

Minutes of Meeting Held on January 30, 2014 at 12:15 p.m.

FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

Thursday, January 30, 2014

12:15 p.m.

President's Conference Room

Sanders Administration Building

300 Highland Avenue, Fitchburg, MA 01420

Trustees present: Robert Babineau, Jr., Martin F. Connors, Jr., Nathan Gregoire, Don Irving, Michael Mahan, Anthony Mercadante, Frank O'Donnell, Carol Vittorioso

Trustees via phone: Gladys Rodriguez-Parker

Trustees absent: Anna Maria Clementi, Cynthia Stevens

Also present: Robert V. Antonucci, Robin Bowen, Jay Bry, Cathy Canney, Cathy Daggett, Gail Doiron, Chris Hendry, Jessica Murdoch, Michael Shanley, Steven Swartz, Paul Weizer, Gail Feckley, Jenny Fielding, Hank Parkinson, Jennifer Perkins, Commissioner Richard Freeland, Adam Wilbur, Kelli Lundgren, Mary Landi

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Vittorioso at 12:27 p.m.

Chairman Vittorioso opened the meeting requesting any public comments.

President Antonucci welcomed Commissioner Richard Freeland to the meeting.

The consideration of the Board of Trustees minutes from November 12, 2013 was presented. Upon a motion duly noted by Mr. Connors and seconded by Mr. Mahan it was

Voted: via roll call to approve the minutes of the meeting held on November 1, 2013 as
(9-0) presented.

President Antonucci welcomed Richard Freeland, Commissioner of Higher Education, and thanked him for attending the meeting. Commissioner Freeland began by thanking everyone on the board for their service and assured them that Governor Patrick personally appreciates their work on behalf of the university. He also acknowledged the work of President Antonucci.

Commissioner Freeland said it is a pleasure to come to the FSU campus and see the revitalization that has taken place. The science building is a fantastic new resource. The commissioner remarked on the connection the university has with the community and also noted that the campus is very active in many initiatives within the university system state-wide. He has enormous respect for what Fitchburg State University is doing for the campus and state-wide.

Commissioner Freeland stated that after a series of events in 2012, the Board of Higher Education and his office were charged with building stronger relationships with boards of trustees in community colleges and state universities. They are looking to build a more integrated system for public higher education, instead of each campus doing its own thing. Jennifer Perkins is the point person in the Office of Trustee Relations. She works with the various boards to build a line of communication between

boards and the state. Ms. Perkins gets to know the leaders of the boards and attends meetings. The commissioner stated that the governor is fully supportive of this program. The goal is not to build any tension. The board is responsible for the institution; the state counts on that and recognizes the importance of the board's work.

In terms of the state budget, last year was fantastic. This year is not as good but is going in the right direction. Public higher education is at the top of the state's priority list. The governor shows that in his budget. Higher education is the ultimate return on investment. To date, it has not been a goal to have Massachusetts be a national leader in public education.

The commissioner talked about the Vision Project, which has five or six metrics. Our numbers look average compared to other states. The goal is to move the needle on that. Are we making the best use of every dollar? Are we being as efficient as possible? Twenty-eight campuses state-wide is a lot - 28 of everything. There was discussion around the value of data and metrics so the board knows what the numbers are to see if the needle is moving.

Commissioner Freeland said we will want to incorporate the state-wide goals into the strategic plan. We will also want to provide professional development activities around data. The state universities and community colleges should be speaking to the legislature in unified way, sending common messages; all campuses are unique, but there are certain things we are all doing. We are a value to the state and want to draw positive attention to the contributions of the campuses. The commissioner said we want to find a way to come together when necessary and at the same time respect campus autonomy.

Mr. Mahan stated that Jennifer Perkins has been wonderful to work with, and the implementation of the program has been very smooth.

Regarding use of data, Mr. Mahan feels we need to be very careful pushing higher education to not be purely vocational. Commissioner Freeland agreed and said it's easier to measure, but it does miss a lot of the other things. Dr. Babineau asked if there is any discussion on the state or national level about consolidating the level of excellence at a particular campus. The commissioner said it's an appealing idea but an idea that campuses tend to resist because no one wants to be pigeon-holed. However, there could be a middle ground. For instance, UMass Lowell is known for its engineering program. It's something to look at when working on a strategic plan. Having a world class program is a very complex undertaking. There was further discussion on that idea. Chairman Vittorioso stated that geography is a factor, and Mr. Mahan said that fee structure would be an issue as well. A nursing program would be more expensive to run than some other programs. Mr. Irving noted that centralizing might lead to a change of makeup in the boards. We need to find balance. Commissioner Freeland said that too much centralization is not good; states do need systems. It is legitimate for the state to set statewide goals and metrics for campuses. The state will stay out of the operations and management of each university. Energy, passion and loyalty are at the campus level.

Chairman Vittorioso said that when the Office of Trustee Relations was introduced, it also came along with guidelines for presidential evaluations and presidential searches. It seemed intimidating at the time, but it was done seamlessly and now it all makes sense. Once implemented, it worked. The commissioner stated the governor is pleased with the outcome. The Board of Higher Education will work with the universities around a formula on allocating resources. There was a discussion around the state budgeting system for state universities and community colleges – incremental budget system. Options are that it is based on enrollment or based on performance. The community college formula is

a hybrid of enrollment and performance. Commissioner Freeland noted that we are moving toward greater equity. He also said he has been asked by the governor to have a similar conversation with the universities. President Antonucci agreed that we need to work toward that and it should work. Commissioner Freeland expressed his appreciation for the positive comments from the board members. Collaboration is good for the system.

Next on the agenda was the Board of Trustees self-assessment review for the NEASC report. Dr. Paul Weizer informed the board that the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) report that is due in March is complete but needs some refinement. Included in the NEASC report is the Board of Trustees self-assessment survey. Dr. Weizer briefly reviewed the survey noting that everything was positive on the report. Mr. Connors noted that question 16 on the Board of Trustees self-assessment survey – *Board members are given adequate orientation and training* – had the lowest number of “strongly agrees.” It was agreed that a glossary would be helpful as well as a list of acronyms. Also, there is a need to expand the survey to include a little more narrative and to get more input from the greater campus community. A subcommittee to the board will be formed to work on this. Jennifer Perkins will send some samples of other surveys to Chairman Vittorioso.

Dr. W. Arnold Yasinski, Vice President for Financial Affairs and Treasurer of Willamette University, had planned to be in attendance to discuss strategic planning with the Board of Trustees; however, President Antonucci informed the group that Dr. Yasinski was unable to be with us today due to medical reasons. Dr. Larry Large, associate of Dr. Yasinski, joined the meeting via Facetime. Dr. Large began by stating that the university is in the beginning stages of the strategic plan process, and he and Dr. Yasinski are consultants to that process. Dr. Robin Bowen is the lead.

Strategic Planning has to be done in a way that works for FSU. The question for the Board of Trustees is - *How do we oversee the change?* Dr. Large reviewed the makeup of the executive planning committee. The strategic planning committee would be a larger committee with sub-committees. Sub-committees open up the process to involvement by many more people. White papers would be presented and a draft strategic plan written. The final plan is negotiated with the president and then the board votes on the plan.

The planning schedule is rigorous. Meetings need to be focused, have a lot of energy, and be informed by the best research. There should be a separate email address and website for posting of meetings, public forums, etc. Late August into January and February is the timeframe. The plan needs to be Fitchburg’s plan. Ms. Vittorioso asked how soon the executive planning committee and the strategic planning committee should be organized. Dr. Large replied that it is in the schedule section. President Antonucci stated we will seek volunteers to serve on the committees. He also thanked Dr. Large for his presentation today.

Dr. Bowen joined the committee at the table. She talked a bit about Dr. Large’s background. He has been a university president and has been in higher education for over 40 years as an educator and administrator. Dr. Bowen has worked with Dr. Large in the past while at another institution. This work will be on FSU’s 2015-2020 strategic plan. Dr. Large and Dr. Yasinski have met with various groups on campus already. Online learning, retention, graduation rates, finance, technology, marketing, admissions, and interaction with the community are some items that will be looked at. The final plan has to be approved by the board of trustees. Mr. Connors asked Dr. Bowen if we are starting with the old plan or with a clean piece of paper. Dr. Bowen responded that we would begin with a clean piece of paper, but there will be some things that will be moved over.

The Board next reviewed the sabbatical requests. Mr. Mahan reported that the Academic Affairs sub-committee met prior to the Board of Trustees meeting at 11:30 to discuss the sabbaticals. Questions were asked during the meeting, mostly around the number of sabbaticals that are being requested this time around. Mr. Mahan gave an overview of what happened in the sub-committee meeting and stated that the sub-committee voted unanimously to approve the sabbaticals. Next year there will be about the same number of requests, and then we will see a drop off. President Antonucci stated that we have not had any issues/problems with sabbaticals.

Upon a motion duly noted by Mr. Irving and seconded by Mr. Gregoire it was

Voted: via roll call to approve the sabbatical requests.
(9-0)

President Antonucci directed the attention of the Board of Trustees to the documents at the end of their book. Those documents included personnel action notifications for new hires, job changes/adjustments, retirements, resignations, reappointments, etc. They also included the following:

- a) Memo from Commissioner Freeland re: Presidential salary increase
- b) Memo re: NCATE
- c) Board of Trustee reappointments
- d) Chemistry Major
- e) Mission statements
- f) Financial statements
- g) News articles


The president reported that under a new ruling agreements/settlements (worker's comp, etc.) must be made public. Also, Landry Arena is not in good shape; we are losing money on it. No decisions have been made as to its future status. A study is currently in process. Any complaints should be forwarded to the president's office.

President Antonucci requested a motion for the Board of Trustees to enter into Executive Session.

Upon a motion duly noted by Mr. Mahan and seconded by Mr. Gregoire, it was voted by roll call (9-0) to enter into executive session at 2:05 p.m. to consider the purchase of real property and to discuss honorary degrees. Open session will not reconvene following the conclusion of executive session.

With no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 2:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:



Anna Maria Clementi, Clerk
Board of Trustees