



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

**Board of Trustees
Academic Excellence and Student Success Committee
April 15, 2026
MINUTES**

CALL TO ORDER

Trustee Rick Cardenas, Chair of the Academic Excellence and Student Success Committee, called the meeting to order at 10:54 a.m.

In addition to Chair Altizer, Committee members present were Vice Chair Mark Filburn and Trustees Luci Blanco, Alan Florez and Stephen King. Board of Trustees Chair Alex Martins, Vice Chair Bill Christy and Trustees Jeff Condello, Danny Gaekwad, Tony Massey, Thomas McNamara, John Miklos and Jeff Vahle also joined the meeting.

MEETING MINUTES

Trustee Filburn motioned to approve and Trustee Blanco seconded. The Committee unanimously approved the meeting minutes of December 04, 2025.

ACTION

At Chair Cardenas' request, Youndy Cook, Vice President and General Counsel, confirmed there were no disclosures of conflict of interest from the trustees.

Conferral of Degrees (AESC-1)

Provost Buckwalter presented the conferral of degrees for the spring 2026 semester. Currently, UCF expects to award 10,082 degrees on May 8-9, 2026. Of the degrees being awarded, 8,354 are baccalaureate, 1,557 are master's, and 171 are doctoral or specialist degrees.

Trustee Blanco motioned and Trustee Florez seconded. The conferral of degrees for the spring 2026 commencement ceremonies on May 8-9, 2026, was unanimously recommended for approval.

2026 UCF Accountability Plan (AESC-2)

Provost Buckwalter and Paige Borden, Chief Analytics Officer, presented the 2026 UCF Accountability Plan. Dr. Borden shared the outcomes associated with performance-based funding metrics, preeminence metrics, key performance indicators, and enrollment management metrics.

Trustee Filburn motioned and Trustee King seconded. The 2026 UCF Accountability Plan was unanimously recommended for approval.

New Degree Program Proposal – BSBA in Risk Management and Insurance (AESC-3)

Dr. Timothy Letzring, Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, presented the new degree program proposal for the BSBA in Risk Management and Insurance. The new degree program capitalizes on existing strengths and collaborations with industry leaders in the insurance and risk management field, with a well-documented workforce demand. The degree program received seed funding from the Florida Legislature.

Trustee Filburn motioned and Trustee Florez seconded. The new degree program proposal for the BSBA in Risk Management and Insurance was unanimously recommended for approval.

2026 UCF Tenure Recommendations (AESC-4)

Provost Buckwalter presented the 2026 UCF tenure recommendations. The 23 candidates recommended for tenure represent eight colleges and have undergone a rigorous, thorough, and objective review process.

Tenure is a key factor in UCF's drive to meet metrics for preeminence and to fulfill the strategic vision of becoming a top public institution and the world's leading metropolitan research university.

Trustee King motioned and Trustee Florez seconded. The 2026 UCF tenure recommendations were unanimously recommended for approval.

Tenure with Hire (AESC-5)

Provost Buckwalter sought tenure with hire approval for one highly qualified faculty member who comes with a proven track record and a clear plan and trajectory for continued success at UCF. The individual will serve as the Director of the Nicholson School of Communication and Media. Hiring senior faculty allows the university to rapidly advance academic excellence.

Trustee King motioned and Trustee Blanco seconded. Tenure with hire for the two faculty members was unanimously recommended for approval.

DISCUSSION

Research and Innovation (DISC-1)

Provost Buckwalter and Winston Schoenfeld, Vice President for Research and Innovation, led a robust discussion on UCF's research enterprise, including updates on research metrics and efforts toward AAU eligibility.

The efforts and investments in the research enterprise have fueled rapid growth in research expenditures, with \$292 million reported in FY2025, on the path to a goal of \$350 million by 2027. These investments have also enabled research and innovation growth that supports research activities across the university and seeks to engage faculty and community, regional and national partners. The Office of Research has also undergone organizational improvements to best support research activities at UCF. These efforts further align with UCF's alignment of priorities toward AAU eligibility.

INFORMATION

One information item was included in the Committee's meeting materials: 1) Accreditation Quarterly Update (INFO-1). Trustees were instructed to direct any questions on this item to the Board Office.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business was brought before the Committee.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Cardenas adjourned the Academic Excellence and Student Success Committee meeting of April 15, 2026, at 12:21 p.m.

Reviewed by: _____ Date _____
Rick Cardenas
Chair, Academic Excellence and Student Success Committee

Submitted by: _____ Date _____
Michael A. Kilbride
Associate Corporate Secretary

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