additional Starfish features, such as an early warning system, in which instructors can flag students as "at-risk" if they have poor attendance—or even give "kudos" to students who excel. The pilot took place in the two highest enrollment courses, College Composition I and College Composition II. Faculty participation was impressive: 70 percent of the instructors in these courses submitted 1,134 early warning "flags." Advisors responded to these flags by *promptly* contacting the students and, when necessary, arranging in-person interventions.

The University will expand this intervention feature in spring 2015 to *all* general education courses. Faculty will be asked early in the semester to raise flags on attendance concerns in their classes (especially important in mathematics, the sciences, and foreign languages) and, later in the semester, to address any concerns about students who are underperforming. FAU is also working with Starfish Solutions to include data on *all* student tutoring sessions, attendance at Supplemental Instruction, and participation in review sessions. Finally, we are developing mechanisms to *assess the effectiveness* of advising overall through data provided by Starfish. FAU wishes to ensure that there is a

clear system of *accountability* in place: in the advising offices, ensuring that the advisors are meeting with students and making the necessary interventions to ensure student success; and among students, to let them know that they must take responsibility in the end for their own academic performance.

C. Launch "Jump Start" pilot for undergraduates admitted in summer

December 2014 – Expectation	December 2014 - Status Report
125 students have completed summer portion of pilot and initiated special advising process	210 students have completed summer portion of pilot and initiated special advising process

JumpStart launched as a pilot program in summer 2014 with 210 students. Students enrolled in the JumpStart pilot voluntarily. The purpose of JumpStart is to *ensure* student success by creating a unique support system. Students establish relationships with academic advisors and faculty; build a community of friends with other first-year students and develop stronger bonds with FAU; and acquire the academic support tools necessary to ensure their success in later semesters. Students enroll in two regular general education courses (6 credit hours), as well as a zero-credit Learning Community Experience course that meets six times over the summer term. The purpose of the Learning Community Experience course is to inform students about *strategies* for success and to connect students to university resources and support offices.

The average grade point average for summer 2014 JumpStart students was 3.28, with 98 percent of students earning a GPA of 2.0 or higher and 47 percent earning 3.5 or higher. Only one student did not return for the fall 2014 semester. Beginning summer 2014, JumpStart will be *mandatory* for all students admitted conditionally (in general, those with a high school GPA between 3.0 and 3.29). The program will also be open to all students admitted for the summer term. The purpose of the program remains the same: to provide the resources necessary for student success but also give students a head start on their university coursework, thus ensuring more timely graduations for FTICs.

D. Develop study plans for undergraduates, also known as "Flight Plans"

December 2014 – Expectation	December 2014 - Status Report
65% (64 of 98) of baccalaureate programs have completed Flight Plan templates	100% (98 of 98) of baccalaureate programs have completed Flight Plan templates

Previously, FAU had no standardized study plans for its undergraduate students. While some of the colleges, departments, and degree programs independently established step-by-step roadmaps to track academic progress, the reliability and thoroughness of these plans varied greatly. This complicated the advising process, making it difficult for advisors to tell when students had deviated from their plans. In the fall 2014 semester, *every* baccalaureate degree program had completed a Flight Plan template, which lists the specific course requirements and other academic milestones and identifies the term-by-term plan that students must follow in order to stay on track with their studies. Some of the degree programs even offer *accelerated* versions of the Flight Plan if students are able to take full course loads in the summer semesters. With the guidance of their advisors, students are able to customize these templates into study plans that fit their unique needs. The standardization of Flight Plans is also assisting the university administration in establishing a *predictive* course scheduling process based on more reliable data, such as student demand.

E. Launch bachelors of general studies degree program

December 2014 – Expectation	December 2014 - Status Report
Initiated approval process for new degree program with FAU Faculty Senate	New degree program approved by FAU Faculty Senate and FAU Board of Trustees.

The Bachelors of General Studies (BGS) degree allows students to design a plan of study to meet their personal interests and career goals. The plan of study is more flexible than that required in traditional degree programs. The degree is intended for those members of the local community already in careers but who need a degree to advance professionally or personally, as well as for current FAU students who meet the 120-hour requirement but, because of personal or employment imperatives, need to hasten their time to degree completion.

While flexible, the BGS still maintains all other FAU degree requirements for baccalaureate programs. In consultation with an advisor, students select a concentration (such as business, communications, or computer science, among many others) and then map out a plan of study that includes 15 credit hours of upper-division coursework in the discipline. The BGS was approved by the University Faculty Senate at the October 2014 meeting and was approved by the FAU Board of Trustees at the November 2014 meeting.

In coming years, FAU aims to graduate 150 BGS students by August 2015 and another 300 students in 2015-2016. Most of these graduates will be existing students who haven't been able to succeed in their current degree programs. Of FAU's active students with 100+ credit hours, 49% expressed interest in the BGS. In future years, the annual goal is

350 students, with special emphasis on recruiting working professionals. A coordinating committee, comprised of one faculty member from each undergraduate college, will oversee the program. The committee will report to University Faculty Senate in 2015 and 2016 on the number of students graduating with the degree, their concentrations, their status upon entry to FAU (FTIC or transfer), and their previous major. If enrollment increases significantly by the fifth year of operation, FAU will hire an additional advisor.

F. Launch "Major KnOWLedge" early career exploration module

December 2014 – Expectation	December 2014 - Status Report
400 students have fully completed module	1,314 FTIC students have fully completed module

Students who have declared a major are less susceptible to attrition than undeclared students. Historically, FAU loses over 75 percent of those undecided entering freshmen who are still undecided by the end of the second year. The goal of the Major KnOWLedge module, offered through the Career Development Center at FAU, is to help all incoming undecided students determine majors and subsequently decrease time-to-degree and increase degree completion. The Career Development Center has also developed an assessment plan to measure the impact of the Major KnOWLedge model. The institution will have concluded the assessment of the program prior to May 2015 in order to ensure adjustments can be made to the module for all incoming FTICs.

To reinforce the insights students gained from the Major KnOWLedge module, University Advising Services launched in fall 2014 the Owl Nation Exploration (ONE) program, which involved more than 15 exploratory activities related to career and major exploration (see www.fau.edu/uas/one.php for full details). Workshops and seminars include peer panels, as well as career and graduate school fairs. Additionally, two of the academic advisors who were hired as part of the first strategy of the improvement plan will be housed in the Career Development Center with a primary responsibility of working with undeclared students to help them identify a major area of study.

Between April and September 2014, 1,314 FTICs, 118 new transfers, and 313 current students both registered and completed this module, thus far exceeding our December 2014 expectation. 96% of these FTICs have declared majors. In later semesters, FAU will make every effort to increase the participation rate, with particular emphasis on undecided students. Those students still undeclared at the end of their first semester will be *required* to take a 1-credit course, SLS 1301 - Career and Life Planning.

Above and Beyond – FAU's Ongoing Commitment to Student Success

Student success is not a new topic for the academic leadership team at FAU. Prior to the release of the scores for the SUS performance based funding initiative, the University engaged in a number of self-assessment activities and operational improvements to ensure that students are graduating in a timely manner. Perhaps the most influential action taken was engaging the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) in a consultation regarding the operations of the enrollment management units. The primary goal of the review was to determine if these areas were providing effective, efficient, and student-centered service in support of students and student success. As a result of the AACRAO report, the University took a number of important steps towards improving its admissions procedures and academic operations. The Provost conducted a reorganization of the Offices of Undergraduate Admissions, the Registrar, and Student Financial Aid so that the three units reported to a newly-formed Enrollment Management and Oversight Committee (EMOC).

The Provost also charged Associate Provost Dr. Michele Hawkins with chairing EMOC and overseeing the daily operations of these units, which are so integral to student success. The team initiated reviews of burdensome registration holds, overhauled the transfer credit evaluation process, conducted surveys of non-returning students, and implemented technological upgrades to the degree audit reporting system. Academic advisors made phone calls to students who were nearing their final term but had not yet registered for their last fifteen credit hours in order for the institution to better understand and *remove* any obstacles to graduation. Lastly, the University initiated a customer service improvement effort, which is currently being conducted in collaboration with partners like the Ritz-Carlton Leadership Center.

While the academic operations are improving, President Kelly has committed to recruiting high-ability students who are adequately-prepared and interested in staying at FAU and graduating in a timely manner. Students who are not quite ready for university study are referred to the local state college partners and encouraged to articulate to FAU after completing the associate's degree. FAU has strong connections to Palm Beach State College and Broward College through vehicles such as "2+2" degree packages, the LINK program wherein state college students are served by FAU advisors, and the BOG TEAm grant-funded CAPTURE initiative to meet workforce demands in computer science and computer engineering fields. Following changes to the University's admissions standards for Fall, 2015, the average weighted high school grade point average of FTICs entering in fall 2014 was 3.77, compared to 3.51 in fall 2013. When considered alongside the institution's student success initiatives, these changes will greatly and positively impact academic progress rates and six-year graduation rates at FAU.

In order to showcase the incredible undergraduate opportunities available to prospective local students, FAU hosted two expos for high school students prior to home football games – October 18 for Palm Beach County students and November 1 for Broward County students. A combined 16,000 prospective students and family members attended these two events, where they learned about the variety of degree programs and student life offered by FAU. The ten academic colleges and various student and administrative offices were present to answer questions on topics ranging from the classroom experience, to admissions, financial aid, sports, and residential life. Both faculty and student researchers were able to exhibit their works, while high school students

attending the expos were granted free admission to the football games at the on-campus stadium. Discounted tickets were available for parents, guardians and family members. These were two incredibly exciting days that offer a clear example of the renewed focus on excellence and innovation at FAU.

The University has an ongoing commitment to enhancing the educational experience for both current and future students, using technology as a tool. The Center for eLearning developed an *online* orientation for new students, which provides an alternative for those who are unable to attend traditional face-to-face sessions due to work or personal obligations. Additionally, a 1-credit online course, SLS 1300, was created to offer non-traditional students the same options as their traditional counterparts to explore careers and make informed decisions when choosing career paths. Finally the Center for eLearning converted high-demand, lower-division general studies courses into an online format to prevent *bottlenecks* in registration and keep students on track for graduation. With these changes in processes, FAU also expanded online tutorial support to ensure students who need help have access to it at all times.

Beyond the improvements in academic support services, the University launched a new department called Owls Care to prevent campus population-level health problems in many areas including: stress management, substance abuse prevention, sexual assault prevention, sexual health, HIV/AIDS awareness, self-esteem, healthy relationships, and bystander intervention training. This department will help students whose studies are negatively impacted by unfortunate external factors. These are just a selection of changes that FAU is implementing to *ensure* that the institutional culture continues to embrace and support student success.

Next Steps -- Becoming the Nation's Fastest-Improving University

As is evidenced in this monitoring report, FAU is improving across the board, with a laser-sharp focus on tackling issues related to student success. These innovative yet often common-sense and best practice improvements will help the institution as a whole. The next step is to conduct a thorough review of institutional priorities, so that FAU can openly embrace its role as comprehensive research university with world-acclaimed partners, located in a beautiful subtropical setting. The University is dedicated to change and finding its place on the national stage.

Currently, President Kelly and Provost Gary Perry are visiting every single academic department in each of the colleges. First and foremost—the hope is to reinforce the ongoing commitment to improving retention and graduation rates, while simultaneously learning about and growing some of the University's most valuable resources, faculty projects, and community outreach efforts. With more than 45 academic departments in 10 colleges and a dozen "academic units" across 6 campuses and sites, this is no easy feat. However, it is incredibly important for the executive leadership team to hear an unfiltered message directly from the faculty. This way, the team can immediately attend to any issues or opportunities that arise related to student success and the reputation of the institution. With a truly strategic vision, FAU can become the nation's fastest-improving university, which only raises the profile of the State University System of Florida—and the incredible citizens that the universities produce.