The workshop was a voluntary attendance opportunity for Trustees.

Members:
Present: Trustee Blake Gable – Chair; Trustee Robbie Roepstorff – Vice Chair; Trustee Darleen Cors; Trustee Richard Eide, Jr.; Trustee Joseph Fogg III; Trustee Mike McDonald; Trustee Stephen Smith; Trustee Christian Spilker; and Trustee Jalisa White.

Others:
Staff: President Mike Martin; Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs James Llorens; Vice President for Administrative Services and Finance, and Executive Director of FGCU Financing Corporation Steve Magiera; Vice President for University Advancement, and Executive Director of FGCU Foundation Chris Simoneau; Vice President and Chief of Staff Susan Evans; Vice President and General Counsel Vee Leonard; Vice President for Student Success and Enrollment Management Mitchell Cordova; Director of Internal Audit Bill Foster; Director of Equity, Ethics and Compliance, and Title IX Coordinator Precious Gunter; Director of Operations Tiffany Reynolds; Assistant Director of Board Operations Tiffany Jackson; Project Manager Melissa Pind; and Executive Assistant to the Vice President and Chief of Staff Bruna Ugolotti.

Item 1: Welcome, and Opening Remarks
Chair Blake Gable called to order the September 10, 2018 FGCU Board of Trustees Workshop on the Four-Year Graduation Improvement Plan at 9 a.m. Chair Gable stated attendance at the workshop was voluntary; therefore, roll call would not be taken, and no action would be taken by the Board. He stated that the workshop had been noticed as a public meeting. Chair Gable asked President Martin to make some introductory comments.

President Martin thanked everyone for participating in the workshop and stated that it was an important milestone along the journey to significantly improving student outcomes. He reminded the Board of the chronology of events leading up to the
workshop. He said last fall a group put together the FGCU Strategic Plan which was approved in December 2017 by the FGCU Board of Trustees (BOT), and by the Board of Governors (BOG) in January 2018. The first of the five pillars of the Plan called for launching an initiative to improve student outcomes, which led to the selection of Vice President for Student Success and Enrollment Management Mitch Cordova who, through campus and outside involvement and a review of best practices literature, devised a plan for the Student Success Initiative. President Martin stated the FGCU Board of Trustees approved a budget that was aligned with the student success plan, and that the University was now about six months into the implementation of the plan. He said although it was still very early in the process, some of the indicators of success were already visible. He said it was important to note this was an ongoing work in progress involving significant reorganization both within the institution and ultimately, geographically on the campus in order to create not only the right kinds of organizational responses to students’ needs, but a one-stop shop.

President Martin asked Dr. Cordova to begin his presentation.

**Item 2: FGCU Four-Year Graduation Improvement Plan (TAB #1)**

Vice President for Student Success and Enrollment Management Mitchell Cordova said the campus had mobilized extensively over the last months to rally around the Student Success Initiative. He said it started with a task force which got the team members thinking about the goals for student success and enrollment management, which led to a report and establishing design teams. He said what had evolved from this was the Four-Year Graduation Improvement Plan. Dr. Cordova said the Plan was really an evolving document that would be used as a roadmap and would be updated along the way as progress was made.

Dr. Cordova gave an overview of the workshop timeline. He said his goal was to get through the comprehensive Plan in a way that best explains what is being done, what it means, updates that have been made, updates that have not yet been made, and future plans for student success and enrollment management. He said a review of the comprehensive Plan would be first, followed by an update of the 2018 Accountability Plan and select Board of Governors performance metrics. He said the specific metrics being addressed are Metric 4: Six-Year First-Time-In-College (FTIC) Graduation Rate, and Metric 5: Academic Progress Rate. He said there would be time allotted for additional comments, questions, and open dialogue and discussion.

Dr. Cordova stated that a big part of what the Board would be discussing was the Four-Year Graduation Improvement Plan approved by the Board on May 1, 2018. He said since it had been approved, his team had been working hard to address specific objectives to action items under each area. He said that the specific areas that they needed to address were: academic, curricular, financial and policy. He explained that his team identified a series of objectives and specific action items under each of those areas.
Dr. Cordova explained he was looking at student success in a completely holistic manner; everything which impacted a student’s life experiences on campus, living in housing, their classes, their health, and everything critical to the holistic perspective of the student was examined. He said a focus on the number one Pillar (Student Success) from the FGCU Strategic Plan would not be lost. Dr. Cordova said what he wanted to discuss first was the academic focus. He said academic focus meant augmenting and enriching the student learning experiences both within and outside the classroom. This could be done through high impact practices, experiential learning opportunities, internships, peer mentoring, and supplemental instruction; all are critical to transforming student learning.

Trustee Richard Eide said it would be helpful if Dr. Cordova would explain the terminology in more detail during the presentation. Trustee Eide said that when Dr. Cordova uses an expression such as “high impact,” it seemed to be a judgement about the practice rather than a characteristic of the practice. Trustee Eide also said that as he read the materials in preparation for the workshop, he sometimes had trouble distinguishing which pieces were really important versus pieces that might work.

Dr. Cordova explained further that high impact practices were practices which, based on literature and experience, were known to make an impact on retention, keeping students at FGCU from freshman year to sophomore year and sophomore year to junior year. These are practices which keep students engaged and connected to campus. Dr. Cordova said these are things that we know based on literature and practices that have been done institutionally that are making a positive impact on FGCU students in all aspects of retention, graduation rate, engagement, and connectedness. He said that he will identify the action items that we know are more critical than others and will provide an update on the status and the impact those items are or could be making once fully implemented.

Trustee Joseph Fogg asked if Dr. Cordova could define transformational learning.

Dr. Cordova said this type of learning involved students not only learning in the classroom, but using that learning outside of the classroom to transform themselves into young professional adults. It was a holistic approach, taking the student above and beyond what they were learning in the classroom.

Trustee Fogg asked if as a result of the transformational learning, would the student then be more likely to graduate in four years. Dr. Cordova responded that was the goal. Dr. Cordova said part of the academic focus was developing stronger partnerships with academic faculty and programs, and that the first academic objective was to promote and increase timely graduation and persistence by focusing on well-established, high impact and related practices. He wanted to remind the Board that on the presentation slides, the green dots are the activities that currently are being done; the yellow dots reflect what they are planning to do; and the teal dots represent what was in progress to
do. He said increasing the number and scope of Living Learning Communities (LLC) programs was highlighted green and something that was in progress. He explained that there were four Living Learning Communities at FGCU: Honors, Leadership through Service, Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (WiSTEM), and Entrepreneurship that had 140 first-time-in-college (FTIC) students in them. He said the goal was to double this number because of the positive impact of students living together, sharing common majors, and taking classes together.

Dr. Cordova said it was also necessary to increase the number of internships and co-ops and align them better with employment gaps. He said they were redefining the position that was previously the Director of Internships and Co-operative Programs and are looking to better align that under the Career Development Services area. A task force would be created to see how the office could best serve the academic programs on campus. He said increasing the number and impact of academic peer mentoring programs was needed and they were looking to develop synergies across existing programs. The task force also would be engaging faculty and alumni in this initiative. He said also increasing the number and type of study abroad/away, diversity, and global learning programs was recommended. This item was something they were planning to do. Dr. Cordova said that study abroad was an important area that helped students with their holistic learning.

Trustee Stephen Smith said there was a percentage of the student body that would graduate in four years no matter what, but there was a group which was at risk. He asked if Dr. Cordova had considered how well these programs aligned themselves with this at-risk group.

Dr. Cordova responded that there was a summer bridge program, called the Step Ahead program, designed for lower academically qualified students. He said good outcomes were seen with this program, and ways to expand to include more students admitted in the lower quartile were being considered.

Dr. Cordova said his team was planning to create non-residential learning communities to strengthen academic engagement, which were not centered on a living environment but on a focused area of an academic major. Lastly, he said the transfer-out rate could be decreased by expanding the Honors College, intentional financial aid, and enrolling students who selected FGCU as their first choice.

Dr. Cordova described the second objective, which was to refine existing programs and implement new innovative programs through the Center for Academic Achievement (CAA). This would assist students with adjusting to college and with the rigors of college coursework. He said the first action in this objective was critical and was to expand resources to increase supplemental instruction and tutoring for courses with high D, F, W (drop, fail, withdraw) rates. He explained his team was looking at freshman classes like ENC 1101 (Composition I) and MAT 1033 (Intermediate Algebra) that students were taking and not doing well in, and looking for ways to improve students' success in them. He said that if they could improve the likelihood of a student
receiving an A, B, or C, grade in these courses, it would impact retention and would reduce the need to offer those courses over and over to the same students who needed to pass them.

Trustee Eide asked if the expansion of resources would include getting to the student who was in the process of making a D, F, or W before the grade was actually posted.

Dr. Cordova responded it was putting supplemental instruction in the classes before the semester even started, and before any quizzes or assignments to ensure the resources were there for students to be successful in a class that historically has had high D,F,W rates.

Trustee Eide asked if advisors were a part of the expanded resources. Dr. Cordova stated that they were not, but expanding resources would mean hiring more student peer mentors and supplemental instructors.

Trustee Eide asked if technology was a part of the expanded resources and if students were notified if they were failing. Dr. Cordova responded that he would talk more later about the technology in place and in creating an alert system. He said right now there was discussion about putting in supplemental instruction in the areas that are known to be helpful for students to be successful in their class before the semester starts.

Trustee Eide said that Dr. Cordova’s response was a little different from what he was asking. He said after the class began and the student was not doing well, would the student have an opportunity to improve. Dr. Cordova responded he was trying to prevent the “D” from ever being posted.

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs James Llorens added he and Dr. Cordova had been working closely with faculty on using Canvas, a learning management system, to identify those students needing early intervention. Provost Llorens said the Faculty Senate had been helpful with this and understood that it becomes the true role of the professor for the particular class to help identify students that needed early intervention.

Trustee Fogg asked if in a class which historically was difficult for students, if faculty would be consulted about teaching the class differently, or would students who were having difficulty be given supplementary help.

Dr. Cordova responded the plan was to do both. He said faculty would be looking differently at pedagogy and would be asking how they could teach these classes differently to improve student learning.

Dr. Cordova said a “drop-back” program was being planned for students which would allow them to come back to FGCU without penalty, and also some section sizes in courses with high D, F, W rates would be decreased.
Trustee Mike McDonald asked for further explanation of the “drop-back” program.

Dr. Cordova responded he did not have details because it had not been developed yet, but his understanding was students who were successful but had dropped out after a semester or two would be given an opportunity to come back without barriers.

Dr. Cordova said the revamping of existing Effective Learning and University Transition courses to focus more on academic skill development also was being accomplished.

Chair Gable asked what the timing was for the items highlighted in yellow.

Dr. Cordova responded some things would take more time than others. He said expanding resources effectively could be done by spring, and he would try to point out the time frame of planned action items.

Dr. Cordova said he would be increasing resources and program capacity for the Step Ahead summer bridge program. He said this program was very exciting and had produced good outcomes.

Trustee McDonald asked if the students who were successful in the Step Ahead summer bridge program became incorporated into the FTIC cohort in the fall semester.

Dr. Cordova responded they did.

Trustee McDonald asked if students who failed or received poor grades were incorporated into the FTIC.

Dr. Cordova responded they also were in the FTIC cohort and were tracked.

Trustee McDonald asked if there was a sense of what relative rates of success were of the summer bridge students.

Dr. Cordova responded he did not have those numbers, but he would get them. He said right now there were 130-140 summer bridge students, and next year the goal was to increase that to 150 students.

Dr. Cordova stated revitalizing the Common Read Program for all incoming FTIC students was being discussed, and a task force had been created to look at it. He said his team would be examining goals for the program. He explained this program was the reading of a common book by students, faculty and staff, who then engaged in activities centered about the book.

Dr. Cordova stated the last objective was to provide more advising and/or use of online resources to help students better choose a major. He said this would involve revisiting a technology solution called My Majors, which is a self-assessment tool that uses analytics to help students understand what major might be the best fit. This could be
implemented institution-wide to help students, along with advisors, make good decisions about the program of study that would best fit.

Dr. Cordova explained FGCU would be publicizing degree maps more to ensure students knew what they needed to take during their first semester and beyond and to track their progress. He said technology is being looked at to automate curriculum maps and track completion better.

Trustee Christian Spilker asked for the number of full-time faculty.

Dr. Cordova responded there were 400 full-time faculty and about 14,000 undergraduate students.

Trustee Spilker remarked that it probably would be overwhelming to try to assign all students to a professor for advisement. He stated at other institutions, every faculty member had 10 or 20 incoming freshmen to advise. Faculty sit down with their students and provide a roadmap one-on-one in addition to the advising software. He said he felt this was critical for success, and it should not be software, but a professor or advisor who engaged with and advised the students.

Dr. Cordova responded that the First Year Advising and the Exploratory Advising are doing those things at orientation. He said the technology would augment the amount of personnel time. He said the amount of time that the advisors have interacting with students is critical, and that they want to preserve that time.

Trustee Spilker asked for the number of FGCU advisors and if there were plans to hire additional advisors.

Dr. Cordova said there now were collectively 47 advisors, which included directors of advising.

Trustee Spilker commented that he was worried before about 400 professors trying to assist 14,000 students, but that there were only 47 advisors. He estimated that the advisors each were assigned about 700 students.

Dr. Cordova stated that there also are some faculty who advise students.

Trustee Spilker asked if the advising ratio was a situation for failure and said it was hard to reach every one of those students every semester.

Dr. Cordova responded FGCU was ensuring that freshman FTIC students appropriately were advised. He said his team was looking to scale up advisement and create a new university advisement structure. He said that as FGCU centralizes and creates a new university advising structure, what they are looking at addressing is critical gaps with rising enrollments but not in the number of advisors.
Trustee Robbie Roepstorff commented the primary goal was to be sure an FTIC student was linked to an advisor, and she asked if then he was relying on other freshmen to have the benefit of family members who had been to college.

Dr. Cordova responded every freshman student was being advised.

Trustee Roepstorff said that when she talked to students about what made the difference to them graduating in four years, she found that the last year was when they could not get into the classes needed, and what made the difference was proper advisement.

President Martin stated the attrition among advisors had been an issue, but under the new plan, all advisors have received a significant salary increase and also resources have been committed to add advisors. He said anecdotal evidence suggested certain majors have greater persistence rates because students were more connected to the destination and outcome. Some examples of programs were the PGA Golf Management Program (PGM), Resort and Hospitality Management (RHM), and Nursing. He stated the more the University can connect students early on, the greater the success, and so they are trying to mimic the model with every academic degree. He also commented that shifting to a trimester schedule was being considered so students could intern at the most ideal time of year.

Trustee Roepstorff suggested utilizing and paying some of the better qualified students to be advisors in their senior year.

Dr. Cordova responded that a peer mentoring program was being considered along with coupling this with a faculty mentoring program. Students also would work with alumni who might be interested in mentoring.

Trustee Eide asked if on the topic of technology and degree maps, there had been issues with students who acquired many credit hours which did not result in a degree.

Dr. Cordova responded it was his understanding FGCU did not have that problem.

Dr. Cordova explained the degree plan or curriculum defined for the students a sequence or suggested sequence of what courses the student needed to take and when the classes would be offered. He said FGCU wanted to institute a map through existing technology so students could see in real time through an audit check what courses they still needed to take and when those courses would be offered. Dr. Cordova said that this was not going to take the place of an advisor, but was going to streamline the process for the student.

Trustee Eide agreed with Trustee Roepstorff that upper class students naturally advise younger students at universities historically, and a program of this nature should be developed.
Dr. Cordova pointed out the next action would be to implement a sophomore-year experience program to increase involvement with the majors and related faculty, service learning, and undergraduate research. He said FGCU did not want to forget about the student after his or her first year. This program would be designed to help the student transition into the major, keep them connected to the institution, and help decrease “washout.” He said this item was still in the planning phase.

Dr. Cordova stated a compensated, competitive FGCU Student Ambassador program was being created to assist with recruitment and academic engagement activities. He said he believed this program could be online in six months to a year.

Dr. Cordova stated the next academic objective was to expand degree completion opportunities for students. He explained the actions for this would be to expand the Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in Integrated Studies degree program to allow greater flexibility for students to complete a major in limited time and to develop competency-based, self-paced online courses to complement high demand face-to-face courses and courses with increased D, F, W rates. He said plans also were being made to bring FGCU out to the community by offering classes off campus. He said another objective was to create a seamless transfer from Florida SouthWestern State College (FSW) to FGCU, and FGCU would be formalizing Destination FGCU later this month. Dr. Cordova said these items had made a lot of progress over the last few months.

Trustee Eide asked if an FSW student came to FGCU after two years and finished in two years, would this student be counted as a four-year graduate at FGCU. Dr. Cordova responded that the student would count toward a degree completed, but would not be counted as an FGCU FTIC student because he is a transfer student.

Dr. Cordova said in respect to developing competency-based, self-paced online courses to complement high demand face-to-face courses and courses with high D, F, W rates, this was still in the planning phase and was in a twelve-month time frame. He said it would take time to identify the classes and develop identical online courses.

Dr. Cordova explained there was a specific objective relating to technology, which was to implement, increase, and improve the use of technology/software which would contribute to students’ academic success and degree progression. He explained each program was developing gateway or milestone courses, which were identified as critical for students to progress along the degree pathway and to be successful. He said a system was being created which would automatically alert faculty, advisors, and others that the student was receiving a low grade. He said this technology would allow intervention to begin sooner.

Dr. Cordova said next the plan was to optimize and maximize existing technologies utilized for advising students, tracking student progression, reporting attendance and grades, and verifying degree completion. He explained “success guidelines” were being created in Canvas for courses with high D, F, W rates, and also a centralized unit was in
the plan to coordinate development and delivery of high quality online courses. He said this should not take long to do.

Trustee Spilker asked how attendance was tracked. Dr. Cordova said some faculty did not track attendance, and some did. He said attendance could be documented through Canvas, recorded through an Excel spreadsheet, or by the use of “clickers” in larger classes.

Dr. Cordova continued to present plans for implementing technology which automatically triggered early warning communications to students and advisors when academic performance has decreased. He stated his team was borrowing ideas being used at the University of Florida (UF) and Florida State University (FSU), and a plan to develop a real-time intervention strategy using customized messages to effectively and timely notify students of key academic issues was being developed. He said email was not as popular with students, and text messaging was being considered and would take some time to deliver and create. He added plans were continuing to integrate existing systems/software with the University ID card system in order better track students’ co-curricular and academic engagement activities.

Dr. Cordova moved to advising and the establishment of new comprehensive university-wide academic advising services to improve advising practices for students. He informed the Board this essentially has been achieved. He said FGCU was in the final stages of developing a single, comprehensive plan and philosophy for all advising throughout a student’s academic experiences, of formally creating a hub and spoke advising model with a centralized office for first-year advisors and exploratory studies/alternatives to advising which would collaborate more with content specific advisors in their respective colleges. He stated an executive position was created to oversee all centralized academic advising across campus where all advisors and directors of advising would report. He said this has been done quickly because academic advising was critical for the campus.

Dr. Cordova reported the establishment of a team of case managers to triage individual student progression issues and track students’ resolution has not moved forward yet but was important and would be acted on in about a year. He said expanding the use of predictive and prescriptive analytics to identify and address issues to reduce attrition (and transfer-out) of first-year students was moving quickly as this was in use each day. He informed the Board that the use of Canvas analytics to identify and work closely with at-risk students to facilitate them graduating in four years was being developed, and he commented Canvas had provided a wealth of information about at-risk students and was critical to student success.

Trustee Eide asked if Dr. Cordova had said there was a glitch in the way the University communicated in a timely manner with students.
Dr. Cordova responded it was not a glitch per se, but what was needed was a communication platform which would allow communication to certain students at certain times immediately where students would read the message.

Trustee Eide suggested blocking students from logging into the FGCU website until the message was retrieved.

Dr. Cordova stated his team was discussing ways to improve the overall student-to-advisor ratio to make it closer to meeting the standard set by the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA). He said the current recommended ratio was 300-400 students per advisor.

Trustee Roepstorff asked if Trustee Jalisa White had any suggestions as a student of the best way to communicate with students.

Trustee White stated she agreed students do not read emails, and Canvas messaging was preferable.

Trustee Stephen Smith asked Trustee White if she felt that students received too many emails.

Trustee White responded that she did not think they received too many emails. She said that since the students are just coming out of high school, they are still adjusting and not used to checking their emails before college. She said as they become older students, they check more.

Trustee Roepstorff asked if text messaging to students would work, and Trustee White responded affirmatively. She said but for academics, students were focused more on Canvas.

Dr. Cordova indicated the last objective under the academic focus area was to formalize and expand faculty engagement in enhancing student success. He said he realized that continued faculty engagement was critical to this initiative, and he appreciated that faculty wanted to be involved in creating a faculty mentoring program to focus on student retention, persistence through the major, and the four-year graduation rate. He said his faculty design team had been discussing the development of incentive programs for faculty to help directly impact improving four-year graduation rates above and beyond what was expected in the classroom. He explained a First Year Residential Experience (FYRE) program already was established, but his team wanted to expand this to involve more faculty and to establish a Faculty-in-Residence program. He informed the Board that increasing professional development opportunities for faculty to help recognize the need to make referrals to Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) based on behavioral issues which negatively affect student academic performance was planned and necessary.
Trustee White commended Provost Llorens for working with Student Government in getting the CAPS information onto class syllabi for students. She also said she was working with the FGCU Bookstore and the Eagle ID Office to get that information onto the back of the Eagle ID so students would know the resources that are available to them.

Dr. Cordova stated within a curriculum focus extra-curricular and co-curricular activities and programs were being implemented which would complement students' programs of study. He said an emphasis had been placed on deeply connecting our FTIC students to campus upon arrival, expanding and formalizing the first-year experience and retention programs overall, and keeping students engaged as they progress into their major until they graduate.

Dr. Cordova stated a core objective was to develop a first-year experience program which provided a common set of experiences for all FTIC students, while providing opportunities to form deeper connections to the institution. He said this had been done by creating the Office of First Year Experience and Retention Programs. Dr. Cordova stated that this was a huge success and was created out of the design team that was created for that purpose. He said that the program was starting to create and identify a set of outcomes with the programming that could be followed over time to look at the effectiveness. The Office of First Year Experience and Retention Programs started the Eagles in 22 program, which began in the fall with the students who came in for orientation. He pointed out that within the first-year experience certain co-curricular activities (e.g. Service Learning, Career Center events, and Civic Literacy) during the students' first two semesters were required. Dr. Cordova stated that of the 2,900 students who attended orientation as FTIC students, about 1,000 had signed up and were going through the Eagles in 22 program. This was about 36 percent of students.

Trustee Fogg asked Dr. Cordova to briefly explain the Eagles in 22 program.

Dr. Cordova responded it was a program where students were required to perform 22 activities over the course of six weeks from when they arrived on campus until mid-November. Students pick from a number of activities such as going to career fairs, weeks of welcome events, etc. He said there were more than 80 events over six weeks available. He explained certain activities had been identified as super high-impact practices that were required for students to attend and the rest were elective; and when the students completed the activities, they received a t-shirt and a water bottle.

Trustee Fogg asked why only 36 percent of students had signed up.

Dr. Cordova responded he did not know why, but this was the first year it was being implemented and his team would be looking at how to improve that number. Trustee Fogg asked what would be some reasons students would not participate. Dr. Cordova said students just might not be interested.
Dr. Cordova stated FGCU would be implementing an involvement requirement for all FTIC students (e.g. the *Pick One* program). He said his team was working collaboratively with Academic Engagement in the preparation and delivery of first-year transitional (SLS) courses. He explained his team had not yet implemented a pre-semester “immersion” program for FTIC students, which would further introduce students to the academic, social, and cultural expectations of FGCU, but was working on this. He said starting in 2019, the plan was to maximize the use of classroom space in South Village (SoVi) residence halls (e.g. classes offered, and faculty participation) with the intention of creating experiences beyond the classroom with faculty and staff for every FTIC resident.

Trustee Roepstorff asked for the male and female breakdown of the 36 percent of students who participated in the *Eagles in 22* program. Dr. Cordova said he did not have that information, but could find out.

Trustee Roepstorff commented she had noticed the sorority and fraternity presence on campus. She asked if there might be a way to involve these in a competitive way. Dr. Cordova responded this was a good suggestion, and he would look into it.

Dr. Cordova said the University would be expanding the number of living and learning communities available in SoVi, engaging students in more connected Service Learning by embedding projects and required hours into more courses. He said his team was working on ways of engaging faculty in developing more cross-disciplinary and collaborative assignments and projects in freshman courses. He explained providing academic advisors and appropriate staff with access to data which would provide a holistic view of student activity to include academic, co-curricular, and extra-curricular components was critical and would be accomplished through the launch of a data analytics and reporting group.

Dr. Cordova moved to financial focus and said expanding and improving persistence to graduation in a timely manner and keeping costs down were important. He informed the Board that an emphasis had been placed on broadening the way aid to students was packaged and awarded, so students could be looked at holistically. He explained this concept. He said the amount of institutional dollars offered students to keep them progressing toward their degree was being increased. He stated part of this focus was decreasing financial barriers which prevented a student from being retained, persisting, and graduating in four years. He said payment plans for students were being considered, which would help students with their finances.

Dr. Cordova stated the first financial objective was to realign and expand scholarship and financial aid programs to provide a positive impact on recruiting best-fit students, on first-year retention rates, on sophomore persistence, and on four-year graduation rates. He said ways to do this were to continue to emphasize the benefits of *SOAR in 4* to incentivize students to complete their degrees within four years, expand partnerships with collegiate high schools to offer scholarships to Associate of Arts (AA) graduates, provide financial management education to undergraduate students with loans to inform
them how to manage loan debt and make progress toward their degree, and implement policy where merit scholarship programs required students to complete 30 credit hours each academic year and maintain a 3.0 GPA. Scholarship funding would end after four years, thereby creating an incentive for students to graduate in four years.

Trustee Eide asked what percentage of students receiving merit scholarships were not completing 30 credit hours each year prior to the mandate.

Dr. Cordova responded he did not have the answer to that question.

Director of Financial Aid and Scholarships Jorge Lopez responded by saying FGCU last year had seen an increase in the number of credit hours students take, there was a minimal number of students who did not renew their scholarships with FGCU. He added Bright Futures recipients had a similar GPA and credit hour requirement, which was sometimes concurrent and reinforced the requirement overall. He said there had not been a significant issue before, but now students were maintaining their progress.

Dr. Cordova said the next financial objective was to expand scholarship and financial aid programs to significantly increase students enrolling in summer courses. He said this was an area which was seen as an opportunity to help persistence to graduation. Therefore, he explained starting with 2018, need-based students would be eligible for a second Pell award. He added for 2018 only, Florida Bright Futures Academic recipients would be eligible for funding and must be enrolled in six credit hours, and that the award covered 100 percent of the tuition and fees (funded by the State of Florida), and Florida Bright Futures Medallion recipients would be eligible for this funding. He said the Florida Bright Futures Medallion award covered $77 per credit hour, which would be funded by FGCU.

Dr. Cordova continued to the next objective which was the expansion of scholarship and financial aid programs to significantly increase the number of students enrolling in summer courses. He said there was continued funding and awarding of summer term grants for need-based students; and this year for Pell eligible students, $1.2 million has been awarded in institutional funding. He explained the University would continue to fund six credit hours of tuition and fees scholarships for students enrolled in the summer bridge program, as students in this program demonstrate higher retention rates.

Dr. Cordova stated FGCU also has a commitment to containing the cost of degree to the student. He said to keep costs down, the establishment of tuition payment plans in order to allow students to pay tuition in installments was being considered. He explained this would reduce large tuition balances, student loan borrowing, the number of students cancelled for non-payment, and the number of financial holds preventing student progression. He said his team was investigating the creation of incentive and retention scholarships for need-based students who complete 30 credit hours and maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP). He pointed out FGCU offered FTIC students a free three-credit hour class for in-state and out-of-state students who had not registered for fall classes. He said this was to encourage students to return for the
sophomore year. He added FGCU continued to promote the *SOAR in 4* tuition rebate program.

Dr. Cordova further explained the commitment to containing the cost of degree to the student. He said so far progress had not been made in exploring options for multi-year financial aid and scholarship packages, or creation of gap funds to support tuition costs to help prevent students from dropping out between their sophomore and junior year, between their junior and senior year, and from their senior year (before graduation). He said he had been working with the FGCU Foundation about these things and was looking to raise money for student success.

Dr. Cordova informed the Board that making better use of workforce development grant opportunities for students was being done through Career Source Southwest Florida, which was linked to FGCU’s Career Development Services Office. He said expansion of student financial services by increasing the amount of financial counseling, financial knowledge of academic advisors, and the amount of financial aid workshops and materials was being done by the creation of a one-stop-shop which would provide a better customer service experience for students.

Trustee Fogg asked if it had been determined whether it was an academic or financial issue that prevented students from graduating in four years. And, he asked if the need for students to work to fund their tuition was a factor.

Dr. Cordova responded it was known that many students work, and his team was trying to mitigate the amount of time students were working to fund their debt. He said he did not know what percentage were dropping out due to strictly financial reasons.

Trustee Fogg pointed out to solve the four-year graduation rate problem, one of the first things which needed to be done was to determine the reason for the problem.

Dr. Cordova responded the philosophy was to keep students on track for graduation by offering summer school opportunities, which would allow students to complete 30 credit hours a year.

Chair Gable pointed out the time of 25 minutes remaining and said the Board was very interested in hearing about the metrics.

Dr. Cordova responded in that case, if there were any questions about specific action items, he would address those.

Dr. Cordova said his team was evaluating, refining, and/or creating new policies and procedures which would help keep students on track for getting into their major and graduating in four years. He said there was general University policy guiding all aspects of helping students graduate in a timely manner, and improving operational efficiencies in Admissions, Records & Registration, Financial Aid, Bursar and other areas across campus with the one-stop-shop. He said the goal was to create a “Disney World”
experience for students and to work cohesively with the Division of Academic Affairs to ensure demand for courses was met.

Dr. Cordova stated with the objective of creating an institutional-wide policy focusing on graduating students in a timely manner, this policy will guide students, faculty, and staff to further recognize the importance of all students graduating from respective degree programs in the expected amount of time. Greater emphasis will be placed on undergraduate students completing their degrees in four years.

Dr. Cordova stated his team was considering how to improve operations involving the application process, document management, file review and course articulation to provide a more student friendly and efficient process for incoming undergraduate students. He asked if there were any questions.

Trustee Fogg asked if any of the admissions policies were going to change.

Dr. Cordova said the University would continue to work with a consulting company that helped with recruitment and to be more active in trying to recruit not just higher achieving students, but students who want FGCU as their first choice.

Trustee Fogg asked if more out-of-state students would be recruited.

Dr. Cordova responded FGCU would continue to do that, and were looking at the cost benefit to lowering the out-of-state tuition cost.

Trustee Fogg asked if out-of-state students were part of the figures the Board of Governors (BOG) used for graduation rate. Dr. Cordova responded affirmatively.

Trustee Roepstorff asked if there was still a 10 percent maximum threshold for out-of-state students.

Senior Associate Provost and Associate Vice President for Planning and Institutional Performance Paul Snyder responded that the 10 percent pertained to students who did not meet the regular admission standards.

Trustee Roepstorff said she was quite sure the policy was to accept only 10 percent of students enrolled as out-of-state students. Dr. Snyder replied that he believed that was more flexible now than it used to be.

Trustee Fogg asked why FGCU would want more out-of-state students and how would this help improve the four-year graduation rate.

Dr. Snyder responded that those out-of-state students would be making an intentional choice to come to FGCU and would want to be there. He said FGCU would be more likely to be their first choice rather than their second or third choice.
President Martin said one of the things FGCU was doing was smoothing the relationship with FSW for transitional students who could not get accepted to FGCU and were not traditional students.

Trustee Fogg commented FGCU did not get credit for those, and so why would the University want those students.

President Martin stated his larger objective was to improve the workforce and its quality. He said the BOG was emphasizing 2+2 programs which guarantees that students who complete an AA degree at a Florida college have the opportunity to earn a bachelor’s degree at a state university or college offering four-year degrees.

Trustee Roepstorff asked if in some categories the University received credit for the students.

Dr. Snyder responded affirmatively, and added students who receive AA degrees and then enroll at FGCU were considered FTIC students by the BOG and count in the four-year graduation rate; because they come with 30-60 credit hours, they have an advantage.

Trustee Roepstorff pointed out these were dual enrollment students.

Dr. Snyder responded affirmatively, but he noted they were transfer students and could be counted as FTIC students.

Dr. Cordova said FGCU was continuing to improve and expand the communications and interactions between the enrollment services offices and incoming students by providing a more student-friendly/student-first environment. His team was expanding communication plans with prospective and admitted students to improve enrollment yields, and create better and more efficient physical locations for enrollment management offices.

Dr. Cordova pointed out his team was enhancing marketing and recruitment plans to attract best-fit students, and students with the highest probability to succeed. He said this included examining policies which were hindering students rather than enticing them to enroll. He stated his team was investigating the cost benefit of lowering the out-of-state tuition rate so FGCU was at least at the State University System (SUS) average, thereby improving the enrollment yield for top out-of-state students. He said FGCU was continuing to expand the use of predictive data analytics to optimize prospective student recruitment, and emphasizing the values of FGCU to attract more students who want to finish at FGCU rather than transfer out. He explained collaborating with the Honors College to optimize methods used to recruit the highest quality students and increasing dual enrollment of outstanding high school students were important action items.
Dr. Cordova stated the last objective was to re-evaluate the current university-wide course scheduling and course enrollment management process to maximize course offerings which allow for timely graduation. He said his team would be evaluating semester credit hour (SCH) demand in each program through a data-driven analysis of applicants by program, the placement of students into math/science courses, and the academic progress of enrolled students. He said it was the intent to evaluate the financial and human resources needed to meet the SCH demand in each program, and to re-evaluate the planning cycle and the timeline for posting the course schedule for each term.

Dr. Cordova then moved to the Accountability Plan and BOG Metrics. He said three key initiatives were known to be successful and tied into Metrics 4 and 5, the 4-year Graduation Rate (Metric #4) and Academic Progress Rate (Metric #5). He stated the three initiatives were: the Student Success and Enrollment Management Initiative, the Data Analytics and Informatics Initiative, and the Honors College Initiative.

Dr. Cordova said the Division of Student Success & Enrollment Management (SS&EM) was formally established on July 2, 2018 through a campus-wide reorganization to achieve these three goals: (1) Align programs, services, and units which directly impact students’ experience in a positive manner leading to timely graduation in four years, and employment within their chosen profession with a competitive salary; (2) Identify offices (or establish new ones) that are optimally-aligned based on common functions so opportunities and synergies for collaboration are enhanced in three main areas: Academic Engagement, Student Engagement, and Enrollment Management; and (3) Seamlessly and synergistically integrate the mission, vision, and focus of SS&EM with all of the other FGCU Divisions to confirm that the necessary resources will be efficiently and effectively aligned to ensure student success.

Dr. Cordova explained Data Analytics & Informatics provided information; information develops knowledge; and knowledge drives decision making. He said the campus as a whole has been supportive of this thought that data needed to be in the hands of the individuals who need it most, and good analytical capabilities had been established thus far to enable description and prediction of certain characteristics and events. He stated the Office of Planning and Institutional Performance (PIP) and Information Technology Services (ITS) would play a key role in student success.

Dr. Cordova stated through technology, FGCU was identifying students who have the highest probability of graduating in four years, and students who could be retained. He said some technologies which were implemented included: Course Scheduler Software, Canvas Tracking System, and Milestones/Gateway Course Tracking System. He explained tracking technologies have allowed the University to implement various interventions on target populations: freshman to sophomore retention, sophomore to junior persistence, and seniors graduating. He said further expansion of data analytics capabilities was necessary as well as cross-campus teams specifically focused on student success.
Dr. Cordova provided information about the Honors College including its history. He presented graphs which showed the continued growth of the Honors College and in Honors FTIC enrollment. He informed the Board that Honors students had significantly higher GPAs and earned more credit hours by the end of the freshman year.

Trustee Spilker commented the graph indicated the main problem, which was in order to graduate in four years, a student must average 30 credit hours, and the non-Honors student was averaging 25 credit hours.

Dr. Cordova explained the graph entitled “New FTICs Previously Dual Enrolled High School with 30 or More Transfer Hours.” He said not every dual enrolled student was an Honors student, and this showed that the percentage was on the rise.

Dr. Cordova then presented information on the Four-Year Graduation Rate, which he explained was the most critical metric being focused on with emphasis on the FTIC student and the first-year experience. He said this would require a campus-wide effort each year to ensure the environment was optimal for students to remain engaged at FGCU. He explained FGCU would continue to rely on technology to better connect with students; track and follow their progression; and efficiently intervene when necessary. He said FGCU must continue to incentivize students to excel while increasing financial support to help those in need; continue to increase admitted Accelerated Collegiate Experience (ACE) and dual enrolled students; and continue to increase FTIC enrollment in the Honors College.

Dr. Cordova pointed out student interventions had been implemented in spring and summer, and advisors had led a campaign in the spring to reach out to all students who were not performing well in at least one class to see what they needed to help them be successful and to graduate in the spring or summer. He said as a result, the decision was made to expand summer school in 2018 and open up more course availability and summer intervention to help decrease any potential barriers to graduation.

Trustee Eide asked how much room there was for expansion in the Honors program.

Dr. Cordova responded the goal was about 1,200 students in the next couple of years and said it would be resource limited.

Trustee Eide asked if that was about 10 percent more than presently enrolled.

Dr. Cordova responded the Honors program had about 1,000 students, and so yes, that would be about a 10 percent increase.

Trustee S. Smith said the graph of the Four-Year Graduation Rate was demonstrating a decline in graduates of the Honors program except for this year. He asked if there was another message in this conclusion.

Dr. Snyder commented the denominator for the Honors program was smaller and a change in the numerator had a bigger impact on the figures, so this was why the
volatility was seen. He stated the percentage was consistently much higher than the
general student population, and that was the take-away message.

Trustee Spilker stated there were still 45 percent of students who were not graduating in
four years, even in the Honors system. He said if this was the highest and best
approach, it would be important to analyze what was making up the 45 percent.

Dr. Snyder responded many things previously discussed dealing with impediments to
student progress were the contributors. He said a strategy which continued to focus on
Honors, on dual enrolled students, and on merit-based financial awards to students
would be effective in helping move up the four-year graduation rate.

Trustee Fogg asked if the problem with graduation rates was really known. He asked if
the problem was students were not graduating in four years because they were gone;
or, was it that these students do graduate, but it took five or six years. He said flunking
out and taking longer were two different problems.

Dr. Snyder responded it was a combination of the two for the most part, but there was a
significant problem with attrition related to the transfer-out rate which had to do with
FGCU being the second or third choice for high-achieving students. He said this would
be where the Honors program could help because it recognized students as special and
gave a sense of community. He stated there was a great deal of competition within the
state.

Trustee S. Smith asked if a student graduated in four years, were certain costs less to
the State than for a student who graduated in five years.

Dr. Snyder responded taking longer to graduate did increase the cost to the State in the
sense that the student was supposed to utilize the resources for only four years and
would be occupying the space that could be utilized by another student who would need
the same opportunity.

Dr. Cordova stated retention was a critical metric in many ways. He said it
demonstrated a level of connectedness to campus, a level of satisfaction with FGCU,
and it painted a picture of what other vital metrics may be (e.g. persistence from
sophomore year to junior year, and four-year graduation rate).

Dr. Cordova said that in 2016, the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP)
survey was implemented and given to freshman students at orientation; it surveyed
students’ likelihood of staying at FGCU and whether FGCU was their first, second or
third choice institution. He showed a graph which illustrated 62 percent indicated FGCU
was their first choice, 27 percent indicated it was their second choice, and 8 percent it
was the third choice. He said this would be tough for retention. He stated data
gathered for students who planned to transfer out after two years showed 58 percent of
students planned to stay at FGCU, 12 percent responded they would be transferring
out, and 28 percent were not sure. He then presented information which showed that of
the students who responded initially to the survey, 72 percent remained after the first year, and 59 percent remained after the second year. He explained the students who said they would not transfer had the highest retention. He explained similar information for years two and three.

Dr. Cordova informed the Board that during student interventions in spring and summer of 2018, FGCU reached out to over 1,500 freshmen (2017 FTIC) advised by the first year advising office who had not yet registered for fall 2018 classes in late April to early May, and also reached out to all 2017 FTIC who had not yet enrolled in any class for fall 2018. These students were offered a retention scholarship which would cover tuition and fees for a three-credit-hour class. He stated this had been done because it was critical to the Academic Progress Rate (APR) metric of students coming back after their freshman year. He said despite these efforts, retention rate remained the same, which right now was about 78 percent, and that the Academic Progress Rate metric is at 71.4 percent preliminarily, which meant this rate had gone down 3.4 percent.

Dr. Cordova explained 38 percent of students leaving FGCU would not share why when asked (usually personal and/or financial matters); 21 percent transferred to another institution (college or university) to be closer to home; 13 percent indicated they were leaving for financial reasons; 11 percent indicated their grades were not as good as they wanted them to be and they were transferring to a state college to improve them; and 4 percent indicated they were leaving FGCU because it did not have their major or program of study. He said the conclusion was students were leaving FGCU for many reasons.

Trustee S. Smith asked how this retention profile matched with similar universities as he felt those figures were very high.

Dr. Cordova responded similar universities had lower numbers, but FGCU was about in the middle. He explained the plan was to become more aggressive in retention with short-term and longer-term strategies. He said his team would be examining critical gateway courses that had high degrees of predictive success based on grades achieved. He said they knew which gateway courses needed to be refined, or redesigned. He stated the University would continue to advise students to enroll in 15 credit hours per term and to satisfactorily complete 30 credit hours a year, which had not been done in the past. He said taking courses in the summer term needed to be emphasized as well as communicating further regarding financial aid and retention scholarship opportunities for students to remain enrolled, especially in the fall semester. He added FGCU must concentrate on admitting students who are more likely to choose FGCU based on a number of factors using predictive analytics.

Dr. Cordova then shared a graph which showed retention rate of Honors students since 2014. He said the Honors program showed a substantially higher rate than non-Honors.

Dr. Cordova shared a graph entitled “Average Cumulative GPA and Retention Rate for FTIC Students: Honors vs Not Honors.” He explained this showed the relationship
between Honors and Non-Honors students on GPA and retention rate combined, which shows significantly higher GPAs and retention rates in Honors in the first year. He said this was not surprising.

Dr. Cordova said FGCU was creating a campus-wide culture where employees understood that they played a role in student success. He stated FGCU was implementing new and refining technologies across campus where a difference will result in optimally tracking the progression of students through their major, optimally communicating to students across all levels, and expanding the use of descriptive, predictive and prescriptive analytics from all data sources. He said some of the challenges facing the University were to continue to optimize admissions strategies to accept students who were more likely to enroll who see FGCU as their first choice school and do not plan on transferring out, to continue to improve the overall academic profile of the FTIC class, and to increase resources to support more scholarships, expansion of successful programs, supplemental instruction, and effective learning/university transition courses.

Dr. Cordova summarized the SS&EM division was created to achieve success. He said the initiative had begun and given time, everything would become connected. He said this was the right thing to do and everyone should be involved to achieve success.

President Martin commented a year ago FGCU was ranked in the bottom three of the state universities, had taken an $8 million budget cut, and did not have an approved strategic plan or the basis for a legislative budget request. So, he stated in 12 months, the initiative had come a long way. He said Dr. Cordova and many others had pulled together to make a difference. He informed the Board that the graduation rate had peaked in 2005 at 26 percent and then had slumped, but now was back up to a projected 26 percent. He pointed there had been a 7 percent increase in summer school, with a 14 percent increase in the number of credit hours taken. He said FGCU was beginning to see the impact of its efforts. He explained the impact of this workshop was incredibly helpful and has given the Board much information to consider. He said that in a couple of weeks FGCU would be breaking ground on a recreation and wellness center, which would make a difference to students. He said the significantly increased commercial development around the campus would make the campus feel more like a university town. He stated he had been meeting with Trustee White about ways to make students feel like this was where they should come and belong. He pointed out the budget just had been settled at the end of June, and so financial matters were still being worked on. He stated more advisors would be hired, more adjuncts will be employed to add necessary courses, and blended online courses would be added for working students to provide maximum flexibility. He said all the indicators have been positive, and that he wanted to note that Trustee White and her Student Government group had been proactive in offering the student perspective.

Trustee Fogg complimented Dr. Cordova and his team on the work that was done and commented this had been one of the best meetings he had attended as a Board member, and that he was behind Dr. Cordova’s efforts.
Trustee Eide said he would second the statements of Trustee Fogg. He stated he would hope in the future, Dr. Cordova’s presentations would include what was working and what was not. He said he wanted to know which programs needed money, or if help was needed in Tallahassee or with the BOG in rearranging the metrics. He added he felt that was where the Board could be most effective.

Dr. Cordova apologized for the length of the presentation but said it was important for the Board to understand all of the moving parts. He stated moving forward he could drill down to more specifics and where the challenges existed.

Chair Gable reassured the Board that at every meeting, Dr. Cordova would continue to provide updates on the Student Success and Enrollment Management Initiative so that it remained a top priority.

Trustee Roepstorff asked if Dr. Cordova had the technology necessary to get the analytical data.

Dr. Cordova responded his team did have the data and the access, and the understanding of the technology improved each day.

Provost Llorens commented that the team was reaching out to the faculty as they were a critical part of the initiative, and faculty had responded positively. He said this was truly a University-wide, collaborative effort.

Chair Gable called for further comments. There were none.

Item 3: Chair’s Closing Remarks and Meeting Adjournment

Chair Gable said the next FGCU Board of Trustees (BOT) meeting would be tomorrow, September 11, 2018. He stated at 8 a.m., there would be an Audit and Compliance Committee meeting, followed at 8:30 a.m. by the FGCU Board of Trustees meeting. He said at approximately 11:15 a.m., there would be an Audit and Compliance Committee Executive Session on Security of Data Information Technology, and all Trustees were invited to participate.

Chair Gable adjourned the meeting at 11:31 a.m.

Minutes prepared by Transcription Experts, and reviewed by Tiffany Jackson, FGCU Assistant Director of Board Operations.
Agenda Items:

A. See Tab #1

B. Handouts