# MINUTES

**Members Present:** Annie Egan (Chair), Jill Davis, Stephen Joost, Chris Lazzara, John White, Kevin Hyde (ex officio)

## Item 1 Call to Order and Roll Call of Committee Members

Chair Egan called the Committee to order at 12:00 pm.

## Item 2 Public Comment

Chair Egan offer those in attendance the opportunity for public comment. There were no requests for public comment.

## Item 3 Consent Agenda

Chair Egan asked if there were any questions about the draft January 20, 2021 Academic and Student Affairs Committee meeting minutes that were on the consent agenda. There being none, Chair Egan asked for a MOTION to APPROVE. Trustee White made a MOTION to APPROVE, and Trustee Joost SECONDED. The Committee unanimously approved the consent agenda.

## Item 4 New Program Proposal – Master of Arts in Teaching in Exceptional Students Education (ESE)

Interim Provost Patterson addressed the Committee and spoke about the proposed new, academic program – the Master of Arts in Teaching in Exceptional Students Education (ESE). She noted the need for the program, highlighting that, for the past three years, the Duval County Public School System (DCPS) started the school year with an average of 185 instructional and instructional support vacancies. She further highlighted that:

* national projections for special education teachers are projected to see a 3.6% increase
* Florida projects a 7.6 – 8.1% increase
* DCPS projects and increase of 12.9% - 14.1%

## Item 4 New Program Proposal – Master of Arts in Teaching in Exceptional Students Education (ESE) *(continued)*

Interim Vice Provost Patterson relayed that the new program would attract students due to its residency model, with an enhanced focus on inclusive practice, cultural responsiveness, and projected 12-month completion timeline. She noted that the program would support all nine of the SUS’ strategic planning goals, and that it would serve as a program of strategic emphasis (critical workforce – education). She also stated that it would help the University with metrics as it would increase the number of graduate degrees UNF awards within programs of strategic emphasis.

Dr. Pamela Williamson, Professor and Chair, Exceptional, Deaf and Interpreter Education, College of Education and Human Services (COEHS), stated that the proposed program is a thirty-credit-hour initial certification program for individuals who wish to become special education teachers and who already have a bachelor’s degree in another area.

Chair Egan asked how having the degree would affect teachers’ salaries. Trustee White noted that upon obtaining the degree, teachers are awarded a $1,000 stipend, but he noted that teachers’ salaries are primarily determined by seniority in their roles. Trustee Lazzara asked if students who completed the program and who wished to earn a Ph.D., would be more competitive for Ph.D. programs. Interim Provost Patterson confirmed that was the case. Dr. Williamson emphasized that the program is for individuals who hold a bachelor’s degree in fields other than education, but later determine that they would like to serve as a special education teacher.

Chair Egan asked if there were any additional questions. There being none, she asked for a MOTION to APPROVE the Master of Arts in Teaching in Exceptional Students Education program. Trustee White made a MOTION to APPROVE, and Trustee Hyde SECONDED. The Committee unanimously approved the Master of Arts in Teaching in Exceptional Students Education program.

## Item 5 Update from the Interim Provost

Interim Provost Patterson asked Dr. Kantner, Interim Associate Provost and Associate Vice President for Research to speak about UNF’s growing reputation as a research university. Dr. Kantner stated that he first wanted to take a moment to share that the University had just announced that UNF had received a grant from NASA to research the effects of low-gravity settings on human physiology.

As he began his update on UNF’s research activities, Dr. Kantner focused on one of the goals of the UNF Strategic Plan to “significantly expand research expenditures , elevating UNF’s ranking among universities for expenditures on research and development as measured, for example in the annual National Science Foundation’s (NSF) Higher Education Research and Development (HERD) Report.” Dr. Kantner relayed that the annual NSF HERD report is the “gold standard” by which universities compare their research productivity. He highlighted that, unlike other possible research metrics, the HERD report focuses on R&D expenditures regardless of funding source. Dr. Kantner stated that, since a low in FY2014, UNF’s expenditures have increased almost 250%, and UNF’s ranking on the HERD report has leapfrogged over more than 100 other universities. He added that, in that same timeframe, UNF had compared favorably with peer and aspirant universities; it now tracks alongside the average aspirant university. Dr. Kantner stated that the University’s success has largely been due to the work of UNF faculty securing significant external funding - such as Associate Professor of Psychology, Jody Nicholson's collaborative NIH grant to study the efficacy of “brain games” in preventing Alzheimer’s disease. Dr. Kantner relayed that UNF’s share of the grant is approximately ~$5 million of new R&D funding.

Dr. Nicholson spoke of the Preventing Alzheimer’s through Cognitive Training (PACT) - an NIH-funded, randomized controlled, trial which aims to reduce the onset of dementia through computerized cognitive training, or “brain games.” Dr. Nicholson noted that the project has had preliminary success through two sites at the University of South Florida and Michigan State, and is being expanded to include sites at Clemson, the University of Florida, Duke, Banner Health of Arizona, and UNF. Dr. Nicholson is the UNF site-PI and will recruit 1001 participants across the next two years to go through the three-year program. Dr. Nicholson relayed that the

## Item 5 Update from the Interim Provost *(continued)*

project is an example of utilizing existing structures in place at UNF, such as the University’s community-engaged focus. She emphasized that it will also enhance the University’s research infrastructure and added that off-campus interview sites will be established to increase the University’s human subjects research potential. Dr. Nicholson stated that the trial demonstrates a clear example of how UNF is developing a bigger research footprint. She highlighted that the project also supports the teaching-focused mission of the University, by providing additional research opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students that align with the MedNexus initiative.

## Item 6 Adjournment

Chair Egan adjourned the meeting at 12:45 pm.