# Attendance

**Trustees Present:** Jack Boyle (Vice Chair / virtual), Michael Barcal,Paul McElroy (virtual)

**Trustees Absent:** Jason Barrett (Chair), Allison Korman Shelton, Kevin Hyde (ex officio), and Nik Patel

# Minutes

## Call to Order

Vice Chair Boyle called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM.

## Public Comment

Vice President and General Counsel, Karen Stone, confirmed a quorum and that there were no requests for public comment.

## Approval Item

### SPMIC-1: Consent Agenda

* April 11, 2024 Draft Strategic Plan Implementation and Monitoring Committee Meeting Minutes

Vice Chair Boyle asked for a MOTION to approve the April 11, 2024 Draft Strategic Plan Implementation and Monitoring Committee meeting minutes. Trustee McElroy made a MOTION to APPROVE, Trustee Barcal SECONDED the motion, and the committee unanimously approved the minutes.

## Discussion Items

### DISC-1: Update on the Strategic Plan Key Performance Indicators

Dr. Paul Eason, Vice President of Strategy and Innovation, provided background on the nature of the Strategic Plan Monitoring and Implementation committee. This ad-hoc committee was established at the start of the strategic plan to provide semi-annual updates based on the reporting pace of certain metrics.

The four strategic plan priority areas include:

1. Ensure student success from enrollment to employment and beyond.
2. Inspire relevant research and impactful innovation.
3. Expand mutually beneficial partnerships with the community.
4. Accelerate the success of faculty and staff.

VP Eason stated that there are two important institutional aspirations: UNF will become a Top 100 Public University in *U.S. News & World Report* by 2028 and UNF will obtain the necessary recourses to support strategic growth to 25,000 students by 2028.

VP Eason shared a chart that organizes UNF metrics by category within each priority area of the strategic plan, showing the starting point in August 2023, the current status in October 2024, the goal for 2024, and the target goal for 2028. The last column indicates the status of each metric, showing whether UNF is on track, in progress, not meeting, or not improving. VP Eason stated that there are more on-track items in the last column compared to the previous update.

Within the student success priority area, the takeaway is that efforts in student success, APR, and retention have yielded positive results in the first year and a half, and UNF is on track to meet its goals, including a FTIC retention rate of 92% and APR (retention with 2.0) rate of 90%. VP Eason thanked the Provost and the student success team for their efforts.

VP Eason stated that the remaining challenge lies in the FTIC four-year graduation rate, which is a lagging indicator reflecting the impact of admissions policies from four years ago. This year, the goal was set at 52%, but the actual rate was 48.4%, indicating no improvement and that the metric is not on track. This trend was anticipated due to historical retention issues. Efforts are ongoing to support upper-division students to prevent further losses, but the numbers are expected to remain challenging next year as this cohort progresses through the system. Gains from current policies will likely only become evident in the future.

Dr. Abby Willcox, Associate Vice President of Institutional Research, stated that next year, the focus will be on the fall 2020 cohort, which had the lowest retention rate. Significant gains are expected with the fall 2021 cohort, as this is when improvements in retention will begin to show, especially considering the impact of COVID-19 on the 2020 cohort.

The final student success metric is median wages, which has historically been strong. Overall, except for the FTIC four-year graduation rate, student success is on track and is incrementally achieving the goals set for the 2028 strategic plan.

Trustee McElroy asked a question regarding the four-year graduation rate, highlighting two main obstacles: students' life circumstances, such as work and family responsibilities, which may extend their time to graduation, and the availability of required courses to stay on track. He expressed concern about whether students still face challenges accessing needed courses due to capacity issues and sought to understand if scheduling improvements have been made to support timely graduation, while also acknowledging that personal life factors may still cause delays for many students.

Dr. Karen Patterson, Provost and Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, explained that they closely monitor course availability, collaborating with advisors and deans to ensure students can access the classes they need. Following the President's directive, if even one student requires a course, they will provide it, even if it means a 1:1 faculty-to-student ratio. Every effort is made to address students' life challenges, with support from the Executive Cabinet. Provost Patterson stated that the approach is *all hands on deck,* ensuring that if a solvable issue arises, there is a prompt response to assist the student.

All metrics under inspire relevant research are on-track, and that all KPI’s were met for total R&D expenditures. VP Eason shared that the final number for number of industry contracts and grants (C&G) is pending verification of recent data due to the system transition from Banner to Workday, however it is projected to have exceeded the goal. Additionally, enough research doctoral candidates graduated to maintain the institution's R2 classification under the research doctoral degrees granted metric. For this year, research expenditures are projected at around $26.8 million, significantly exceeding the 2024 target. This increase includes notable internal expenses and a $1.7 million equipment purchase. While a slight decline is expected next year, growth in research and grant submissions may help maintain current levels if additional awards are secured.

Vice Chair Boyle asked whether it's acceptable for some metrics to dip in future years, as long as they remain above the goal and on track toward the 2028 targets, acknowledging there may be some volatility over the next five years. VP Eason indicated that this year's R&D expenditures were unusually high due to a unique set of circumstances, though it wasn’t expected to reach that level. President Limayem shared that while there's a commitment to increase expenditures, future declines may occur due to fluctuating federal and state agency budgets. The President noted the primary goal is to exceed targets over the five-year period. VP Eason emphasized the importance of mindful growth, noting that efforts should prioritize long-term health, performance-based funding metrics, and sustainable research over mere expansion.

Under the expand community partnerships priority area, there are both "in progress" and "not met" metrics this year under the third strategic priority area, reflecting a generally volatile situation. Notably, significant progress has been made in community engagement courses, which are crucial for the Carnegie classification and the documentation for reclassification efforts in the coming year. Despite the transition, efforts to enhance collaborations and partnerships continue, which will lead to a reassessment of metrics.

Lastly, in the priority area of accelerating the success of faculty and staff, the first point focuses on average faculty compensation. Recent bargaining led to successful raises, but the updated figures are not yet available to reassess the fall 2023 metric of $238,000. This amount exceeds the 2024 goal, and while it may increase, factors like retirements and faculty losses must be considered, so the fall 2023 number will be maintained for now.

Additionally, the institution has been recognized as one of the best places to work, ranking 38th on the Zippia.com list of the top 50 companies in Jacksonville. Although this ranking is based on legitimate data and surveys, it is not the most prestigious, and efforts will be made to pursue higher accolades.

Lastly, fundraising efforts led by Teresa Nichols, Vice President of University Development and Alumni Engagement, exceeded the $30 million goal and are on track for the $50 million target by 2028.

Dr. Richmond Wynn, Vice President of Community Engagement & Partnerships, highlighted a shift in community partnerships from 99 at the start of the plan in August 2023 to 48 as of October 2024. This change occurred after consulting with the President and the Executive Cabinet, who agreed it was beneficial to take a closer look at partnerships rather than maintaining a large, less-defined list. The committee decided to focus on partners who have made significant investments in UNF as a primary inclusion criterion, while still acknowledging other community relationships that will be addressed later.

Dr. Wynn shared how UNF is increasing the depth and breadth of partnerships through a new partnership inventory matrix, which assesses engagement across multiple areas of support. One of the primary inclusion criteria states that there must be a philanthropic relationship of at least $100,000 in the last two years. Additionally, there are several areas of support, including assessing partnership levels through specific benchmarks like the number of graduates involved, alumni philanthropy, internship opportunities, contracts, and service on UNF advisory boards.

UNF is currently engaged in discovery conversations with potential partners, including Fidelity Information Services (FIS), Operation New Uniform, NLP LOGIX, Take Stock in Children, and United Way of Northeast Florida. Discovery conversations are aimed at strengthening relationships with current partners and forming new, mutually beneficial partnerships in the community. These discussions focus on collaborative efforts, emphasizing not only what an organization can offer but also how both parties can work together to address real-world challenges.

UNF has established two new collaborations centered on mutual commitments to learning and discovery will be highlighted through the following upcoming on-campus events:

* **TEDx Jacksonville, annual conference, November 16, 2024**
	+ Four faculty members participated in the TEDx Jacksonville Democracy Salon on May 30, 2024.
* **Incubate Debate, high school debate tournament**
	+ National Championship, May 2025.

These events will be passive advertisement for potential students because it will allow attendees to experience UNF firsthand. Dr. Wynn stated that when hosting partners on campus, efforts are made to provide a tour or exposure to various campus areas beyond the event venue. The goal is to balance time and resources, focusing on partners who meet the primary inclusion criteria, while also engaging those who may not but are still valuable for collaboration.

Vice Chair Boyle asked how we define the geographic reach of Northeast Florida. Dr Wynn stated that there currently are no specific opportunities or targets outside of the greater Jacksonville area, but the organization remains open to exploring partnerships beyond this region. There is potential for an international partnership, although discussions have not yet progressed. The focus is on finding partnerships that align with UNF’s goals and can help address real-world problems, with a willingness to collaborate wherever it makes sense for the organization.

President Limayem added that in the upcoming November board meeting, there will be a detailed discussion about expanding community engagement and partnerships. The Board will explore ways to open doors for opportunities beyond the local area. The President echoed Dr. Wynn’s point about not limiting partnerships to one region, noting that many multinational businesses in Florida are seeking local partners. While UNF supports the local business community, it remains open to wider opportunities.

Dr. Wynn discussed one exciting potential partnership that involves an Australian-based organization with a presence in Jacksonville. This organization has discussed offering students internships and employment opportunities, both in the U.S. and at their locations in Australia. These possibilities represent valuable international career opportunities, and UNF’s plans to follow up on them.

Vice Chair Boyle stated that one potential location to consider is Savannah, due to its prominence as a logistics hub in the Southeast, which aligns with UNF’s logistics focus.

Dr. Abby Willcox, Associate Vice President of Institutional Research, presented the progress on becoming a Top 100 Public University in *U.S. News & World Report* by 2028. Dr. Willcox shared that the rankings rely heavily on two main factors: six-year graduation rates (to include rates for Pell Grant recipients and how well we graduate students over what *US News* expects; 37%) as well as reputation (20%), which together account for nearly 60% of the total ranking. When retention rates, which contribute 5%, are included, these factors collectively make up over 60% of the ranking calculation. The university is already focused on improving six-year graduation rates as retention efforts yield results over time.

A notable change in this year's ranking is the removal of first-generation graduation rates, which were based on outdated data. With the removal, *U.S. News* increased the weight of Pell Grant graduation rates in the calculation. This change is seen positively, as the previous first-generation data only included students who took out loans, representing a smaller, less comprehensive group.

UNF improved its ranking among top public schools, moving from 129 to 126, gaining three spots. Within individual indicators, there were increases in seven areas, decreases in nine, and stability in two. Key improvements were seen in graduation rates, retention, and Pell Grant graduation rates, though the data reflects lagging metrics such as SAT/ACT scores from last year.

However, the peer assessment score, which contributes 20% of the overall ranking, dropped from 2.4% to 2.3%. This decline was consistent across Florida, affecting institutions like FGCU, FAMU, UCF, and the University of Florida, with no SUS institutions reporting an increase. In comparison, last year’s ranking at 129 was shared with four other universities, two of which—University of Texas, Arlington, and University of New Mexico—also moved up to 126, while the others dropped by six points.

Vice Chair Boyle asked to clarify the meaning and composition of the peer assessment score due to its significant impact on rankings. Dr. Willcox stated that peer assessment in the *U.S. News and World Report* rankings involves a survey sent each spring to university presidents, provosts, and deans of enrollment management. They rate hundreds of institutions on a scale of one to five, evaluating the overall quality of education, research, and general reputation.

President Limayem shared that improving the peer assessment score is challenging, as it involves competing with well-known institutions like Ivy League schools, which have established reputations. The reliability of these assessments is sometimes questioned, as universities can be ranked highly in disciplines they do not offer due to name recognition. For instance, FAU's popularity spiked after making the Final Four but later declined. Despite these challenges, there is optimism that with the efforts of Andrea Jones, Vice President of Marketing and Communications, and her team, progress can be made.

VP Jones echoed the President’s remarks and stated that the peer assessment process has become less reliable, with survey response rates dropping from about 60% in the 1990’s to about 30% now. Debate continues over whether this ranking method should be removed from *U.S. News and World Report*, as national recognition or scandals can heavily influence a university's reputation. Targeted marketing efforts have been made, but it remains difficult to impact rankings given the large number of institutions and limited respondent knowledge.

Dr. Willcox presented a chart displaying the Florida SUS *U.S. News & World Report* Top Public School Rankings from 2020 to 2025. She noted that since entering national rankings in 2020, UNF has improved its ranking by 14 points, moving from 140 to its current position. However, other universities like FAU, FAMU, UCF, and FIU have seen significantly larger increases. While progress should be celebrated, it's important to continue pushing for further improvement. Peer assessment scores are crucial to these rankings, and if UNF had the same score as FAU, it would have ranked 119. For the goal of breaking into the top 100, institutions ranked 97 and 103 have an average peer assessment score of 2.8, highlighting the importance of this factor in future discussions.

Dr. Glen Besterfield, Dean of Enrollment Management, presented an update on enrollment and growth. For Fall 2024, the target enrollment was around 17,000 students, but the actual enrollment was approximately 16,300, falling 300 short of the previous year’s total. The most significant drop occurred in the First-Time in College (FTIC) category. However, transfer students performed well across three categories: Florida college system (FCS) transfers, other transfers, and post bachelors. Graduate students, both master’s and doctoral, also saw positive numbers, with only a small shortfall of about 5 students in each category. The major decline was in the FTIC cohort. A comparison of continuing students from Fall 2023 to Fall 2024 showed strong performance in transfer students, doctoral, and master's students, but a shortfall of about 1,000 students overall, with FTIC students being the primary area of concern.

In Fall 2024, the university performed well with transfer students, doctoral students, master's students, and non-degree students, exceeding expectations in these categories. Dr. Besterfield emphasized that there was a shortfall of about 1,000 students overall, primarily due to a decline in FTIC enrollment. While continuing students showed strong retention, the FTIC students did not meet the target.

Dr. Besterfield stated FTIC enrollment in Fall 2024 dropped by 31.6%, with a national trend showing declines across all types of universities, both public and private, attributed to changes in FAFSA. Additionally, UNF removed several decile one and two students in the FTIC class and faced a weaker recruitment funnel. Despite the drop in numbers, the incoming FTIC class is of exceptionally high quality, with the highest GPA of 4.05 in UNF history and a significant increase in SAT scores (1142 versus 1101 for class of 2023). This class is expected to help achieve long-term retention and graduation goals outlined in the 2028 strategic plan.

UNF was able to support more students through scholarships, particularly through Bright Futures, with an increase from 36.2% for class of 2023 to 44.9% for the class of 2024. Dr. Besterfield stated there was only about a 15% increase in spending, while doubling the number of students receiving scholarships. Dr. Besterfield indicated this is a significant achievement, with some of the success possibly linked to changes in FAFSA. Moreover, further analysis of FAFSA data is expected to provide more insight into these trends.

Dr. Besterfield discussed the enrollment efforts toward the spring 2025 admits and confirmations, and he noted efforts to mitigate the enrollment decline are showing promising results. Applications and admits for Spring 2025 are significantly up, especially for FTIC and transfer students. Confirmations for both groups are nearly double compared to previous years, indicating strong interest and enrollment. While graduate student numbers are also rising, it’s difficult to provide a precise figure due to visa-related challenges, as many international students were deferred from Fall 2024. Dr. Besterfield shared that the main issue for graduate students was not visa denials, but difficulties in securing visa interviews. Overall, mitigation efforts are progressing well, though full recovery remains uncertain.

Dr. Besterfield provided insight on the funnel and applications for the FTIC class of 2025, indicating that UNF has 152,333 leads. He stated that the admissions funnel for the future class is currently very strong. A call to apply was sent to 150,000 students in July, and this has since increased to over 230,000 students, with continuous additions through various vendors and social media. Additionally, the funnel now includes SAT and ACT students, which were previously absent for the Class of 2024, showing improvement in nurturing these leads.

Dr. Besterfield reported that applications for the Fall class of 2025 are up by 20% compared to last year. For the Summer/Fall class of 2025, applications have increased by 25%, with out-of-state and international applications rising by 35%. As the November 1st priority application date approaches, it is expected that about 55% of applications will be received by that time. After November 1st, the application pace will level off, continuing through March.

Trustee McElroy inquired whether the trends from that year indicated that the previous year was an anomaly and if the data on applications could help project a more reliable yield for future enrollment, particularly as the process progressed. Additionally, he asked when the university would be able to achieve a degree of reliability in forecasting applications to yield.

Dr. Besterfield stated that last year's issues were somewhat of an aberration, largely due to FAFSA problems, which were expected to improve but may still have a 5-7% impact. Although FAFSA was scheduled to roll out in December instead of October, the technical glitches are expected to be resolved, making this year's impact less severe. Additionally, the admissions funnel was much stronger this year, which is a positive development, and there was no need to dial down decile one and two students as had been done the previous year. The priority application due date on November 1st and the release of decisions on November 13th will be crucial in determining the success of this year's enrollment efforts.

President Limayem stated the key message conveyed was that all efforts are being mobilized to monitor and support enrollment growth, emphasizing a collaborative approach. The President mentioned an upcoming meeting with the Deans and the Provost to ensure their involvement and accountability, highlighting that enrollment efforts should extend beyond the enrollment team. While FTIC enrollment numbers were intentionally reduced, the decline was greater than expected. President Limayem ensured that efforts will be intensified to leverage strategies effectively.

Trustee McElroy emphasized the need to utilize all available strategies to reach the 25,000 students target, acknowledging the challenge of achieving this goal. He indicated that while a slight deviation of 5 to 10% might be manageable, the current numbers, with declines exceeding 20% and nearing 30% in the early years, are particularly concerning as these issues would compound over time, especially approaching 2028. Trustee McElroy acknowledged the team’s efforts and emphasized the importance of ongoing efforts.

Dr. Besterfield highlighted the importance of maintaining and improving the student profile, which had been strategically strengthened to reach targets. He indicated that a goal has been set for an average FTIC student GPA of 4.2 and an SAT score of 1,200 by 2028. Dr. Besterfield emphasized that these incremental gains could be achieved alongside enrollment growth. Additionally, Dr. Besterfield announced a record-setting admissions event with over 2,200 registered attendees, primarily high school seniors, aimed at boosting applications.

VP Eason acknowledged time constraints and summarized key points, mentioning that discussions about brand awareness, initially intended to be discussed, were touched on enough to highlight progress. VP Jones has been leading targeted efforts to improve brand recognition, specifically in connection with U.S. News & World Report. VP Eason noted significant progress, including a recent Wall Street Journal ranking that placed the institution third among public and private universities in Florida, marking a notable improvement in national recognition. VP Eason stated that detailed discussions on tactics will be deferred to a future Board of Trustees meeting.

Trustee Barcal asked about the future goals beyond 2028, expressing curiosity about what comes after reaching the current targets. He noted the importance of maintaining focus beyond 2028 to ensure continued progress and to prevent complacency after achieving the set milestones.

President Limayem emphasized the dual focus on improving and expanding the university, noting that better quality requires increased infrastructure, recurring funding, and capital investment through PECO dollars. The President stressed the need to reassess growth plans based on funding outcomes in Tallahassee, with the goal of continuing growth to meet the needs of Jacksonville's strong job market, where UNF is a key talent provider. President Limayem highlighted that growth must be supported by adequate funding to avoid setbacks, making strategic appeals to state legislators for continued financial support. He cautioned against growth without improvement, referencing past enrollment decisions that posed reputational risks and underscored the importance of aligning resources with expansion.

### DISC-2: Committee Discussion

This discussion was deferred to a future Board of Trustees meeting.

## Adjournment

President Limayem acknowledged that the committee meeting was intended to be in-person but noted that various reasons prevented full attendance. He proposed reconsidering the format for future meetings to align with other committee meetings, to reduce stress related to traffic and work schedules. The President expressed willingness to continue arranging in-person meetings but suggested virtual meetings might be more convenient for trustees. The Committee and Vice Chair Boyle agreed to revert to Zoom for future meetings.

Vice Chair Boyle expressed gratitude to the Committee, emphasizing its importance and noted that the meeting was highly informative. He acknowledged significant progress shown on the scorecard, commended the team for their strategic accomplishments, and supported the President’s goal of achieving complete success by continually raising the bar.

Vice Chair Boyle adjourned the meeting at 10:04 AM.