



USF Board of Trustees Minutes

Monday, March 11, 2025
Traditions Hall

Call to Order and Comments

Chair Will Weatherford welcomed everyone and convened the Board of Trustees meeting.

Chair Weatherford asked Kiara Gayle to call the roll.

Kiara Gayle called the Roll.

Trustee Charbel Barakat
Trustee Sandy Callahan
Trustee Mike Carrere
Trustee Rogan Donelly (not in attendance)
Trustee Suryakanth Gottipati
Trustee Mike Griffin
Trustee Oscar Horton
Trustee Lauran Monbarren
Trustee Shilen Patel
Trustee Fredrick Piccolo
Trustee Melissa Seixas (not in attendance)
Trustee David Simmons
Trustee Will Weatherford

A quorum was established.

FL 111 – Naming Resolution

Chair Weatherford began the meeting slightly out of order from the agenda to announce an incredible event that occurred just prior to the Board meeting. The College of Artificial Intelligence, Cybersecurity and Computing will be named in recognition of a transformational and historic philanthropic forty-million-dollar gift from Arnold and Lauren Bellini. I want to thank the Bellinis for this significant gift that will have a lifelong impact on the future of USF and our students.

Chair Weatherford requested a Motion to approve the name of the Bellini College of Artificial Intelligence, Cybersecurity and Computing. The Motion was made by Trustee Gottipati, seconded by Trustee Griffin and Item FL 111 was approved.

Announcements from Chair Weatherford

- Chair Weatherford spoke about the recent announcement of the Presidential Search. When he first asked President Law to serve as the interim President of the University, it was not expected that she would be signing up for a four-year commitment. Rhea has done such an incredible job, and the

University is a better place because of her. She took four months and turned it into four great years and has provided 40 years of dedication to this University. To find our next transformational leader will take time.

- A search committee has been launched, and Trustee Griffin will be leading this search. Chair Griffin chaired the committee in our previous search where we landed on our great President, Rhea Law. The committee is a mixture of Trustees, alumni, friends of the University, leaders in the community and members of the Board of Governors.
- USF Football's 2025 schedule has been released featuring some exciting matchups. We look forward to football returning in the Fall and in the meantime, the Spring Game will be on April 26 at Corbett Stadium on the USF campus.
- Chair Weatherford formally welcomed and introduced our new Trustee, Charbel Barakat, to the USF Board of Trustees. Charbel is the Vice President and Counsel for Public Policy with D.R. Horton, Inc., the nation's largest homebuilder. He also has experience serving on other boards in Florida and USF welcomes him and is looking forward to his contributions given his experience and expertise. Chair Weatherford asked Trustee Barakat for any comments he would like to make.
- Trustee Barakat commented on the Board of Trustees and the amazing staff and how well everything is run and that it is an honor to be a member of the Board. He thanked Governor DeSantis for the opportunity to serve and is grateful that he has the privilege to be at such a great University that will help guide the continuing evolution of what he believes is the model for greatness in American public higher education.

Student Presentation – Julio Blanco III

USF student Julio Blanco III shared a video. Julio was the first person in his family to go to college. He spoke about being bold in all aspects of his life and that he aspires to be a doctor. He talked about the adversities he has faced in his life and how USF has been pivotal in providing him with every opportunity to succeed. He is currently in his last semester majoring in Biomedical Anthropology.

Chair Weatherford thanked Julio for sharing his story.

The President's Report

President Law provided an update on the following:

- President Law thanked Arlene and Lauren Bellini for their generous gift, their trust in USF and for their vision and passion for the future.
- Fletcher Parcel update – USF is going through the process to redevelop the property for the benefit of the University and the surrounding community with a vision for a mixed-use district that includes retail, dining, academic research facilities, housing, and green and recreational uses. There was a two-stage invitation to negotiate the process and in February USF issued the intent to negotiate with a team consisting of Capstone Development Partners, Capstone Communities, Aria Development and Ellison Development. The negotiation phase will be spread over the coming months with hopes of having a finalized plan to present to the Trustees and Board of Governors in the fall.

- USF received a five-year \$4.8 million grant from the Andrew Mellon Foundation that will support nine hundred students each year through paid internships.
- Athletics – The Track and Field team won its second consecutive American Athletic Conference indoor championship, which also earned the Bulls Men’s coaching staff its second straight Men’s Coaching Staff of the Year honor. Women’s Lacrosse officially launched its first season of competition with a dominant victory over Kennesaw State. The first game drew about 2400 fans, which is the largest week one crowd in the nation and the largest single game attendance for Women’s Lacrosse in the history of the state of Florida. The USF Sailing team, which is based at our St. Petersburg campus, hosted the first Regatta for the 2025 season on Bayboro Harbor and finished in third place. USF will serve as the host institution for the NCAA’s Women’s Basketball Final Four at Amalie Arena. The Spring Football game is April 26th.
- President Law joined Tampa General Hospital and Lite Point Health for the recent ribbon cutting ceremony of the Tampa General Behavioral Health Hospital. This is the first behavioral health hospital in Florida and USF is thankful to our elected officials for their support.
- USF Day at the Capitol will be in Tallahassee on April 15, 2025, and together with board leadership, President Law is looking forward to sharing the USF story throughout the Legislative session.

New Business – Action Items (Minutes and Consent Agenda)

FL 101 – Approval of December 10, 2024, Minutes

There were no questions or revisions to the minutes. Chair Weatherford requested a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was given by Trustee Piccolo, seconded by Trustee Barakat and Item FL 101 was approved.

Consent Agenda (FL 102 – FL 110)

GOVERNANCE Committee Approved Items

FL 102 – USF Foundation, Inc. Board of Directors

FL 103 – USF Management Corporation Board of Directors

FINANCE Committee Approved Items

FL 104 – Approve Sublease

AUDIT & COMPLIANCE Committee Approved Items

FL 105 – Approval of Revised Compliance & Ethics Charter

ACE Committee Approved Items

FL 106 - Tenure as a Condition of Employment

FL 107 - Degree Proposal - B.S. Exercise Science & Kinesiology, 31.0505

FL 108 - Self-Supporting Proposal – M.S. Fintech major, 30.7104

FL 109 - Credit Hour Reduction, B.S.C.H. in Chemical Engineering, 14.0701

FL 110 - USF Regulation 3.029 Textbook & Instructional Materials Affordability & Transparency

Chair Weatherford reported on behalf of the Governance Committee. After a thorough review of the items, the Committee recommended approval.

Trustee Griffin reported on behalf of the Finance Committee. After a thorough review of the items, the Committee recommended approval.

Trustee Callahan reported on behalf of the Audit and Compliance Committee. After a thorough review of the items, the Committee recommended approval.

Trustee Horton reported on behalf of the ACE Committee. After a thorough review of the items, the Committee recommended approval.

UFF Representative

UFF President Steve Lang provided an update and highlighted the following:

- The USF Sailing team participated in the Rainbow Invitational and came in third and fourth place with ten institutions and eighteen teams.
- USF Regulation 3.029 Textbook & Instructional Materials Affordability & Transparency
- Academic Freedom
- Alumni Regatta for the Sailing Team is April 26, 2025

Trustee Simmons commented that three representatives of the Faculty Senate participated in discussions around the Textbook Regulation and how to implement the Board of Governors policy revision.

Chair Weatherford thanked Dr. Lang for his report.

Public Comments

There were no public comments. Chair Weatherford requested a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was given by Trustee Callahan, seconded by Trustee Patel and the Consent Agenda Items FL 102 – FL 110 were approved.

New Business – Action Items

FL 112 – Amendment to USF President's Contract

Senior Associate General Counsel, Brittany Dix presented the agenda item seeking approval for a contract extension for President Law. Her current employment contract ends March 31, 2025, and President Law has agreed to continue her role while the University conducts a search for her successor. This requires an extension of her contract, which was drafted in consultation with the Board of Governors. It seeks to accomplish two things. It will extend the term of the President's contract for up to one year and will continue to make contributions to the President's deferred compensation plan. This extension amends the term until the first day of employment of the next University president and is in effect for up to one year. This is in accordance with Board of Governors Regulation 1.001 subsection 5D, which mandates that presidential contract renewals must be approved by the Board of Governors and are limited to one year

terms. Additionally, the extension includes a provision for the USF Foundation to continue contributing to President Law's deferred compensation plan, maintaining a contribution of 25% of her current base salary for the year 2025. This percentage was previously approved by this board last September and the extension does not alter or void any deferred compensation earned by President Law under the terms of her existing contract. It is important to note that this extension does not alter any terms of her existing employment agreement beyond what was just explained, and if approved today, we will seek confirmation from the Board of Governors at their meeting on March 25th and 26th, 2025.

Chair Weatherford asked for any comments or questions. Trustee Simmons thanked President Law for being willing to stay with the University through this transition. Trustee Carrere had a question regarding the 25% from the Foundation and Brittany Dix explained. Trustee Barakat also thanked President Law for her willingness to stay through the transition and commented on the compensation agreement being progressive in that it is not expected in a public institution.

A motion was made by Trustee Piccolo, seconded by Trustee Gottipati and Item FL 112 was approved.

FL 113 – Approval of Regional Chancellor Emerita Title for Dr. Karen A. Holbrook

President Law spoke about Dr. Holbrook that she has been a champion of student success of innovative research of global engagement and impactful community partnerships, that she has served at several of the nation's top universities, and she has shared that experience here at USF. Under her leadership, Sarasota Manatee has achieved many major milestones including becoming a residential campus for the first time. She has demonstrated unwavering dedication to the faculty, staff, and alumni and is deserving of the honor of the title, Regional Chancellor Emerita.

A motion was made by Trustee Piccolo, seconded by Trustee Horton and Item FL 113 was approved.

Chair Weatherford echoed the statements about Dr. Holbrook and thanked her for her service at the University of South Florida and for her leadership in Sarasota.

BOT Roundtable Discussion

Chair Weatherford opened the roundtable discussion to the Board members.

- Chair Weatherford spoke about the Legislative update and that USF Bulls day in Tallahassee will be on April 15, 2025
- Vice Chair Griffin welcomed the new Trustee, Charbel Barakat.
- Trustee Barakat spoke about the high quality of the Board and how he is honored and humbled to be a part of it.
- Trustee Simmons thanked Vice Chair Griffin for serving on the Presidential Search Committee.

Having no further business Chair Weatherford thanked everyone for their participation and adjourned the Board meeting.