

**MEETING MINUTES
SOUTH FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE
DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES
AUGUST 26, 2026**

Members Present: Mr. Terry Atchley, Chair
Mr. John Eason, Vice Chair
Mr. Bo Conerly
Mr. Devon Donaldson
Mr. Justin Fussell
Ms. Denise Grimsley
Mr. Fred Hawkins, President/Secretary
Mr. Scott Cole, College Attorney

Excused: Mr. Derren Bryan Ms. Alison Hancock

Staff Present:	Mrs. Ashley Bennett	Dr. Mark Bukowski	Dr. James Hawker
	Dr. Kathleen Cappel	Mr. Peter Elliott	Mr. Harry Havery
	Dr. Michele Heston	Mrs. Mary Hutzelman	Mr. Don Kesterson
	Dr. Melissa Kuehnle	Mrs. Amie Kelly	Mrs. Tina Gottus
	Dr. Asena Mott	Mrs. Emily Dabolt	Mrs. Anastasia Fucsher
	Mr. Keith Loweke	Mrs. Melissa Prusinski	Ms. Brenda Daniels
	Mrs. Kelly Fairfield Dec	Mrs. June Weyrauch	Mr. Corey Wales
	Mrs. Renee Marcy	Mrs. Sureka Personette	Mrs. Kim Cloud
	Ms. Carleigh Okwali	Ms. Michele Hall	Ms. Lena Phelps
	Mrs. Alexis Torres	Mrs. Sheryl McGrath	Mrs. Kristie Krell
	Mr. Ryan Hehn	Mr. Steve Ashworth	Mr. Mike Austin
	Mrs. Davida Austin	Ms. Clara Campbell-Florvilus	Ms. Kozette Hubbard
	Mr. Larry Taylor	Ms. Hirell Bell	Dr. John McLaughlin
	Ms. Jessica Bryant		

Others Present: Mr. Rick Mitchell, Gray-Robinson Mr. Marc Valero, Highlands News-Sun

The regular meeting of the District Board of Trustees was called to order at 1:01 p.m. on the Highlands Campus of South Florida State College by Board Chair, Mr. Terry Atchley.

Mr. Atchley thanked Mr. Scott Cole, board attorney for bringing Mr. Rick Mitchell with him today. He welcomed Mr. Mitchell.

1.0 PRELIMINARY MATTERS

1.1 Adoption of Agenda

Mr. Eason made a motion, seconded by Mr. Fussell, to adopt the agenda of the regular meeting as presented. Those voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Atchley, Mr. Conerly, Mr. Eason, Mr. Donaldson, Mr. Fussell, and Ms. Grimsley. **Motion carried by unanimous vote.**

1.2 Approval of Minutes

1.2.1 Regular Meeting Minutes

Mr. Fussell made a motion, seconded by Ms. Grimsley, to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held June 29, 2026 as presented.

Those voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Atchley, Mr. Conerly, Mr. Eason, Mr. Donaldson, Mr. Fussell, and Ms. Grimsley. **Motion carried by unanimous vote.**

1.3 Review of Master Calendar & SFSC Events Calendar

Mr. Atchley discussed the proposed 2026-2027 South Florida State College District Board Trustees Meeting Schedule with the Board. The Board reviewed the dates with their schedules for any conflicts. The Master Calendar and SFSC Events Calendar were reviewed. No changes were recommended by the Board.

[\(EXHIBIT "A"\)](#)

Mr. Fussell made a motion, seconded by Mr. Donaldson, to approve the South Florida State College District Board of Trustees Meeting Schedule for the 2026-2027 academic year as presented. Those voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Atchley, Mr. Conerly, Mr. Eason, Mr. Donaldson, Mr. Fussell, and Ms. Grimsley. **Motion carried by unanimous vote.**

2.0 COMMUNICATIONS, INTRODUCTIONS, AND RECOGNITIONS

2.1 New Employee Introduction

The following new employees were introduced:

Employee	Position	Supervisor	Hired
Alexis Torres	Library Assistant II, Service Desk	Lena Phelps	3/23/26
Kristie Krell	Front Office Manager, Dental Education Office	Sheryl McGrath	4/20/26
Ryan Hehn	Business Intelligence Analyst	Corey Wales	4/1/26
Renee Marcy	Administrative Assistant III, Institutional Effectiveness	Corey Wales	5/4/26

2.2 Employee Retirement Acknowledgement

Employee	Position	Dates of Service
Michael B. Austin	Coordinator, Criminal Justice Programs	5/2/2014 – 8/31/2026

Mr. Eason made a motion, seconded by Mr. Fussell, to recognize the retirement of Michael B. Austin for his many years of service to South Florida State College. Those voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Atchley, Mr. Conerly, Mr. Eason, Mr. Donaldson, Mr. Fussell, and Ms. Grimsley. **Motion carried by unanimous vote.**

Mr. Eason stated that it has been an honor to work with Mr. Austin for over twenty-eight years. He acknowledged Mr. Austin for his many years of service and for him to enjoy retirement.

3.0 PUBLIC COMMENT

None

4.0 PRESENTATION

President Hawkins reported on the CAAHEP Accreditation for Paramedic Program site visit during the week of Convocation. He recognized Mr. Steve Ashworth and team for their amazing work. Dr. Cappo gave a brief overview of the site visit. She stated it was an honor to hear the wonderful things about Mr. Ashworth's department and students at the exit conference. Mr. Ashworth spoke about and recognized each member of his team. He stated that he is blessed with a wonderful team and students.

5.0 CONSENT AGENDA ACTION ITEMS

5.1 Personnel Actions

Approved a list of full-time career staff; full-time faculty; administrative staff (transfers); professional staff (transfers); full-time career staff (transfers/reclassifications); resignations/separations; and adjunct faculty for the 2026-27, academic year as needed as presented.

[\(EXHIBIT "B"\)](#)

5.2 Agreements and Contracts

5.2.1 Memorandum of Understanding Agreement – CareerSource Heartland

Approved the agreement between CareerSource Heartland and South Florida State College as presented.

[\(EXHIBIT "C"\)](#)

5.2.2 Affiliation Agreement – Precision First Healthcare – Dr. Kane Thomas

Approved the agreement between Precision First Healthcare – Dr. Kane Thomas and South Florida State College as presented.

[\(EXHIBIT "D"\)](#)

5.3 Operational Actions

5.3.1 Monthly Accounts Payable/Payroll Check Register

Approved the monthly accounts payable/monthly payroll check registers and summary for all funds through June and July 2026.

[\(EXHIBIT "E"\)](#)

5.3.2 Property Disposals – July 2026

Approved the deletion of college property from inventory records as presented.

[\(EXHIBIT "F"\)](#)

Mr. Eason made a motion, seconded by Mr. Donaldson, to approve the Consent Agenda, Items 5.1 through 5.3.2 as presented. Those voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Atchley, Mr. Conerly, Mr. Eason, Mr. Donaldson, Mr. Fussell, and Ms. Grimsley. **Motion carried by unanimous vote.**

6.0 PLANNING AND POLICY ISSUES

6.1 Reorganization of the Board

Following the District Board of Trustees Policy 2.02, **Mr. Cole, Board Attorney called for nominations to serve as the 2026-2027 District Board of Trustees Chair. Mr. Eason moved and Ms. Grimsley seconded the nomination of Mr. Atchley to remain as Chair for 2026-27. Mr. Cole asked if there were any other nominations. There being none, Mr. Cole then called for a vote.** Those voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Conerly, Mr. Eason, Mr. Donaldson, Mr. Fussell, and Ms. Grimsley. Mr. Atchley abstained. **Motion carried by unanimous vote.**

Mr. Cole called for nominations to serve as the 2026-2027 District Board of Trustees Vice Chair. In following District Board of Trustees Policy 2.02, **Ms. Grimsley moved and Mr. Donaldson seconded the nomination of Mr. Eason to remain as Vice Chair for 2026-27. Mr. Cole asked if there were any other nominations. There being none, Mr. Cole then called for a vote.** Those voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Atchley, Mr. Conerly, Mr. Donaldson, Mr. Fussell, and Ms. Grimsley. Mr. Eason abstained. **Motion carried by unanimous vote.**

Mr. Cole called for nominations to serve as the 2026-2027 SFSC Foundation Liaison. Mr. Eason moved and Mr. Fussell seconded the nomination of Mr. Donaldson to remain as the Foundation Liaison for 2026-27. Mr. Cole asked if there were any other nominations. There being none, Mr. Cole then called for a vote. Those voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Atchley, Mr. Conerly, Mr. Eason, Mr. Fussell, and Ms. Grimsley. Mr. Donaldson abstained. **Motion carried by unanimous vote.**

Mr. Atchley stated he appreciates the opportunity to continue as chair. He announced there are lots of new and exciting things happening. Mr. Atchley shared about meeting Commissioner of Education, Dr. Henry Mack, as he toured the Highlands campus. He announced that he is serving as the Vice Chair for the Council of Trustees and gave a brief overview on upcoming trainings for new trustees. Mr. Atchley gave an inspirational speech and stated that we are here for one reason, our students.

7.0 ACADEMIC AND STUDENT MATTERS

7.1 Curriculum Proposals

Dr. Heston presented the curriculum revisions and General Education Review to the Board.

[\(EXHIBIT "G"\)](#)

Mr. Donaldson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Fussell, to approve the curriculum proposal and 2027-2028 General Education Review as presented. Those voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Atchley, Mr. Conerly, Mr. Eason, Mr. Donaldson, Mr. Fussell, and Ms. Grimsley. **Motion carried by unanimous vote.**

Dr. Heston thanked the board members who were able to attend the Fall Trustee Retreat. Mr. Atchley gave kudos to all those involved in planning or helping with Convocation this year. He highlighted Day 1 and Day 2 of Convocation. He stated how impressed he was with the attendance by students, faculty, and staff for the Day 2 events.

8.0 PURCHASING AND OTHER ACTION ITEMS

8.1 SFSC Mission Statement Affirmation

The Board reviewed the current SFSC Mission Statement. No changes were recommended.

(EXHIBIT "H")

Mr. Donaldson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Fussell, to affirm the South Florida State College Mission Statement as presented. Those voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Atchley, Mr. Conerly, Mr. Eason, Mr. Donaldson, Mr. Fussell, and Ms. Grimsley. **Motion carried by unanimous vote.**

Dr. Heston stated that there will be a rewrite of the mission statement and refresh of the vision statement in the future. She gave a brief overview and stated there will be more information to come. Mr. Atchley highlighted the Fall Trustee Retreat and Strategic Planning that was presented by Mr. Erik Christensen. Dr. Heston and Mr. Atchley both recognized Mr. Christensen for his contributions.

9.0 REPORTS

9.1 Financial Report

Mr. Elliott reported on updated summary views and reports of revenue and expenditure summary compared to budgeted funds within the Operating Budget through June and July 2026.

(EXHIBIT "I")

9.2 Resource Development Report

Mrs. Emily Dabolt reported that the South Florida State College Foundation, Inc. received donations and pledges in the amount of **\$42,645.41** from June 1 through July 31, 2026.

Mrs. Dabolt reported on the following items:

1. Announced the Foundation has award scholarships in the amount of \$429,741.15 to 630 students this past academic year.
2. Grant Update: Mrs. Weyrauch reported on the following grant awards:
 - 2026-27 National Farmworker Jobs Program, Farmworker Career Development Program \$ 296,810
 - Rural Care Connect: Creating Sustainable Health Care Pathways in Rural Florida \$ 341,310.18

9.3 President's Report

President Hawkins reported on the following items:

1. HLC Accreditation Update: Shared the events leading up to the accreditation trip to Chicago on July 27-28. He thanked Dr. Heston, Dr. Bukowski, and team for their work.
2. Highlighted the visit from Commissioner of Education, Dr. Henry Mack on August 4 to the Highlands campus. He stated that he is proud that Commissioner Mack chose SFSC as his first college to visit.

3. Recapped Convocation held on August 10 and August 14. President Hawkins stated he doesn't know how we will top it next year. He gave kudos to Mr. Harry Havery for his selection on the band that played on Day 2 of Convocation and did a concert later that evening.
4. Fall Trustee Retreat: President Hawkins gave a brief overview of the retreat and stated that he would like to make it an annual event.
5. Grants Update: Mrs. June Weyrauch gave a brief overview and grant process for the Rural Care Connect: Creating Sustainable Health Care Pathways in Rural Florida through the Rural Health Transformation Program. The Board congratulated Mrs. Weyrauch on her work and receiving this grant.
6. College Update: Dr. Heston introduced Mrs. Tina Gottus as the new Dean of Applied Sciences and Technologies. Mrs. Gottus thanked everyone for the opportunity and stated she is excited for her new role. She gave a brief overview of some new ideas for her department. President Hawkins acknowledged Mrs. Gottus and her contributions to the administrative team.
7. Student Housing: President Hawkins followed up from the Trustee Retreat about seeking direction from the DBOT on the possibility of student housing on the Highlands Campus. He asked the following two questions:
 - Do you want to have student housing on campus?
 - Do want a separate DSO created as a housing board to oversee this initiative?

Mr. Atchley recapped the history of the student housing discussions and the need for it for the future of the college. He discussed the need for resources and funding to complete this goal. Mr. Atchley asked for Board input. Mr. Eason agreed that the Board needs to give President Hawkins and staff the approval to move forward. He concurred with Mr. Atchley about the need for student housing at the college. Mr. Eason stated he would like to have the information presented and to know what the options are and how to move forward. Mr. Conerly stated as new trustee, he is trying to get the full scope of student housing and what goes into it. Mr. Donaldson stated he has no problem with student housing but voiced his concerns about funding and making sure technology would be available as more students are moving to online or hybrid classes. Ms. Grimsley concurred with Mr. Atchley and Mr. Eason for the need for student housing. She stated this is a need as student growth increases and shared a housing issue that happened to a lineworker student in Hardee County. Mr. Fussell stated he is in favor of exploring student housing on campus and making access easy to students.

President Hawkins recapped the trustees' points. He stated there is a need for student housings and that the DBOT will be part of the decision making. He discussed creating a new DSO to oversee the student housing imitative and gave brief overview of need for a separate DSO.

8. Highlighted the Lawfully Present policy and gave brief overview.

9.5 Board Attorney's Report

Mr. Cole stated no report.

9.6 Board Members' Reports

Mr. Conerly stated no report.

Ms. Grimsley stated she is proud of the college and the EMS program. She gave kudos to Mr. Ashworth, Dr. Heston, and Dr. Cappo. Ms. Grimsley acknowledged Mrs. Weyrauch's work on the grant front.

Mr. Fussell stated he enjoyed the Fall Trustee Retreat.

Mr. Eason stated no report.

9.7 Board Chair Report

Mr. Atchley stated no report.

10.0 ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m.