

Agency Snapshot: State University System of Florida Board of Governors

by Vikki Shirley and Iris Elijah

Background:

The State University System of Florida Board of Governors (Board) was created by an amendment to the Florida Constitution in November 2002. Article IX, section 7 of the Florida Constitution created a constitutionally autonomous governance structure for all public universities. The Board is responsible for operating, regulating, controlling, and managing the entire State University System (SUS). Responsibilities include the establishing SUS higher education policies, appointing five of the eleven citizen members of the university boards of trustees, establishing the powers and duties of the university boards of trustees, preventing wasteful or duplicative facilities and programs, ensuring articulation with public schools and community colleges, and ensuring the well-planned coordination and operation of the SUS. The SUS includes Florida A&M University, Florida Atlantic University, Florida Gulf Coast University, Florida International University, Florida Polytechnic University, Florida State University, New College of Florida, University of Central Florida, University of Florida, University of North Florida, University of South Florida, and University of West Florida. Each SUS institution is governed by a board of trustees. Boards of trustees are comprised of thirteen members, six of whom are appointed by the Governor and five appointed by the Board. These appointees are confirmed by the Senate for a five-year term. The remaining two members are the respective university's chair of the faculty senate and president of the student body. The boards of trustees are responsible for administering their constituent universities and are dedicated to the purposes of the SUS.

Board members:

Mori Hosseini, Chair
Tom Kuntz, Vice Chair
Richard Beard III
Matthew Carter II

Dean Colson
Daniel Doyle, Jr.
Patricia Frost
Tonnette Graham
H. Wayne Huizenga, Jr.
Ned Lautenbach
Alan Levine
Wendy Link
Edward Morton
Katherine Robinson
Pam Stewart
Norman Tripp

The Board is comprised of seventeen members, fourteen of whom are appointed by the Governor, and confirmed by the Senate for a term of seven years. The remaining three seats are held by the chair of the advisory council of faculty senates, the Commissioner of Education, and the chair of the Florida Student Association.

Chancellor: Marshall Criser III

The Chancellor serves as the chief executive officer of the Board, charged with the implementation of all Board regulations, policies, guidelines, and resolutions. The Chancellor assists the Board with the development of policies, programs, and procedures to guide the operations of the SUS and advises the Board on best practices in higher education. The Chancellor is responsible for the preparation and submission of annual legislative budget requests for the SUS and the Board office to the Board. As the chief executive officer, the Chancellor serves as the Board's liaison for communications with university boards of trustees, university presidents, the Legislature, the Office of the Governor, other state entities, external organizations, the media, and the public.

Chancellor Criser took office in January 2014 after serving as president of AT&T Florida. Chancellor Criser has a long history in education, having formerly served as vice chair of the University of Florida's board of trustees. He has also been a member of the Higher Education Coordinating Council since 2009.

Agency Clerk and General Counsel:

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Hours for Filings:

8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Vikki Shirley joined the Board as General Counsel in February 2006. Beginning in August 2014, Ms. Shirley assumed the responsibilities of corporate secretary and Agency Clerk. Prior to joining the Board, Ms. Shirley was a partner at the law firm of Huey, Guilday, Tucker, Schwartz, and Williams, P.A. Ms. Shirley has practiced in the areas of appellate, administrative, state, and federal civil litigation. Ms. Shirley holds a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Florida and a Juris Doctor from the Florida State University College of Law.

Number of Lawyers on Staff: 2

Kinds of Cases:

The Office of the General Counsel is responsible for a broad range of legal services to the Board, Chancellor, and Board staff. These services include, but are not limited to, providing legal advice and counsel regarding educational law and policy matters to the Board and the Chancellor, issuing written legal opinions, overseeing litigation, preparing and/or reviewing contracts, developing Board regulations and rules, and analyzing proposed legislation affecting the Board and SUS. The Office of the General Counsel also works closely with university general counsels to create consistent SUS practices and interpretation of Board regulations and state and federal law.