# **MINUTES**

**Trustees Present:** Kevin Hyde (Chair), Paul McElroy (Vice Chair), Tom Bryan, John Gol,

Alison Korman Shelton, Nik Patel

**Trustees Absent:** Jason Barrett, Selma Besirevic, Jill Davis, Annie Egan, Christopher Lazzara, John White

## Item 1 Call to Order

Chair Hyde called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m.

Chair Hyde relayed that in anticipation of Senate Bill 520 passing, at its March 3, 2022 meeting, the Presidential Search Committee had decided to make an adjustment to the schedule for the presidential search – with the recommended list of final candidates coming to the Board of Trustees on April 13 or 14, 2022 and the interviews occurring in early to mid-May.

Chair Hyde reminded the trustees of the Board’s upcoming (virtual) meeting on March 16, 2022. He also reminded the trustees that the Board of Governors will meet on the UNF campus on March 29 and March 30, 2022 (and that the Board of Governors meeting will take place on March 30).

## Item 2 Public Comment

Chair Hyde offered those in attendance the opportunity for public comment. There were no requests for public comment.

## Item 3 Overview of UNF MedNexus

Dr. David Szymanski, CEO and Executive Director of UNF MedNexus,

presented an overview of MedNexus.

Dr. Szymanski highlighted that MedNexus is a capabilities-based, systems approach to problem solving and job preparedness for the Jacksonville area, Northeast Florida and beyond. It has a staff of 3.70 FTE, with:

* + - * Dr. David Szymanski, CEO and Executive Director of MedNexus (1.0)
      * Ms. Karen Bowling, Director of Global Partnerships (0.7)

(Ms. Bowling also serves as the Director of UNF’s Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation.)

* + - * Ms. Melonie Handerson, Program Director (1.0)
      * Noah Sterling, Coordinator IT Support (1.0)

He noted that MedNexus has three funded facilities: UNF MedNexus Deerwood, UNF MedNexus Palm Coast and UNF MSERF (mass spectrometry room).

Dr. Szymanski reviewed the mission and vision statements for MedNexus:

**Mission Statement**

The mission of UNF MedNexus is to solve healthcare problems through collaboration. MedNexus seeks to transform the face of healthcare by bringing organizations and people together to solve important healthcare problems. UNF MedNexus provides the platform for collaboration among universities, companies, and governments. MedNexus will direct, drive, identify, create and actively participate in collaborative consortia to solve pressing healthcare issues.

**Vision Statement**

The vision of UNF MedNexus is to be the premier problem-based, academic entity addressing healthcare problems through partnerships among colleges and universities, healthcare providers and healthcare organizations and local, state, and national governmental organizations. Capitalizing on its unique power of collaboration, UNF MedNexus will become nationally reputed for being at the edge of healthcare (1) learning (2) thought leadership and (3) technological innovation.

Dr. Szymanski also reviewed the goals of MedNexus:

**Goal 1**

Fulfill Legislative Obligations (2020-2021 LBR)

Engineering equipment, nursing instruction at UNF and Palm Coast; engineering and nursing accessed facilities at UNF-main campus, Deerwood, and Palm Coast; engineering, nursing and MedNexus staffing; and student scholarships

**Goal 2**

University of Distinction in Healthcare demands a broadening of healthcare focus across the university.

Address cross-college healthcare-related educational needs and opportunities at UNF - expand college and department involvement in healthcare focus

**Goal 3**

Augment, facilitate, and advance an integrated medtech focus at UNF through the UNF MedNexus

All colleges plus strategic emphasis on healthcare & healthcare-related organizations as collaborative partners. 2022 – 2023 LBR requests funding for 3D printers, scholarships and nursing faculty.

Trustee Korman Shelton asked a question with regard to the services that MedNexus provides vis-à-vis what the Colleges could provide with additional resources. Vice Chair McElroy relayed that the MedNexus model operates as a type of exchange of the ‘menu’ of capabilities and capacities in all aspects for the medical industry. He emphasized that the industry is so large that (and challenges within it many), that MedNexus provides an opportunity to connect the University’s capacities with the industry’s needs in an effective manner. Chair Hyde described the MedNexus model as medical technology coupled with industry partners. Dr. Szymanski confirmed, highlighting that industry has stressed the need for more data analytics capacities and that additional faculty members are needed in this area to build this capacity. Trustee Patel stated that he understands it is important for MedNexus to address problems in the healthcare industry as well as capacity issues. Dr. Szymanski agreed, stating there are multiple opportunities, for example, to improve outpatient follow-up care using technology. Trustee Gol, whose professional background is in the healthcare industry, agreed that there are multiple opportunities, with practical applications, to improve the healthcare industry’s coordination of outpatient care. Trustee Korman Shelton asked Dr. Paul Eason, Associate Dean of the College of Computing, Engineering and Construction, and Director of the Materials Science and Engineering Research Facility, (MSERF) what the role of and vision for the use of technology would be in MedNexus. Dr. Eason, who would present at a later time in the meeting relayed that his work and involvement with MedNexus represents a “slice” of an organically grown capability at UNF. He stated that MedNexus had been an accelerant for faculty who already have expertise in an area for finding commonality with other faculty to do research with. He added, “it is an opportunity to collaborate with others and find additional paths to partner with companies and additional paths to grants.”

## Item 4 Overview of Engineering Materials Science and Engineering Research

## Facility (MSERF) Partnership

Dr. Eason presented an overview of the MSERF partnership with MedNexus. He relayed that MSERF has partnerships with Tescan and Shimadzu, which provide state of the art instrumentation for research and education at significantly discounted prices. Dr. Eason highlighted that, while UNF does not have a major in materials science and engineering, it has 18 faculty across biology, chemistry, physics and engineering and anthropology who are material scientists.

Trustee Korman Shelton asked Dr. Eason if he might share information on the work he had done with NASA and other “explosion” analysis work he had performed. Dr. Eason described flight testing in 2009 for materials on the James Webb Space Telescope performed at UNF prior to the creation of MSERF. (He used this an example to stress that the technology that MSERF looks at is focused on the needs for and use of technology that will occur in 10, 20 and 30 years.  Dr. Eason stated that the “explosion” work he performed was a function of his consulting firm in which he conducts fire explosion and material failure analysis. (He relayed that he is also a “customer of his own lab and he is billed the full industrial rate for use of the machine.”)

Dr. Eason spoke of the companies with which MSERF works. He noted that MSERF is in its 5th year of operation and is building its base. Dr. Eason highlighted that Materials Science and Engineering involves the design and discovery of new materials (including metals, ceramics, electronic materials, and biomaterials) for use in any application. Dr. Eason stressed that MedNexus provides MSERF with additional opportunities to do molecular analysis. He spoke of the types of medical innovations and interventions MSERF can help with.

Dr. Eason referenced the work of Dr. Albina Mikhaylova and Dr. Brian Wingender’s work as examples of biomaterials work that has occurred at MSERF.

Trustee Bryan asked if the University owns a part of the intellectual property for researchers’ findings on UNF equipment. Dr. Eason stated that unless a UNF researcher is doing the research, the University does not.

Dr. Eason further described MedNexus as a way to get faculty in different, but complementary disciplines excited about the opportunities to collaborate together. Dr. Eason also spoke of the capabilities of the MALDI 7090, stating that discussions are underway for collaborations with leaders in the medical industry. He noted the potential for cancer and Alzheimer’s research with the MALDI 7090.

Trustee Patel asked how MedNexus helps Dr. Eason do his work. Dr. Eason relayed that MedNexus makes funds available and provides greater visibility for the work. He stated that “it takes our existing expertise, allows it to grow and flourish and partners us with industry.” He furthered that MedNexus is “a way for me to interface with industry and engage additional faculty in research.” Chair Hyde noted that this reflected Dr. Eason’s earlier comment that MedNexus was the accelerant for the work Dr. Eason and others do.

Trustee Korman Shelton emphasized the opportunity for medical innovation that MedNexus provides. Dr. Eason responded that there are opportunities with MedNexus for medical innovation, as well as opportunities for innovation in other areas. Chair Hyde stated that “it is all under the umbrella of innovation addressed to a specific problem that has been identified by the community and that industry wants to address it.” Chair Hyde stated that he likes that MedNexus uses resources and conduits the University has to accomplish these things.

Trustee McElroy asked about the benefits of MedNexus to UNF students. Dr. Eason stated that as an RII emerging research institution, UNF will not grow its research activities without a significant investment in infrastructure (especially equipment to do research). He stated that students in the interdisciplinary Masters of Materials Science use the MALDI 7090. Dr. Eason relayed that the University teaches courses that benefit from having this equipment and that “other partners are interested in teaching biology and data analysis courses for biology students, using our equipment.” Dr. Eason emphasized that all of these activities take place in the context of education. He stated that there is a 25-seat classroom in the lab and he has the ability to teach students about how the MALDI 7090 works and the theory behind it. He added that these opportunities will help students prepare for PhD and medical school programs or go into industry with skills sets they may not have otherwise developed.

Trustee Korman Shelton stated that she thought the opportunities students would have at UNF, through MedNexus, to be exposed to research and innovation in the medical industry would be attractive to parents of potential students. Dr. Szymanski agreed and stated that the presentation Ms. Karen Bowling, Director, UNF MedNexus Global and Academic Partnerships, had planned for later in the day references those types of opportunities. He noted that due to time constraints at the workshop, Ms. Bowling would not have the opportunity to present at the workshop.

Dr. Szymanski and Dr. Eason stated again that MedNexus helps increase the visibility of the faculty who are associated with it (which can augment the University’s existing marketing efforts). Trustee McElroy stated the MedNexus model leverages existing UNF expertise and knowledge to find solutions in the medical industry. He stated that MedNexus will be working with industry to identify and define which problems in the medical industry it can help with. Trustee McElroy stated that one of the challenges for the region is that UNF is the knowledge center of the region and people have to start looking inward to UNF cross-discipline solutions. Trustee McElroy added that MedNexus is a tool to “gather the expertise at UNF, across disciplines, and apply it to solutions for problems in the region and in different industries.”

## Item 5 Overview of Social Work Partnership

Dr. Paul Clark, Director of the Masters in Social Work program, and

Professor Ross McDonough, Director of Field Education, presented an overview of the MedNexus partnership with the UNF Social Work program. Dr. Clark referenced Dr. Eason’s interesting presentation on technology and emphasized that ultimately technology “comes down to people.” He stated that what social workers do, as a profession, is practice from “what could be called a ‘critical best practices’ perspective.” He noted that this perspective is focused on working with and within systems to provide outcomes for clients, patients, and consumers, as well as institutions. Dr. Clark stated that, at the individual, family, group and organizational level, the University works with social work students to make those outcomes possible.

Dr. Clark referenced that the U.S. Board of Labor Statistics predicts that there will be 78,300 job openings nationwide per year in social work (through approximately 2030). He stated that the UNF is prepared to address this at the graduate and undergraduate level. Dr. Clark noted that UNF social work students prepare to enter the health and mental health fields, child welfare, and social policy.

Professor McDonough stated that all UNF social work students who graduate have completed an extensive field education internship. He emphasized that field education provides an opportunity for students to develop and further refine their social work skills. Professor McDonough stated that the goal of the program is to ensure that students are fully ready to practice and are prepared for the job market. Professor McDonough stated that, for the 2021-2022 academic year, UNF social work students will have provided 36,000 hours of services to the community. He noted that, using data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, UNF social work students are providing approximately $1M of “free labor” to the Jacksonville community and surrounding region. Professor McDonough stated that there are a variety of settings in which UNF social work students can do their internships, and that UNF has formal relationships with 60 different agencies in Northeast Florida. He stressed that social work education cannot exist without community partnership and stated that the program sees the internship program as a “win/win” for the University/program and the agencies. Professor McDonough stated that many agencies hire the UNF students who have interned with them, after the student have graduated.

Dr. Clark stated that the Social Work program sees its involvement with MedNexus as being a part of an “incubator” for addressing the challenges in the community that exist in the health and mental health areas in Jacksonville. Dr. Clark reemphasized that the social work program is preparing UNF students to address the challenges for health and mental health at the individual, family, group, and organizational level. He noted that the program looks at how the burdens individuals face are affected by different contexts within the community and that solutions are also focused at addressing the problems not just within the individual, but also within the community and institutions. Dr. Clark stated, “we hope to be bringing ideas for research back to our colleagues, in MedNexus and the University, from the community and improving healthcare in the city of Jacksonville.” Dr. Clark stated that MedNexus provides the program with a wonderful opportunity to collaborate with other professions and disciplines within the University.

Trustee Korman Shelton asked why the opportunities Dr. Clark described are not available through other parts of the University. Dr. Clark stated that “part of what I do when I am not on faculty at UNF is work with people with cancer.” He noted that some of the medical interventions that Dr. Eason had previously spoken about will ultimately affect the patients that Dr. Clark is working with in the counseling center (external to UNF). Dr. Clark stated that the non-confidential information Dr. Clark’s clients provide to him can provide important feedback to a researcher at UNF who may be working on developing a medical intervention for a related problem (i.e. a researcher might be trying to help clinicians manage a side effect or manage how the problem is affecting the patient’s life).

Trustee Gol highlighted that social determinants can affect the delivery of outpatient healthcare. He stated that there can be barriers to obtaining health care (i.e. not having transportation for in-person visits). He stated that this may be a type of problem that MedNexus could help with.

## Item 6 Overview of Nursing Partnership

Due to time constraints and the time needed for the trustees’ general discussion of MedNexus, the presentation by Dr. Cindy Cummings, Assistant Professor, School of Nursing did not take place at the workshop.

## Item 7 Overview of Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation Partnership

Due to time constraints and the time needed for the trustees’ general discussion of MedNexus, the presentation by Ms. Karen Bowling, Director, UNF MedNexus Global and Academic Partnerships did not take place at the workshop.

Item 8 Breakout Workshop Sessions

Due to time constraints and the trustees’ discussion, the trustees were not able to participate in breakout workshop sessions.

## Item 9 Regroup for Discussion

At Chair Hyde’s request, and because of time constraints which prohibited the trustees’ participating in breakout workshop sessions, the trustees did not regroup for discussion. The trustees’ discussion occurred throughout the workshop and is reflected in other areas of these minutes.

## Item 10 Open Tours of the UNF MedNexus Deerwood Facility

Some trustees had previously toured the MedNexus facility, but time constrains prohibited a group tour.

## Item 11 Adjournment

Prior to adjourning, Chair Hyde asked if there were additional questions. Trustee Korman Shelton asked about next steps for MedNexus. Chair Hyde stated, that as a Trustee, from his perspective, the Board has seen the need to further crystalize the areas in which MedNexus can have an impact, narrowing the focus (in the context of most programs having limited resources). By narrowing the focus, MedNexus can determine the areas in which it will have the most impact and focus on the impact. He also stated that his hope is that the University community reflects on the areas it thinks MedNexus can have the most impact and brings those ideas and issues to MedNexus. Chair Hyde stated that he looks forward to future updates about MedNexus. He also stated that he appreciated Trustee McElroy’s emphasis on the benefits of MedNexus to UNF students and always having that in the forefront of the discussions regarding MedNexus.

Trustee Korman Shelton stated that the discussion had been helpful and that it also highlighted additional opportunities within the University to collaborate and promote the University’s programs and initiatives. Interim Vice President Pease stated that the UNF Media Relations team will be meeting with MedNexus staff and touring the facility very soon.

There being no additional questions, Chair Hyde adjourned the meeting at 12:00 p.m.