



FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

FIU Embrace

External Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

Monday, April 22, 2019

External Advisory Council Members

Evelyn Alvarez (via Phone), Regional Operations Manager-Southern Region

Cuong Do, Executive VP and Head of Global Strategy, Samsung Electronics America

Anthony Gonzalez, Chief of Surgery, Baptist Hospital of Miami

Yogi Hernandez Suarez, Vice President of Clinical Innovations, Conviva Care Solutions

Brenda Lampon, Area Six Director, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Luis Navas, Senior Partner, Global Governance Advisors

Mary Partin, Chief Executive Officer, Dan Marino Foundation

Ora Prilleltensky, Clinical Assistant Professor (Retired), University of Miami

Milton Vescovacci, Shareholder, Polsinelli PC

Attendees

Damaris Albrecht, Miami Dade County Public Schools

Nicole Attong, Director, FIU Embrace

Sasha Benitez, Campus Manager, Dan Marino Foundation

Valentine Bruk Lee, FIU

Shanna Burke, Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, FIU

Mayte Capo, Program Manager, FIU Embrace

Kathy Childs, Sunrise Community

Deborah Dietz, DIG

Arielle Dorsey, Student Assistant, FIU Embrace

Jennifer Einstein, UM NSU Card
Alberto Fernandez, Miami Dade County Public Schools
Andres Gil, Vice President of Research, Dean of the Graduate School, FIU
Dorcas Gonzalez, FIU
Emily Gresham, Assistant Vice President of Research, FIU
Tomas Guilarte, FIU
Kelli Hunter-Sheppard, Miami Dade County Public Schools
Ciara Khan, Program Specialist, FIU Embrace
Zoraya Ledesma, Program Administrator, FIU Embrace Law
Ernie Martinez, FCC
Jolynne Mendez, Sunrise Community
Katherine McCulloch, Dan Marino Foundation
Janet McDaniel, FIU
Mavara Mirza-Agrawal, FIU
Elizabeth Mon, Miami Dade County Public Schools
Denise Prehay, Self-Advocate
Ondina Rodriguez, Miami Dade County Public Schools
Sabrina Salas Martinez, FIU
Easlande Suazo, Manager of Administrative Services, FIU Embrace
Krystal Sutherland, Sr. Program Manager, FIU Embrace
Monique Truesdell, Miami Dade County Public Schools
Kourtney Wilson, Administrative Specialist, FIU Embrace
Zach Wray, Sunrise Community

Call to Order

The Chair Dr. Yogi Hernandez Suarez convened the meeting of the FIU Embrace External Advisory Council at 10:00 a.m. on April 22, 2019 at Modesto Maidique

Campus, MARC Pavilion in Miami Florida, and invited the Council and members of the audience to introduce themselves

Review and Acceptance of Minutes

Chair Dr. Yogi Hernandez Suarez asked for a motion to approve the minutes from October 1st, 2019. Dr. Gonzalez put forth a motion and Mr. Do seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved by the council as presented.

Bylaws Update

Mr. Vescovacci informed the Council that the By-Laws Committee has submitted recommended changes to the Bylaws for discussion and approval. He shared the need for staggered terms for existing members to ensure that all members are not transitioning off the board at the same time. A new member, once approved would hold a seat for one year. After serving their first year, the new Council member would then have the option to seek reappointment for a two year or three-year term. After a Council member has termed off the Council, the External Advisory Council can make a decision for the former Council member to be placed on an Emeritus status.

Chair Dr. Hernandez Suarez asked if there has been any consideration on the leadership roles that are given within the Council and are those term limited as well and Mr. Do asked how the current Council members will transition to their terms. Mr. Vescovacci responded that there is a hybrid to the staggered term concept, and that any current Council member will be assigned to either a two or three-year term.

Ms. Attong indicated that at the last time the Council met a request was made for each Council member to select the term of their choice. Mr. Do suggested that every current member should have the three-year term so that they transition out evenly and Dr. Gonzalez concurred. Ms. Attong indicated that this would have a significant impact on the Council's ability to continue its work if all current members were to transition simultaneously. Chair Dr. Hernandez Suarez indicated that this issue will be brought back to the Council for further discussion and vote.

Ms. Attong brought to the Council's attention the other changes made to the Bylaws, highlighted in yellow. Mr. Vescovacci described the new provision for a self-evaluation that holds the Council accountable to the public, and that this should be conducted at the annual meeting. Chair Dr. Hernandez Suarez asked for a motion to accept the By-Laws as presented. The motion was presented by Mr. Navas and seconded by Dr. Gonzalez. The motion was passed unanimously by the full council.

Legislative Update

Dr. Andres Gil informed the Council that the Florida Legislature is in session. He indicated that the University has not received any request for information nor does the University perceive any risks to the FIUnique line at this time.

New Council Member

Chair Dr. Hernandez Suarez asked Mr. Vescovacci to present the potential Council member for discussion and vote. Mr. Vescovacci presented Nina Sinisterra, Marketing Director at Conviva Solutions. Chair Dr. Hernandez Suarez indicated that Nina is a colleague and feels that she is an enormous source of energy and goal oriented and has been as asset to Conviva Solution. Chair Dr. Hernandez Suarez recused herself from the vote due to conflict of interest, therefore Vice Chair, Mr. Vescovacci requested a motion for Nina to join the Council. Ms. Partin put forth a motion and Mr. Navas seconded the motion. Nina was unanimously voted onto the Council .

FIU Embrace SFY 2019-2020 Areas of Focus

Ms. Attong provided an update on each of the following areas as these continue to be areas of focus for FIU Embrace.

- Finish the build outs
- Launching the full time medical program
- Launching the Day Program
- Finishing the re-design of the PLUS program
- Support of the research of FIU Embrace

Additionally, resources will be committed to launch the Simmons +Hernandez Suarez Fellowship and Ms. Nicole Attong announced the donation from Cuong Do and Lori Rickles Foundation to the expansion and strengthening of the FIU Embrace Education program.

Some key points shared with the Council included:

- Ms. Nicole Attong stated that under the Service Models there are three areas that are currently up and running, Medical, Legal, and Post-Secondary Education. She also stated that the Day Program is being built this fiscal year and is set to launch next fiscal year.
- An employment initiative was launched with Dr. Valentine Bruk-Lee. This was the result of the employment conference held in March of last year. Our goal is to develop an employment toolkit and a companion leadership training. This initiative is focused on training and supporting employers and preparing organizations to onboard individuals with disabilities.
- Dr. Burke and her team has developed a curriculum for the residential portion of the PLUS program which was launched.

- Dr. Sales - Martinez has launched cooking labs. The goal is to not only teach students how to cook but to make healthy choices.
- Dr. Burke informed the Council that there are six graduate research assistants involved in either program implementation or research activities associated with LIFE and PLUS.
- She informed the Council that there have been twenty-two presentations since September, ten manuscripts (eight under review and two published), and six research investigations.
- Ms. Agarwal won third place for her poster about the Faculty Mentor Certification Program in the Graduate Scholarly Forum.

Chair Dr. Hernandez Suarez congratulated Dr. Burke on the productivity of the graduate Students and suggested that the positive ripple effect will be felt by the students. Dr. Prillentsky asked for a brief overview of each manuscripts and Dr. Hernandez Suarez suggested that Dr. Burke invite two of her graduate assistants to provide a presentation at the next External Advisory Council Meeting. Dr. Gil indicated that there are different ways to promote FIU Embrace research and suggested Ms. Attong explore those opportunities.

Dr. Hernandez Suarez requested talking points regarding the research agenda particularly she is now an ambassador for FIU.

FIU Embrace Update - College of Law

Ms. Zoraya Ledesma, Program Manager, FIU Embrace Law provided an update on behalf of Dean Mason. Ms. Zoraya Ledesma stated that currently the program is working with one hundred and fifty-five families. The Law clinic provides a full array of services which includes but are not limited to guardianship, family Wills, and housing. The clinic is also developing a network of alumni attorneys in the community to whom they can refer affected youth and their families. Ms. Ledesma also informed the Council that six workshops regarding guardianships, wills and trust, and social security will be provided in the community beginning August 2019. Additionally, this summer research project focused of incarcerated adults with autism will be launched.

Chair Dr. Hernandez Suarez indicated the importance of this project given the need for prison reform. Ms. Ledesma indicated that the direction for this research project was from Ms. Attong. Ms. Partin asked for The Dan Marino Foundation to be included on the research project and indicated that historically DMF has partnered with the Juvenile Justice System.

Dr. Gonzalez requested information about the promotion of the workshops. Ms. Attong indicated that FIU Embrace staff will launch a social media campaign, engage the School Systems, PTA's, emails will be sent to alumni and organizations working in the disability arena. Finally, Mr. Vescovacci shared that he provided a referral to the law clinic who indicated that the family felt very comfortable and provided positive feedback about the experience.

FIU Embrace Update - Medical

Dr. Gil provided an update regarding the expansion and partnership with the College of Medicine and the progress that has been made. He informed the Council that the anticipated opening date for the medical practice is October 1st 2019. While there is an initial investment in securing and building the space, there is an expectation that this operation will free up operational dollars that can be appropriated to other projects. Additionally, there are also discussions with the new Dean of The College of Medicine to continue providing services in the practice. Dr. Hernandez Suarez informed the Council that she has met with Dean Sackstein on behalf of FIU Embrace, sharing with him the mission and goals of FIU Embrace. She indicated that the Dean was open to partnering and saw the opportunities for the college and FIU Embrace to work together. Mr. Do stated that this is a great opportunity for FIU Embrace students and the initiative will provide greater supports to the community. He also brought up that this was "just an idea" a year ago but now it has materialized.

FIU Embrace Update - LIFE and PLUS

Ms. Attong informed the Council of the decision to sunset the FIU Embrace LIFE program and expand and strengthen the PLUS program. The LIFE program will continue to operate until all currently enrolled students have exited the program. A re-design of the PLUS program is currently underway. The intent is to strengthen the academic rigor and to better prepare students for competitive integrated employment. Students will receive badges in their area of specialization, the residential component was launched and the program was expanded to age 28. Also, the program will submit the application to become a certified credential program at the state and federal level. This will open the door to additional funding opportunities for faculty to conduct research and student scholarships.

Dr. Burke informed the Council that a grant was awarded to launch a Faculty Mentoring Program which included workshops focused on training faculty on how to mentor individuals with intellectual disabilities. Additionally, students are also receiving training on how to become engaging productive mentees. The students that successfully completed the mentor program are now eligible to be a paid peer mentor to incoming freshmen. Mr. Vescovacci asked if these changes will be added to the

website. Ms. Attong indicated that the website will be updated once the redesign is completed and that Nina will assist with the rebranding and Marketing of the program.

Mr. Do asked with the sun-setting of LIFE what's the expected enrollment for young adults will it increase or decrease? Ms. Attong stated that she is hoping for an increase in the amount of students enrolling in the program. The goal is to continue to serve a total of forty students between the new program and the LIFE program.

Dr. Gonzalez asked that since sixteen of the students are graduating this year, how many will be residential? Ms. Attong answered that there is a total of twelve slots available for residential. However, students must be a commuter student for one year before they can be eligible for the dorm. This is because there are a number of transitions that students struggle with. First, transitioning onto a large campus, second, transition into and out of the dorm, and third managing all the components of the program. Dr. Gonzalez expressed concerns regarding academics, he indicated that an individual can be a great employee but struggle with academics. Ms. Attong stated that the class selection will be based on the student's ability and Dr. Gil also indicated that badges are a University wide initiative and shared with the Council that the space needed to expand the program is limited. Therefore, any program expansion efforts will be impacted by this challenge.

Dr. Gonzalez stated that the program has the employment training for the students. However, employers need training as well, how will the program address this? Ms. Attong indicated that Baptist Health Systems expressed a desire to work with Dr. Valentina Bruk-Lee to roll out the tool kit and training at the hospital which is aimed at preparing and supporting organizations to employ our students.

FIU Embrace - Day Program

Ms. Attong provided an update on The Day Program located in PG6 next to the Dan Marino Foundation. FIU Embrace will partner with Sunrise Community Inc. who will facilitate the Day Program for approximately twenty to twenty-five individuals. There are two Snoezlen Rooms which are sensory integration rooms (there are none in the State of Florida for adults). These rooms help reduce anxiety and other behavioral challenges. The program will also be a learning lab for students.

Public Comments/Questions

An attendee asked, what assessment tool does the program use to identify the needs of a student in the program? Ms. Attong answered that the program works closely with vocational rehabilitation to help identify and match the students to the program. Additionally, every student must complete a psychological evaluation which includes very specific measures. The attendee then asked, are there assessments for parents. Ms.

Attong indicated that historically students have been well matched to the program. However, parents have had significant difficulty adjusting to the program. Therefore the program is implementing some requirements that parents will have to comply with. Dr. Prillentsky suggested that a parent training component is added to assist parents with adjusting.

Another attendee commented on the progress FIU Embrace has made. She spoke about two of the students who are graduating from the program and will now be hired by Baptist Hospital. She also spoke for the need for parental support.

Ms. Attong agreed with the attendee and indicated that parental support will be revisited. The attendee also suggested that a tool box for parents should be considered.

Adjournment

Chair Dr. Hernandez Suarez requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Do put forward a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Vescovacci seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 3:47pm