# MINUTES

**Trustees Present**: Kevin Hyde, Tom Bryan, Doug Burnett, Jill Davis, Wilfredo Gonzalez, Stephen Joost, Paul McElroy, Nik Patel, Ally Schneider, John White

**Trustees Absent** (Excused): Sharon Wamble-King, Annie Egan, Adam Hollingsworth

## Item 1 – Call to Order

Chair Hyde called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm.

## Item 2 – Public Comment

Chair Hyde offered the opportunity to those in attendance for public comment.

## Item 3 – Annual Presidential Evaluation

Chair Hyde reminded the Board that, at the end of fiscal year 2020, President Szymanski had completed the second year of his four-year contract and that the purpose of today’s meeting was for the Board to evaluate the President on the Board-approved goals for the fiscal year 2019-2020. He relayed that, before the Board’s discussion began, he had asked the President to speak to the Board.

President Szymanski gave an overview of the past year, noting the onset of the pandemic which occurred during the year. The President stated that despite the University having to grapple with new and ever-changing conditions during the pandemic, the experience had made the University better, stronger and more fluid in its abilities to anticipate, plan for contingencies, and innovate.

The President noted the progress that the University had made, emphasizing that the institution had been nationally ranked for the first time and that UNF had achieved having the most diverse body in its history thus far. With regard to UNF’s progress on metrics of strategic emphasis, President Szymanski highlighted that the University’s cost of a UNF education had decreased from $16,540 to $10,270 in two years. He stated that the cost will be $9,200 at the end of year three. The President emphasized that UNF is more affordable to students than it has been previously and that more students are coming to University and staying to complete their education. The President relayed that retention, which has historically been a challenge for the University, has improved - highlighting that, for the first time, the University has been on the list of state university system institutions with increases in retention rates. President Szymanski stated that the University will continue to focus on students’ classroom, social and campus experiences.

President Szymanski also highlighted the strides the University had made with regard to its graduation rates. He stated that UNF had improved 990 basis points in two years and that the University is now in the top 10 among its more than 300 Carnegie institution peers in terms of its graduation rates. The President stated that the University is now graduating students in significant numbers and creating greater access for students. President Szymanski also noted that, in terms of the most recent results of progress on the metrics that UNF had been the only university in the state university system which had a positive increase in Pell-grant-recipient students.

President Szymanski gave an overview of the types of (more than 1300) engagements he had participated in with UNF constituents in the last year - which he stated had included meetings and attending events with faculty, student, staff, community leaders, political leaders and donors. The President noted that the Presidential Lecture with Madeleine Albright was a success, with high attendance from the community and university. He added that the First Lady, Mrs. Szymanski, had also been highly engaged in campus and local community activities, attending events and representing the University. The President also referenced the Board of Governors directive to transform the University and stated that UNF had been working diligently in terms of enhancing teaching, research and in creating new positions.

Trustee Burnett stated that he was extremely impressed with the results the University and the Board have seen under President Szymanski’s leadership. He added that he has been proud to see what UNF has accomplished during this time. Trustee Patel stated that he echoed Trustee Burnett’s comments and asked the President if he “could improve on anything, what would it be?” The President noted that, while the University has made great strides in certain areas, there are still improvements that need to be made with regard to the University’s culture. He thanked Trustee Schneider and the Student Government for identifying funds in the Student Government budget, during the pandemic, that could be used to support the Emergency Student Relief Fund.

Chair Hyde asked if there were additional comments or questions. Trustee Bryan stated that it has been great to watch the transformation of UNF. He noted that at its October 17, 2019 meeting, the Board had discussed improvements needed for the University’s One-Stop office and, that since then, the University had made multiple changes to One-Stop processes. He asked Trustee Schneider if she could provide feedback on her recent experiences with One-Stop. Trustee Schneider stated that she had recently visited One-Stop. She relayed that there was a marked improvement. Trustee Schneider shared that she was easily able to make an appointment. She stated that the *Qless* appointment system, which shows students where they are in the One-Stop queue, had been extremely helpful. Trustee Schneider also stated that she was also able to wait in her car for her appointment (which she remarked was convenient and was likely a practice implemented to support social distancing during the pandemic). President Szymanski stated that Associate Vice President of Enrollment Services Terry Curran had done a

“great job” with One-Stop, providing staff training and implementing technology, which, the President stated had really made an impact on.

Chair Hyde noted that, per the Board’s policy on its annual evaluation of the President, he had reached out to Chair Kitson, of the Board of Governors, to get feedback on the President’s performance for the past fiscal year. Chair Hyde relayed that Chair Kitson had expressed that the University was moving in the right direction – in terms of its proposals such as MedNEX, with its goals of expanding programs and research in the health sciences and forming partnerships with leading healthcare institutions in the region. Chair Hyde relayed that Chair Kitson’s feedback also included that the President and the Board of Trustees were working well together for the advancement of the University.

Chair Hyde stated that he agreed with Chair Kitson’s feedback, highlighting the number of opportunities MedNEX will offer the University’s students. Chair Hyde noted the University’s recent success in terms of its Legislative Budget Requests. Chair Hyde stated that “the President and his leadership team had done a wonderful job in terms of responding to the COVID-19 crisis and preparing to open the campus and in response to social issues that have been in the forefront for the nation.” Chair Hyde praised the President for creating the University’s first Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer position and first Vice President of Jobs position to ensure that the University continues to engage the community in thoughtful action and response to social issues and strengthen its leadership as the number one jobs university in the state university system. Chair Hyde stated that, for these reasons, it was his recommendation that the University award President Szymanski the full amount ($75K) of incentive compensation.

Trustee White stated that he thought that President Szymanski had done a remarkable job in many ways. He noted the President’s support for faculty raises. Trustee White also stated that there had been challenges in relation to the Administration’s and faculty’s relationship and referred to a faculty survey, which Trustee White stated indicated low faculty morale and faculty dissatisfaction with their interactions with the President. He relayed that faculty have expressed that they would like more interaction with the President. Chair Hyde asked Trustee White if he thought this was evaluative or should be included as one of the goals for the next year. Trustee White relayed that he had competing thoughts, but that he did think it should be included as a goal for the upcoming year. Trustee White stated that faculty had also expressed they want more input in decision making. He relayed that faculty want more collaborative discussion and opportunities to provide input. Trustee White stated that while he appreciated the President’s support of faculty raises, as do the faculty, he thought that some of the impact of the President’s support for the raises might have been lost in communications to the faculty.

Trustee Burnett stated that he, himself, had been responsible for generating institutional change at a number of organizations and stated that the first few years can be difficult. He relayed that it is his experience that once institutions implement changes in the first few years, they often find they have additional capacities to address remaining challenges. Trustee White thanked Trustee Burnett for his comments, but relayed that he disagreed with the general characterization of the university having needed extensive institutional change prior to 2018.

Trustee Patel stated that he thinks the President had done a great job in the past year and that, as a new Trustee, he has been paying particular attention to the University’s performance in the metrics. Trustee Patel emphasized that progress in the metrics ultimately results in more funding for the University, which benefits its students and the University community. Chair Hyde asked if Trustee Patel was in support of incentive compensation. Trustee Patel stated that he was.

Trustee McElroy stated that the President had exceeded expectations in terms of progress on the metrics with regard to his performance during the year. Trustee

McElroy also stated that he agreed with Trustee Burnett that creating institutional change is challenging and takes time. He added that he thought that creating sustainable change relies on engagement. Trustee McElroy stated that “faculty are the core – the brains and heart of the University.” He stated he thought there may be additional opportunities to engage faculty. Chair Hyde asked if Trustee McElroy was in support of incentive compensation. Trustee McElroy stated he was.

Trustee Davis stated that she echoed Trustee McElroy’s statements. She relayed that she thought the President had done a “great job with handling the pandemic.” Trustee Davis stated that she was disappointed that the level of the President’s support of faculty raises might have been somewhat lost in messaging to faculty, and stated that she had voted to approve the faculty raises because of the strong case the President had made for the raises. Chair Hyde asked Trustee Davis if she was in support of incentive compensation. Trustee Davis stated that she was.

Trustee Davis asked Trustee Schneider for her input and thoughts on levels of student engagement at the University. Trustee Schneider first stated that President Szymanski handled conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic and MedNex “perfectly.” Trustee Schneider also stated that she agreed with the statements provided by Trustee White. Trustee Schneider relayed that, as a constituent representative and student, she has a unique understanding of the students’ perception of the President. She relayed that there is opportunity for more in-depth engagement with the students by the President. Trustee Schneider also expressed that the students had been frustrated by an earlier decision to eliminate tailgating activities on campus and that students remain frustrated by the decision.

Chair Hyde asked if there were additional comments or questions. Trustee Joost stated that the Board had expressed that the President had met all of the goals. He asked if the incentive compensation was “all or nothing” or if a percentage of the compensation could be awarded. Chair Hyde relayed that, in the President’s contract, incentive compensation is a defined amount and that Chair Hyde recommended that the Board award the full amount. Trustee Joost thanked the Chair for his comments and added that he thought further engagement with the faculty and students should be added as a Presidential goal for the coming year.

Chair Hyde stated that he would revise the draft Presidential evaluation to include the input from the Trustees and that he would discuss the evaluation with the President.

## Item 4 - Consideration of Incentive Compensation

Chair Hyde asked if there were a MOTION to APPROVE the payment of incentive compensation of $75K for the President. Trustee Burnett made the MOTION to APPROVE and Trustee Joost SECONDED. Chair Hyde asked the Trustees if they would like any additional discussion. Trustee White stated that the institutional policy is to award the full incentive pay amount to the President, if the Board deems it is warranted, but that he had noted language on the Board of Trustees website which seemed to reflect that the amount will be determined by assuming it could be some portion of the total compensation. Chair Hyde stated that, when the University entered into the contract, if the goals were met, the contract reflected the full amount would be approved. Chair Hyde asked if there were additional questions and/or if the Board would like further discussion. There being no further requests for discussion, the Board approved payment of incentive compensation of $75K for the President’s performance during the 2019-2020 fiscal year.

Trustee Gonzalez requested a moment to make a comment. He stated that with regard to perceptions of access to university presidents, he noted that he has heard similar expressions about access in multiple universities in the state university system and that universities face challenges as they grow. Trustee Gonzalez asked if it might be possible to assign a faculty member and student to each of the Board’s committees. Chair Hyde reminded the Board that it has been discussing the structure of its committees and will resume these discussions at a future meeting.

## Item 5 – Adjournment

There being no additional business, the meeting concluded at 1:00 pm.