

Staff Advisory Committee

February 14, 2023; John and Martha Hartley Room

Attendees: Sarah Irizarry, Jeffrey Richardson, Allie Biagioni, Jamie Blaszkowiak, Susan Erickson, Jennifer Nessmith, Brittney Lamb, Charles Cherrito, James Crook, John Meyer, Chris Finn, Dory Sigman, Aaliyah Thomas

Meeting was called to order at 9:03 am by Chair, Sarah Irizarry; January 2023 minutes were approved.

Guest Speaker: Kathleen McDermott, Interim Chief Financial Officer

- Provided a brief background regarding her experience in higher education
 - 10 years in higher education – beginning at NYU, moving to University of Arkansas, then Elmyra College, and now interim at Florida Tech
- Presented a portion of the PowerPoint slide show provided to the Financial Committee during the Board of Trustees Meetings in January 2023
 - Major difference this year – 5-year plan v. year to year plan
 - Had a good fiscal year for FY22
 - Budgeting modestly for FY23
 - Expected to end with surplus for FY23
 - First step of projection – look at where most revenue comes from – Undergrad
 - Using cohort survival methodology to project undergrad headcount
 - Discussed differences between new student admissions v. current student retentions
 - Using a 3-year rolling average to project undergrad retention
 - Question asked – Did Board of Trustees express goal of retention persistence rate
 - Answer was no, not a specific percentage goal
 - Discussed ways graduate students/credit hours were tracked – track projected semester credit hours, not students
 - Explained the need for a plan, then need to gather and track data
 - Taking the conservative method to projecting for FY23
 - Explained when University transitioned to position management, many positions transferred to Workday without budget assignments, which created discrepancies that need to be resolved by closing positions that will not or cannot be filled. Without closing these positions, we cannot get an accurate count for available positions/available budget
 - Discussed budget development schedule
 - After October 2022 Board Meetings – revenue planning
 - November 2022 – Enrollment, tuition planning/projections
 - December 2022 – Housing, Dining, Auxiliary Services
 - January 2023 – Presented to Board of Trustees
 - May 2023 – Work with big departments for capital expenses
 - June 2023 – Plan/budget presented to Board of Trustees

- FY24 Budget Development
 - Information should be distributed to campus/cost center budget managers regarding timelines and planning
 - Training will be available for budget managers
 - Budget planning will follow the hierarchy –
 - Cost Center Budget Manager creates budget request
 - Dean or VP review the budget request by Cost Center Budget Manager
 - Dean or VP finalizes request/submits what they feel is needed
 - Senior VP reviews request
 - Not all budget requests will be approved
- FY24 Budget Development will impact FY25, FY26, FY27
- Question asked regarding infrastructure – older residence halls/buildings – how/if renovations will be funded
 - Once budgets are finalized, and FY23 is closed, see where the surplus falls – if surplus money - meet with Brian Leslie, President King and incoming President to discuss projects that can be funded, and timelines for projects/funds
- Question asked regarding comparison of Florida Tech retention rates to other similar universities
 - Answer - We are currently in the bottom 10% compared to national peer group for retention; Unsure how we compare to State of Florida peers (regarding State of Florida Peers – comparison would be apples to oranges as different types of students v. stem focused students)
- Current student breakdown – 1/3 from Florida, 1/3 Domestic, 1/3 International
- Question asked regarding Board of Trustees requesting exit surveys for students who leave the University
 - Answer - Yes, Dr. Carvalho and Dr. Subasi are already working on new strategies to target retention problems; Discussed the need to identify students who are struggling earlier to help them adjust/get back on track before it's too late in the semester and help students vulnerable to academic dismissal; Looking at ways to identify students at a time when they are still able to turn things around
- Question asked regarding Board of Trustees receptiveness to 5-year plan
 - Answer - Board of Trustees agrees 5-year plan better for projecting than year to year plan; much harder to plan for big picture with year to year projecting
- Feedback from Staff Advisory Committee - Members expressed they were happy to hear a 5-year financial plan is being created

Guest Speaker: Grace Gamage, Ombudsperson

- Provided brief background regarding her time at the University
 - Hired in July
 - Became Interim Title IX Coordinator 3 weeks into position until new Title IX Coordinator (Dennis) was hired
 - First time the University has had an ombudsperson that was strictly ombudsperson and did not hold another position within the University

- Defined role of Ombudsperson at the University
 - Provides conflict resolution for everyone on campus – faculty, staff, and/or students
 - Confidential resource (unless complaint involves self-harm or harm of others)
 - Independent – does not sit on any committees/ if on a committee cannot be a voting member; does not advocate for Florida Tech or the Individual with a complaint/concern
 - Informal - does not help the process – available to mediate conflict if necessary but does not advocate on individual’s behalf
 - Takes large sets of data to analyze and bring to the President’s Office and Board of Trustees
 - Individual names are not provided
- Question asked – Do you follow student social media pages and if so, what have you found?
 - Answer – yes and looking for trends in their posts, suggests pages that are not run by Florida Tech or Florida Tech affiliates post disclaimer in bio/on main part of page
- Goal of ombudsperson is to decrease conflict and mitigate risk; solve conflict internally
- Reviews policies – noticed some policies were lacking and working towards improving/correcting those policies
 - Explained when she finds deficiencies or discrepancies within policies, she brings information to appropriate offices and parties to correct/make decisions and does not put new policy in place herself
- Ombudsperson also mediates conflict without emotions; can also talk through different strategies and conversations
- No one on campus is required to utilize ombudsperson services/talk to ombudsperson
- Public universities are required to have an ombudsperson

Other Business:

- Sarah discussed Presidential Open Sessions as well as Search Committee Sessions
 - If you attended the open sessions, please complete surveys for the candidates
 - Some members stated they have been in attendance, either in-person or via Zoom
 - A request was made to have a survey regarding all candidates once all open sessions were complete
 - Grace offered to collect any information that members were unable to submit through the surveys and route to the search firm or Board of Trustees
 - Attendance for in-person and Zoom combined was about 75-100 participants for each open session
- Next meeting pushed back a week due to Spring Break

Suggestion Box:

- Concern regarding dental plan – question being routed to HR for review and consideration for benefits for next year

Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 21st, 2023 at 9:00am in the Hartley Room