

FLORIDA **A&M** UNIVERSITY
Board of Trustees

Special Committee on the College of Law
Wednesday, June 3, 2021
3:45 p.m.
Zoom

Committee Members: Belvin Perry, Chair
Kristin Harper, and David Lawrence

AGENDA

- | | | |
|-----|---------------|-------------------|
| I. | Call to Order | Trustee Perry |
| II. | Roll Call | Linda Barge-Miles |

ACTION ITEM

- III. Approval of Minutes
A. March 4, 2021
B. April 16, 2021

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- IV. Licensure Pass Rate Improvement Plan
- V. Adjournment

FLORIDA **A&M** UNIVERSITY
Board of Trustees
ACTION ITEM

**Special Committee on the College of Law
Minutes
Wednesday, June 2 2021**

Subject: Special Committee on the College of Law Meeting Minutes

Proposed Board Action: Subject: Approval of the Minutes

Rationale: Section 5.10 of the Board of Trustees Operating Procedures provides that detailed minutes should be kept for any Board or Committee meeting. Those minutes should include a record of votes cast and attendance.

Recommendation: Approve the Board of Trustees meeting minutes for March 4, 2021 and April 16, 2021.

Attachments: Yes, copies of the minutes are attached.

**Special Committee on the College of Law
Committee Minutes
March 4, 2021**

The Special Committee on the College of Law met March 4, 2021. The following committee members were present and established a quorum: Belvin Perry, Kristin Harper, and David Lawrence.

Trustee Perry asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the February 2, 2021 meeting. Trustee Harper moved approval. The motion was seconded and passed with a unanimous vote.

Next, Trustee Perry recognized Dean Keller for a report regarding a letter from the American Bar Association (ABA). Dean Keller shared that the ABA Council on Legal Education concluded that the College of Law had demonstrated compliance with Standard 316 which requires that at least 75 percent of a law school's graduates in a calendar year, who sat for a bar examination, must have passed a bar examination administered within two years of their date of graduation. The 2018 graduating class had a passage rate of 81.5 percent, which placed the College into compliance.

Dean Keller then updated the Committee on key performance indicators for the class that began in 2020, comparing them with other SUS institutions:

<u>Performance Indicator</u>	<u>FAMU</u>	<u>SUS</u>
LSAT	147	161
Undergrad GPA	3.30	3.74
Median GPA of 1 st year Fall Cohort	2.51	2.60

Regarding current admissions, Dean Keller stated that there is a larger pool of applicants this year. The College has 692 applicants, compared to 537 at the same time last year. She stated that the incoming LSAT and GPA credentials for this cohort exceeded those admitted in 2017 – 2020. She said that she feels the College is on track to meet or exceed its goals for those credentials.

Dean Keller reminded the Committee that the College of Law consultant Barry Currier is working on a review of the College's academic and non-academic functions to identify areas of strength for further development and areas of weakness, which would require retooling, reinvigorating, or reimagining. He is also working on data analytics to benchmark the College against peers and aspirational institutions. Mr. Currier then provided an update to the Committee. At the conclusion of the report, the Committee asked Dean Keller to revise the timeline for Mr. Currier's deliverables. They also agreed to schedule a meeting with the College of Law faculty via Zoom.

There being no further business for the Committee, the meeting adjourned.

**Special Committee on the College of Law
Committee Minutes
April 16, 2021**

The Special Committee on the College of Law met April 16, 2021. The following committee members were present and established a quorum: Belvin Perry, Kristin Harper, and David Lawrence. Trustees Cliatt, Reed, Dubose, McClinton and Cavazos also participated in the meeting.

Trustee Perry explained that the Special Committee on the College of Law was established because the Board of Trustees is very much interested in the success of the College of Law (COL) and its students. He then commended the graduates and faculty for the results of the latest bar exam. He then shared that the Special Committee wanted to get the faculty's perspective on relevant issues such as bar examination preparation, admission requirements and strategies to improve the status of the COL.

Trustee Perry confirmed that a consultant was hired by the COL and that the faculty would be privy to the report, once received.

Trustee Perry asked the faculty about their thoughts on the current methodologies being used to help our students prepare and successfully pass the bar exam. Faculty provided the following comments:

- They try to integrate bar preparation into the theoretical teaching provided to students;
- They integrate formative assessments periodically throughout the class and utilize some of BarBri's examination preparatory materials;
- One of the approaches that has changed over time is a more integrated approach which starts bar prep in the first year of law school and goes throughout the entire law school experience; and
- The substantive knowledge and mental ability to perform under the stress of the bar exam needs to be developed throughout law school.

Trustee Lawrence noted that the COL graduates did much better on the February examination and wanted to know what was done differently, so it can be used as a pattern forward. Dean Keller indicated that she was told that basically, the students felt more empowered and took ownership of their bar passage journey. The students were told to focus on what works for them regarding preparation and they did that. Trustee Cavazos stated that students have also performed better because this was the first cohort that had the benefit of using bar prep resources earlier in their matriculation.

Faculty noted the following regarding COL admission requirements:

- the Admissions Committee evaluated the LSAT score with the GPA of students dismissed in the first year of law school. The Committee found that the GPA was a better predictor of success, so adjustments were made.

FLORIDA **A&M** UNIVERSITY
Board of Trustees

- The Admissions Committee also looked at students that were successful on the bar and found that the law school GPA played a much greater role than the LSAT score.
- The COL shouldn't drift from its historic mission. One of the strengths of the COL
- is that it gives opportunities to students that wouldn't otherwise have such opportunities.
- The COL summer program for admitted students was found to be extremely helpful with students getting through the first year of law school.

The following suggestions were made regarding strategies for improving the COL's status/image:

- The COL should be engaged in racial justice issues.
- It should be more engaged in the community and economically deprived areas and involved in the national debate on racial justice.
- The COL should carve out niche areas that would attract top students.
- There needs to be more faculty scholarship and more support for faculty to travel and present at conferences.
- The COL highlight its successes.
- The COL needs money to attract and retain its top students. COL is losing top students every year. Funding is a problem.
- Not all students feel they can excel at the COL, so it needs to promote a more supportive environment.

As a general comment, a faculty member suggested that students that are not interested in practicing law, should not be encouraged to take the bar. They should be encouraged to get professional certifications instead.

Trustee Perry provided a recap. His take-aways from the meeting were that the COL needs to tell its own story, raise money, and get the community support. Faculty and students are its greatest resource and can vastly impact the community. The COL needs programs such as centers of excellence. Finally, the COL needs to define what it is and what it wants to be.

There being no further business for the Committee, the meeting adjourned.