



JACKSONVILLE STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES

The Board of Trustees of **JACKSONVILLE STATE UNIVERSITY** held its Winter Quarterly Meeting on the 5th Floor of Meehan Hall on April 30, 2024, **commencing at 9:00 a.m. CDT.**

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

Presiding Chair Jones officially called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and welcomed everyone present. Trustee Smoke opened the meeting with an invocation.

ROLL CALL AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM

The Chairman directed Dr. Killingsworth, Secretary to the Board, to call the roll. The following members were present:

Randall E. Jones, Chairman
Senator Vivian D. Figures, Vice Chair
Mr. Greg Brown
Mr. Clarence Daugeette, III
Mr. Rusty Fuller
Mrs. Gale S. Main
Mr. Randy Y. Owen
Mr. Tony Smoke

The Trustees listed above constitute a quorum for conducting business. Trustees Ingram, Trustee Linn, and Ex-officio member Governor Ivey were absent. Others present included Mrs. Kristi Killingsworth, First Lady; university faculty, staff, and students; members of the public; and media representatives.

Chairman Jones extended a warm welcome to Dr. Heidi Dempsey, the newly elected president of the Faculty Senate, and Mr. De'Onta Bush, the newly elected president of the Student Government Association (SGA).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Jones noted that a draft of the **January 9, 2024**, Winter meeting minutes had previously been circulated through Diligent for review. He asked if there were any objections to

approving the minutes as distributed. Hearing none, the minutes were unanimously approved.

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Trustee Owen, Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee, reported that the Committee convened on April 29, 2024. During the meeting, they discussed significant accomplishments across the various colleges and reviewed **one action item**, which the Committee unanimously approved.

Motion: Graduate Admissions Requirements: The current language in the catalog should be changed from receiving only official transcripts from all colleges/universities with degrees posted to "*receiving all transcripts from the baccalaureate degree awarding institution and all transcripts where any work beyond that baccalaureate degree has been completed.*"

Coming from the Academic Affairs Committee, the motion did not require a second. The Board of Trustees unanimously approved.

ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE

Trustee Main, Chair of the Advancement Committee, reported that the Committee convened on April 29, 2024, and had a great meeting. The committee liaison, Dr. Medders, discussed growth and fundraising for Q1 2024. They reviewed the Foundation's asset growth in 2023, investment, gifts, and commitments. The restructuring of athletic fundraising to the JAX State Athletic Foundation was also covered, along with staff expansion. Ms. Wiggins provided a brief recap of enrollment, highlighting record spring enrollment in multiple areas, and stated that the outlook for summer and fall is positive. **There were no action items to bring before the Board.**

ATHLETIC COMMITTEE

Trustee Ingram, Chair of the Athletic Committee, was absent. Trustee Fuller, co-chair, reported that the Committee met on April 29, 2024. He announced the Women's Bowling Team's historic achievement of winning the NCAA National Championship in their first competition season by securing a 4-3 victory over Arkansas State on April 13, 2024. The NCAA National Championship Trophy will be displayed in the coliseum lobby. **There were no action items to bring before the Board.**

AUDIT, RISK, AND COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE

Trustee Brown, Chair of the Audit, Risk, and Compliance Committee, reported that the Audit Committee had an excellent meeting on April 29, 2024, highlighting numerous positive developments. He praised Mr. Clark for his outstanding leadership in the department. The Committee engaged in a productive discussion about the internal audit committee's activities and was introduced to an intern from Haiti. Mr. Clark is commendable in his mentorship of interns. The conversation with the intern showcased our institution's high caliber of students. While interactions with faculty and staff are always valued, engaging with students, and witnessing how

well we fulfill our school's mission is especially rewarding. The Committee had **one action item**. Trustee Brown motioned to adopt the **2022-2023 audited Annual Financial Report**.

Coming from the Audit, Risk, and Compliance Committee, the motion did not require a second. The Board of Trustees unanimously approved the adoption of the 2022-2023 audited Annual Financial Report.

BUILDING AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Trustee Smoke, Chair of the Building and Finance Committee, reported that the Committee convened on April 29, 2024. The Committee had a very thorough discussion on financial matters. There was an overview of capital projects; Dr. Hoult and Mr. Thompson thoroughly reviewed the status of capital projects on campus and the fiscal aspects of those projects. There was a presentation from STIFEL Investments on the fiscal matters in credit at the institution. As a result of these discussions, the Committee brought forward **five action items** for consideration at today's board meeting.

ACTION ITEMS:

- 1. Approval of the West Village Housing Project – Parameter Resolution**
- 2. Approval of the new 403(b) Investment Plan with TIAA**
- 3. Approval of the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Mid-Year Budget**
- 4. Approval of the Fiscal Year 2024-2024 Proposed Tuition and Fees**
- 5. Approval of the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Proposed Budget**

Trustee Smoke moved for the Board's approval of the five action items as presented. They were unanimously adopted, separately and collectively.

Chairman Jones offered an opportunity for discussion and comments. The motion from the Building and Finance Committee did not require a second.

THE BOARD COMMITTEE MEETINGS

(The records of the Board Committee meetings are in the respective committee meeting minutes, which are on file in the Office of the President.)

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Killingsworth began his report by welcoming everyone and announced the good news about the university's reaffirmation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). This reaffirmation, conducted every ten years, was particularly challenging due to the passing of Dr. Louise Clark, who had overseen the process for nearly 50 years. The provost stepped in to lead the effort, culminating in submitting the Compliance Certification Report. The review included three site visits and concluded with no findings of fault, a rare and commendable achievement.

The president likened this success to a major sports victory, emphasizing the team's hard work and dedication. He acknowledged the leadership of the reaffirmation team and noted that

SACSCOC has started recruiting university staff for other review teams, highlighting their expertise.

The provost thanked the president for his support, which included creating and funding the new position of Executive Director of Accreditation. This position has been crucial in managing both SACSCOC and program accreditations. The provost also detailed the extensive efforts of her team, which included long, intensive retreats dedicated to compliance tasks.

Dr. Stone, who led the development of the innovative Jax Mix general education program, thanked the president and acknowledged the broad-based support from the campus community. The program is noted for embedding micro-credentials into general education, a pioneering effort nationally.

The university plans to adopt a continuous compliance strategy to ensure readiness for future reviews and will celebrate this achievement with a campus event in the fall. The president and provost expressed pride in the university's accomplishments and gratitude for the hard work of everyone involved.

There is one final step: the SACSCOC Board of Trustees must approve the submission from the on-site committee in December. While we do not expect any issues, their approval is still required.

Government Relations Report

Ms. Leigha Cauthen, Chief Government Affairs Officer, announced that Congress passed the budget in March, confirming an award of \$5.11 million in federal earmarks for various campus projects. Congressman Mike Rogers supported \$2.7 million for the Additive Manufacturing Training and Innovation Lab, with Dr. Dana Ingalsbe and her team leading the effort. Senator Katie Britt secured \$1.76 million for the Interprofessional Healthcare Education Center, thanks to Dean Matthews and her team. Also, Senators Katie Britt and Tommy Tuberville, along with Congressman Mike Rogers, allocated \$656,000 for campus safety improvements. Ms. Cauthen expressed her excitement about securing funding for the campus from DC. She mentioned that they are finalizing the grants to provide students with new opportunities and enhance their experience. She emphasized her enthusiasm and commitment to continuing this progress.

President's & Provost's Faculty Fellows Program

President Killingsworth introduced two faculty fellows yesterday: a Provost Fellow focused on experiential learning opportunities and a Presidential Fellow. During the meeting, he discussed Open Educational Resources (OER), which refer to freely accessible educational materials available online. Dr. Mark Sciuchetti was awarded the first fellowship. Before selecting a fellow, President Killingsworth tasked potential candidates with finding ways to integrate web-based and digital resources for students without relying on textbooks. He is piloting this program with Dr. Sciuchetti in the Geography department and other General Education courses, hoping this initiative will ease some of the burden on students by utilizing the resources already available.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT CONTINUED

Staff Counsel

A Staff Council and its constitution and bylaws will be presented to the board for review at the next meeting. Two existing groups exist: the Faculty Senate and the Student Government Association. The aim is to establish a Staff Council representing the staff's voice within the university. The Staff Council will develop its rules before July and present them to the Board. The objective is to officially recognize this group as a vital voice for the staff.

SB129 (Alabama Senate Bill 129 (SB129), passed during the 2024 Regular Session, addresses diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in certain public entities).

The university has formed a task force to examine SB 129 and its impact on the institution. Dr. Brent Cunningham, Dean of the College of Business and Industry, has been appointed to chair the group. Comprising 12 members from faculty, staff, and students, the task force will begin its work next week. Their goal is to navigate the law and prepare for its implementation on October 1st. The group will identify necessary changes to ensure the university complies with the new regulations as the fall semester approaches.

Cannabis Study Research

The Biology Department at JSU is making significant strides in pediatric cancer research thanks to the combined efforts of Dr. Lori Hensley and Dr. Le Su. Their research focuses on rare childhood cancers with low survival rates. A key development is a new partnership with Sustainable Alabama, a medical cannabis applicant. This partnership has yielded a \$1 million grant to support JSU's cancer research. Dr. Su has also secured additional funding (\$850,000) from external sources.

Capitalizing on this collaboration, the department has launched a new cannabis studies curriculum offering stackable micro-credentials (18 credit hours). This innovative program equips students with the necessary skills to enter the rapidly growing cannabis industry. The program launch event attracted over 160 attendees and highlighted strong student interest.

The department further enhances student learning by integrating cancer research into its curriculum. Biology students design semester-long research projects focused on cannabinoid compounds, gaining valuable hands-on experience. This initiative demonstrates the department's commitment to advancing pediatric cancer research and preparing students for success in the evolving cannabis field.

President Killingsworth shared his enthusiasm for the future opportunities available to our students. With the potential workforce being part of a \$25 billion industry expected to double in the coming years, numerous job prospects exist. Our goal is to secure the best opportunities for our students, said President Killingsworth.

Recognition

President Killingsworth thanked Dr. Reginald Overton, the outgoing Faculty Senate President, for his service during the past year. He acknowledged the significant accomplishments achieved under his leadership.

President Killingsworth commended Tierra Thatch, the outgoing SGA President, for her outstanding leadership over the past year. He acknowledged Tierra's dedication, expressed appreciation for their conversations, and recognized her longstanding contributions to the campus community.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 10:23 a.m., Chairman Jones made a motion to enter into an Executive Session for 30 minutes to discuss the general reputation and character of certain individuals and 2) to discuss with the University counsel legal ramifications and options on certain matters as outlined in Alabama Code 36-25A-7(a)(3). A written opinion from counsel was secured for the University that such an exception applies to the planned discussion. **The motion was seconded by Trustee Brown and approved unanimously.**

The Chairman called for a Roll Call vote. President Killingsworth called for a roll of voting to approve the executive session. The following people voted:

Randall E. Jones, Chairman	Yes
Mr. Greg Brown	Yes
Mr. Clarence Daugeette, III	Yes
Senator Vivian D. Figures	Yes
Mr. Rusty Fuller	Yes
Mrs. Gale S. Main	Yes
Mr. Randy Y. Owen	Yes
Mr. Tony Smoke	Yes

Chairman Jones reported a unanimous vote for the Executive Session and stated that the Board members would return for a public vote on any actionable items.

EXECUTIVE SESSION ADJOURNED

The executive session adjourned at 10:43 a.m. with no other business to discuss.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

Upon returning from the Executive Session with a quorum present, Chairman Jones reported that the Board had **no action items.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There was no further business before the Board of Trustees. By consent, the meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m. The next meeting will be on July 16, 2024, on the 5th Floor of Meehan Hall.



Don C. Killingsworth, Jr., Ed.D.
President



Randall E. Jones
President Pro Tempore of the
Jacksonville State University Board of Trustees and
Chairman of the Executive Committee

Catherine H. Chappell
Recording Secretary

