State University Board opts to keep FAMU/FSU College of Engineering

The Florida Board of Governors voted unanimously Feb. 19, 2015, to keep intact the joint Florida A&M University and Florida State University engineering school, with the caveat that organizational changes be implemented, reports Karl Etters of The Tallahassee Democrat.

The BOG indicated last week the school should remain together and made several recommendations including: a 12-member joint council of university officials from FAMU and FSU; a new budget entity that will manage funding for the school as a whole instead of separately as in the past; a multiyear plan to address updating facilities; and integrating academic and student affairs activities traditionally split between the universities.

The council would need to provide semiannual updates on recruiting, enrollment and graduation by gender and ethnicity, budget and expenditures, research funding and activities and on hiring, promotion, tenure and integration.

The move came after reviewing a state-commissioned report which said it could cost $1 billion to split the program between the two schools. Following is a summary of the report:

Commitment to Guiding Principles and a Plan of Action for the FAMU-FSU Joint College of Engineering

The FAMU-FSU College of Engineering should remain a Joint College.

Significant administrative and organizational changes will be implemented over the next year within a renewed Joint College of Engineering Governance Council, including, but not limited to, the following:

- By April 1, 2015, a 12-member permanent Joint College Governance Council will be established, comprised of the Presidents (or their designees), the Provosts, the Vice Presidents for Research, and the Chief Financial Officers of FAMU and FSU. The Dean of the Joint College of Engineering and two student representatives, appointed by the respective Student Government Association presidents of the two universities, will be included as ex-officio non-voting members. The Chancellor will be a voting member of the Governance Council. The Chancellor may also designate a representative.
  - The Joint Council shall meet at least quarterly.
  - The Joint Council shall receive reports at least semi-annually on the following topics, and may require additional reports at its discretion:
    - Recruiting, enrollment and graduation by gender and ethnicity
    - Adequacy and consistency in academic preparation and achievement
    - Budget and expenditures
    - Research funding and activities
    - Faculty hiring, promotion, tenure, and integration
    - Technology transfer and commercialization activities
- The creation of a new budget entity for the Joint College will be pursued during the 2015 legislative session, to include all operating funds for the Joint College, including the appropriate amount of plant operation and maintenance funds.
• A multi-year plan must be developed and presented to the Board of Governors by June 1, 2015, to address the renovations and repairs for Buildings A and B, and the completion of Building C.

• The Joint College should integrate academic and student affairs activities that have been separately administered by FAMU and FSU so that a true Joint College of Engineering is established.

• By March 1, 2016, the Joint College must submit a report to the Board of Governors documenting the completion of the above activities.