



**FIU Embrace-External Advisory Council  
Meeting Minutes from August 15, 2017**

**FIU Embrace-External Advisory Council Members**

Albert Lopez, Southeast Assurance Regional Managing Partner, BDO USA, LLP  
Luis Navas, Senior Partner, Global Governance Advisors  
Mary Partin, CEO, Dan Marino Foundation  
Yogi Hernandez Suarez, Vice President and Chief Medical Office, Care Delivery  
Organization of Humana

**Telephonic**

Milton Vescovacci, Shareholder, GrayRobinson, P.A.  
Ora Prilleltensky, Clinical Assistant Professor, University of Miami

**Members of the Public Present**

Alberto Fernandez, Principal, SPED Outreach, Miami-Dade County Public Schools  
Amanda Giust, Program Manager, Project Panther LIFE  
Angela Laird, Professor, Department of Physics, Florida International University  
Barbara McDaniel, Director of Admissions and Community Liaison, Miami Learning  
Experience  
Daniel O Perez, Program Assistant, FIU Embrace  
Deborah Chin, Manager, The Daniel Jordan Fiddle Transition and Adult Programs,  
UM-CARD  
Deborah Dietz, Executive Director, Disability Independence Group  
Elizabeth Alvite, Administrative, FIU Embrace  
Elsa Clarke, Director, Miami-Dade and Monroe Family Friendly Hands  
Emily Gresham, Assistant Vice President, Office of Research and Economic  
Development, FIU  
Eric Wagner, Director of FIU-BRIDGE, Florida International University

Ernie Martinez, Center for Independent Living South Florida

Gilda Ferradaz, Southern Region Managing Director, Department of Children and Families

Howard Frank, Director of the Metropolitan Center, Florida International University

Janet McDaniel, Adjunct Lecturer, FIU

Jennifer Martin, Program Coordinator, Project Panther PLUS

Katerina Bryant, Community Relations Manager, Governmental Relations, Florida International University

Kelli Hunter-Sheppard, District Director, Miami-Dade County Public Schools

Kenneth Furton, Executive Vice President and Provost, Florida International University

Lester Roviroso, Manager of Administrative Services, FIU Embrace

Marcus Cooke, Chair of the Department of Environmental & Occupational Health, Florida International University

Maria Ilcheva, Research Assistant Professor, Florida International University

Marisabel Rey, Director of Special Events, Miami Learning Experience

Marlaina Maddux, Research Assistant, School of Social Work, Florida International University

Mavara Mirza-Agrawal, Medical Director, FIU Embrace

Michelle D Mason, Senior Associate Dean for Clinical Education, Experiential Learning & Engagement, Florida International University

Nicole Attong, Director, FIU Embrace

Patricia Ramirez, Program Specialist, SPED Outreach, Miami-Dade County Public Schools

Raquel Linares, Deputy Director of Jobs, Best Buddies International

Rosana Onorato, Chair, Miami-Dade and Monroe Family Friendly Hands

Shanna Burke, Assistant Professor, Florida International University

Tonja Moore, Associate Vice President of Budget, ORED, Florida International University

Valerie Mota, Program Support, FIU Embrace

Zoraya Ledesma, Senior Administrative Assistant, Florida International University

## **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 2:11 p.m. by the vice-chair Milton Vescovacci. Everyone was invited to introduce themselves and identify their affiliation.

## **Review & Acceptance of Minutes**

The vice-chair requested a motion to accept the minutes. Albert Lopez put forth a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Luis Navas seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved, and the minutes was accepted.

## **Bylaws Amendment**

Milton Vescovacci provided an update on bylaws and stated that all changes are indicated in yellow. Moreover, the most substantive change could be found in the meetings section and was for notifications to be able to be sent via electronic mail in addition to being delivered in-person or by regular mail.

The vice-chair requested a motion to accept the amendment of the bylaws. Luis Navas put forth a motion to approve the bylaws as presented. Mary Partin seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved, and the amendment to the bylaws was accepted.

## **FIUnique Realignment**

Provost Furton provided an update on the realignment of FIUnique. FIUnique includes four programs Fostering Panther Pride, Project Panther LIFE and PLUS, FIU Embrace and the Center for Children and Families (CCF).

To better manage the coordination of the programs, FIU Embrace and Project Panther LIFE and PLUS were merged and report to the VP of Research and Economic Development and Dean of the University Graduate School, Dr. Andres Gil. This will also facilitate multidisciplinary teams of researchers working together to more successfully compete for grant dollars and will help to enhance the programs. Finally, the Provost indicated that it is through the collective work of all of the programs and colleges that innovative programming and development will be fostered resulting in better position of FIU Embrace and Project Panther LIFE and PLUS for philanthropic funding.

Milton Vescovacci inquired if the location of the programs will be affected. Ms. Attong informed the Council that Project Panther LIFE, PLUS, and FIU Embrace are now co-located on the first floor of the MARC building in rooms 130 through 160.

Albert Lopez asked about cuts to the budget for the programs. Provost Furton shared that FIUnique received full funding. There were no cuts.

## **Gap Analysis & Housing Plan: Summary of Initial Research Findings**

Drs. Maria Ilcheva, Shanna Burke, Howard Frank and Eric Wagner presented the summary of findings of the Gap Analysis & Housing Plan.

The presentation recapped the literature findings that were focused on intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, cerebral palsy, spina bifida and down syndrome and the prader-willi syndrome which are the six waiver categories the State of Florida classifies in terms of the benefit structure. The need domains identified were supervision, transportation, housing, communication, finances/employment opportunities, activities of daily living/instrumental activities of daily living training, socialization opportunities, enhanced adult-centered medical care, psychological care, medical equipment and sexual health education (see attached presentation).

Luis Navas asked if supported living is the lowest cost, which provides the best quality of life for the individual?

Dr. Ilcheva shared that one challenge that was faced during this project was creating discrete groups particularly given that developmental disabilities across a spectrum and in many instances, can co-occur with other conditions. In addition, Dr. Burke indicated that previous finding on models which includes supported living and/or shared living, where the individual makes the choice of who they live results in a much lower cost, and the outcomes are far better in terms of longevity, medical and personalized attention. Dr. Burke indicated that she will share those findings at the next meeting.

Dr. Ora Prilleltensky commented that based on the findings presented by Drs. Burke and Ilcheva the overall need is growth-promoting opportunities such as community, good relationships, doing something that is interesting and contributed to our communities. Therefore, we should go beyond what is needed and focus on growth-promoting tactics.

Finally, Dr. Frank indicated that a key component of the system that is missing is a system integrator. One individual that advocates and works across service providers/organizations/funders to ensure that individual and their families are linked and have a coordinated network of services that meets the individual needs of the person for whom they are assigned.

### **FIU Embrace Update**

Yogi Hernandez Suarez joined the meeting and introduced the next agenda item

### **Budget Update**

Tonja Moore shared the budget for FIU Embrace's 16-17 FY \$1.5 million was received with \$1.2 million carryforward from the previous year. Expenses to support administration, programs, trainings, and clinical services amounted to \$1.2 million.

For the 17-18 FY, \$1.5 million was received with \$1.5 million carryforward from the previous year. Estimated expenses is \$2.8 million with the addition of a new Day Program, an additional full time Psychiatrist, a Nutritionist and Behavior Analyst. Auxiliary funds being received through the Dan Marino Foundation operating agreement is being used for purchases not allowed by the state funds such as promotional materials.

Project Panther LIFE and PLUS in 16-17 FY received \$600,000 and had \$155,000 from the previous year. Expenses totaled about \$562,000 with \$262,000 was cost-shared with an ABLE

Grant. For the 17-18 FY, \$600,000 was received with \$195,000 available from the previous year. Estimated expenses is \$300,000 but may increase with the collaboration of FIU Embrace.

### **Legal Services**

Dean Mason provided the following updated. In the fall of 2016, the Legal Needs Assessment Day was hosted and about twenty-three families attended. From January to the present day, there has been eight lawyers, eleven clinical students, and twenty pro-bono students working on the various legal matters received. The College of Law worked with forty-three families: eight families were over-income and were referred to alumni who have their own practices to handle these cases at a reduced fee. Some families were referred to legal agencies who were better equipped to assist with the family's needs, and nine households were served through the clinic. Two families had disability issues who were referred to private agencies to assist them accordingly. Eighteen families were referred directly to firms to assist them and take on the responsibilities.

For the '17-'18 Fiscal Year, the College of Law will focus on marketing, targeting its services, and to improve website and outreach. Finally, by the end of September, educational trainings and brochures will be finalize.

### **Medical Services**

Dr. Agrawal indicated that we have added the following, a Starlight Waiting Room, as a place for the patient to experience a more relaxed area in the clinic where the patient can wait to be seen, social stories which offer a visual support on the full experience at the doctor's office. In addition, we have added comprehensive care through the implementation of medical technology, vision screener, blood pressure monitor. We are working towards expanding our service array to include a nutritionist, a behavior analyst, and we are working on providing more clinical trainings.

Yogi Hernandez Suarez asked what is the total number of FIU Embrace patients seen to date. Dr. Agrawal indicated that there are 322 unduplicated patients at this time.

### **Employment Committee Update**

Vice-chair Milton Vescovacci discussed the Employment Conference scheduled for March 12<sup>th</sup>. He indicated that the committee is working on including additional speakers and engaging organizations who currently employing individuals with disabilities to discuss their experiences, challenges and outcomes in hopes to encourage other organizations to begin hiring individuals with disabilities. Further updates on the conference will be provided in subsequent meetings.

## **New Business**

Mary Partin shared that the first meeting of the FIU Embrace-Education Committee will be held on September 19<sup>th</sup> at FIU in PG6-Room 150 at the Dan Marino Foundation Location.

## **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:09 p.m. by the chair Yogi Hernandez Suarez.