

**FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY ATHLETICS ASSOCIATION
MEETING MINUTES**

**February 18, 2021
10:00 AM**

Members Participating: President John Thrasher, Ed Burr, Dr. James Clark, Bob Davis,
Dr. Pam Perrewé

I. CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

President John Thrasher, Chair

Chair Thrasher welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 10:00am. Vicki Cupp conducted the roll call and confirmed a quorum.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The meeting minutes from November 19, 2020 were approved as presented.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were provided.

IV. SEMINOLE BOOSTERS REPORT

Bob Davis, Chair of the Seminole Boosters, Inc.

Michael Alford, President & CEO of Seminole Boosters

Director Davis reported that the five-year, \$100 million Unconquered Campaign, launched about three years ago, has already exceeded the initial campaign goal. New targets will be revised under the direction of Michael Alford.

The contract of former President & CEO Andy Miller has been revised from employee to consultant, with Andy being available on an as-needed basis over the next year.

Seminole Boosters, Inc. is currently working on a comprehensive committee structure for the Board of Directors, with the goal of better engaging the members and utilizing their expertise. The By-laws Committee will meet soon, with a recommendation to change the term of the Board Chair from one to two years. Also, there are approximately seven members due to roll off the Board June 30. Because of the issues surrounding Covid, and the inability of these members to fully participate, they will each be invited to extend their term for one additional year.

Mr. Davis and Mr. Alford met with the Presidential Search Committee, found it enlightening, and appreciated the opportunity to be involved with the process.

The Coach Norvell Spring Tour has been extremely successful, with one additional stop until it is completed.

Finally, Mr. Davis reported that he has been participating in regular Zoom meetings with other DSO leaders to share information and better communicate among each other.

President & CEO Michael Alford is excited about the video boards installed throughout the Boosters office, which display up to the minute accountability for the organization and staff. The boards measure team and individual revenue goals and provide a means to transparently communicate to donors.

The One Tribe Campaign, geared to annual giving, kicked-off and is currently just under 50% of goal in members, and 63% of goal in pledges. People are stepping up and are not only renewing, but also giving at higher levels. The Coaches Clubs are 78% of goal in membership for the quarter, and 95% of goal in pledges.

The football season ticket campaign was initiated on February 1, and constituents are extremely excited about the upcoming season. So far, 66% of our season tickets have renewed with payments made, compared to 36% at this time last year. About 50% of the payments have been collected.

The concessions contract is ready to be reissued and presentations will be begin in early March with industry leaders who have bid. Populous has also been hired to examine stadium renovations, based on the fan study from CSL last spring. The goals of this exercise are to invest in and improve the customer experience, and also right-size the Dunlap Champions Club and create a diversified seating program. Moreover, the development of a self-sustainable business model will generate surplus revenues that can be used for other facilities. The concessions contract will play a key role in the stadium project.

V. STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

Jim Curry, Senior Associate Athletics Director

Since the last meeting, the strategic plan survey was distributed, closed and processed. It consisted of ten open-ended questions which evaluated the current mission and vision statement and established core values. It also included elements in order to create a basic SWOT analysis. The survey was completed by 101 individuals consisting of coaches,

staff, student-athletes, boosters, alumni and students external to athletics, representing a wide range of stakeholders.

In terms of the **Mission Statement**, 50% of the respondents had a favorable opinion of the current mission statement, but suggested some slight modifications. An additional 38% supported the mission statement as presently drafted. Some felt that gaps exist in terms of alignment with the university's mission statement, notably the lack of reference to diversity/inclusion, service and innovation. Additionally, questions were received related to the use of gender-specific pronouns and use of the word "demanding." Other than a suggestion to possibly shorten the statement, there is an overall favorable impression of the mission statement, and wholesale changes do not appear to be needed.

Comprehensive Excellence is the department's mantra, the centerpiece of the current mission statement, and the prevailing source of pride for respondents. It has become synonymous with excellence across all of our sport programs and service/support areas; however, some feedback indicated that the term is ambiguous and not easily measured. Part of our steps going forward are to determine how we define this. Some potential measurables are: post-season qualifications across all sports/Directors' Cup standings; APR public recognition award/ACC Honor Roll participation; and community service hours.

The department's **Core Values** were evaluated with the top responses as follows:

- Excellence/Champions/Elite
- Integrity/Character/Ethical
- Committed/Dedicated
- Family/Team/Community
- Caring/Empathetic
- Innovative/Enterprising
- Tradition/History/Legacy
- Unconquered/Determined
- Leadership
- Sportsmanship
- Inclusive/Diverse

These top core values were matched against those of the university which showed a lot of synergy and alignment.

When **Comparative Advantages** of our Athletics Program was surveyed, this item yielded the most consensus among the overall respondents. The areas which our stakeholders determine give us the greatest source of pride, and are a valuable foundation upon which to build the strategic plan in the future are:

- Success across all sports, particularly women's sports
- Traditions and history
- The Florida State brand
- Family atmosphere
- Efficiency/Maximize use of resources
- Supportive/passionate fans, boosters and alums
- Location

SWOT Analysis

- **Strengths**: Competitive among all sports; academic support; hiring and retention of coaches; student-athlete welfare and development; celebration of history and traditions.
- **Weaknesses**: Alignment among athletics, boosters, and administration; fundraising/resource acquisition; digital initiatives/advanced media; facilities (new and maintenance); staff compensation and retention.
- **Opportunities**: FSUAA; ACC Network; university's academic ranking/reputation; physical campus; geography/climate.
- **Threats**: Current financial model of college athletics; comparative conference revenues; litigation; governmental oversight/policymaking; COVID/post-recession recovery.

There are five **Next Steps** to be employed in moving the strategic plan forward. They are:

- Steering Committee will incorporate feedback into revised versions of mission, vision statement, and core values.
- Will evaluate SWOT analysis against refreshed mission, vision and values to establish 3-5 overarching strategic goals.
- Virtual town hall with Athletics and Boosters staff to provide update on strategic plan and seek feedback on final edits.
- Final drafts will be provided to FSUAA Board for feedback and approval.
- Formation of goal-specific subgroups to identify tangible initiatives and measurable tactics for each goal.

President Thrasher noted that he was pleased with the progress made toward the formulation of the strategic plan. He stated that the university's strategic plan, established four years ago, took a lot of work and input by many internal and external stakeholders. A comprehensive update will be presented in tomorrow's Board of Trustees meeting showing how the university's strategic plan currently aligns with what has been accomplished. The goals are measurable, can be adjusted as needed, and hold everyone accountable in moving forward with the organization's mission. Pam Perrew added that it will be helpful for each step to be operationalized to serve as a roadmap for how to get to where we need to go.

VI. BOARD OF TRUSTEES REPORT

Ed Burr, Chair of FSU Board of Trustees

Director Burr reported that the Board of Trustees committee meetings will be held this afternoon, with the full board meeting occurring tomorrow. Two Board members, Brent Sembler and Billy Buzzett, will be departing. Peter Collins and Deborah Sargeant have been appointed as their replacements.

The Presidential Search Committee continues to making progress. The candidate profile was approved at the last meeting.

The Board of Governors continues to meet regarding the reopening of university campuses.

President Thrasher thanked Chairman Burr for his continued leadership, particularly in light of the challenges of the past year.

VII. ATHLETICS DIRECTOR'S REPORT

David Coburn, Director of Athletics

AD Coburn began by stating that each Board member should have received copies of draft versions of charters for FSUAA Audit and Finance Committees. While these may be discussed at today's meeting, the goal is for everyone to review, provide feedback, and approve at the next meeting, so that these committees may be activated and working. These drafts have already been reviewed by university counsel, finance & administration, and audit staff.

Mr. Coburn then provided updates on the three national NCAA issues.

1. The **Alston Case** is scheduled to be heard on March 31, with a decision hopefully by mid-June. The judge in California has increased the cap for potential academic/graduation awards for student-athletes from \$5,600 to \$5980 which adds to the potential costs of this decision. There is no indication where the Supreme Court is going on this case, only speculation.
2. **NIL** – The NCAA was scheduled to take action in January and delayed, choosing to wait for the opinion from the Supreme Court in the Alston Case. The Florida and Georgia laws go into effect on July 1 which creates a small window of time for the NCAA to take action after the June decision on the Alston Case. That will leave the D1 schools in Florida in a tough position, caught between the State law and the NCAA's position. AD Coburn is working with the Athletics Director from the University of Florida to organize and communicate with the other Division I ADs in the State and make sure they everyone is on the same page.

FSU is proceeding with the procurement process for a vendor to do education and content creation for our student-athletes. This is already becoming a recruiting issue and it is important that we remain proactive.

3. **Transfers** – Also deferred by the NCAA, we still believe that the NCAA will adopt the one-time undergraduate transfer provision, probably in April. According to data from Sports Illustrated, since August 1 around 1500 football players have entered the transfer portal. About one-third of those are walk-ons. Of the approximately 950 scholarship athletes, 560 of them are Power 5 conference scholarship athletes. Three hundred (300) of those have committed to new schools, and approximately 180 athletes (60%) have taken a step down to FCS schools. Almost 580 of the remaining Power 5 scholarship players are still looking for another school. The hidden damage is to the high school athletes who signed before COVID and the current year. This will impact the number of scholarships being available in the future to high school athletes. The overall cap is 85, and with Power 5 schools holding some scholarships for transfers, the high school impact will become an issue that, as of now, is not getting a lot of attention.

In terms of the department's financial situation, the projected deficit for the current fiscal year is continuing to go up, mostly due to the lack of ticket sales, particularly in the Champions Club, along with some advertising revenue. Athletics is continuing to try to cut expenses. Two weeks of furlough were required by most of the department staff, and one or more weeks may still be required of the higher salaried staff. Some of the coaches' restricted funds may have to be used for operating expenses on a one-time only basis.

The recruiting dead period was extended until May 31. What happens after that will be decided by the NCAA no later than April 15. Football can now have football virtual meetings and phone calls with 2022 recruits.

The Football Coaches Association has asked the NCAA to address the issue of injuries being faked in football. It has become a substantial problem as teams try to slow down offenses that are moving at a high pace. This will be an interesting issue for the NCAA to address, given the possibility of legitimate injuries.

AD Coburn then provided the Board with an update of the current records and post-season projections for the spring sports. All sports are fully up and running, but attendance will continue to be limited for all spring sports.

Jim Phillips, former Athletics Director of Northwestern University, has been named the new Commissioner of the Atlantic Coast Conference. He is high energy and receiving good reviews from those he has already met. President Thrasher echoed those comments and believes he will bring some positive changes to the ACC.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to be discussed.

IX. OPEN FORUM FOR BOARD MEMBERS

Chair Thrasher thanked Dr. Pam Perrewé for her commitment to FSU over the years, and particularly her dedication and support of our student-athletes in her role as FAR. The replacement Faculty Athletics Representative will be announced soon.

Dr. James Clark shared that President Thrasher has been a big supporter of the FSU Student Resilience Project. This program is now getting a lot of national visibility. Due to support by David Coburn and Vanessa Fuchs from Athletics, and Greg Hulen from Seminole Boosters, the athletes have used the project a great deal, which is good news. As we move to a post-Covid environment, the hope of Dr. Clark is that we can think more strategically about how we tailor the program even more to FSU athletics as well as to other D1 athletes on a national level.

X. ADJOURNMENT

The next FSUAA meeting will be held in conjunction with the June Board of Trustees meeting. With no further business, Chair Thrasher adjourned the meeting at 11:06 am.