

Item # 41

**ADDITIONAL MATERIAL
Regular Meeting
May 4, 2021**

SUBMITTED AT THE REQUEST OF

**OFFICE of the COUNTY
ATTORNEY**



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MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Andrew J, Meyers, County Attorney *s/ Andrew J. Meyers*

DATE: April 29, 2021

RE: **Item 41 on the May 4, 2021, County Commission Agenda; Selecting a University to Draw Districts**

Pursuant to the Broward County Charter's requirement that the County hire a college or university to draw County Commission districts, the Board directed this Office to solicit proposals from eligible colleges and universities. The Board also directed me to issue a recommended ranking of the proposals.

We received proposals from the University of Florida ("UF"), Florida International University ("FIU"), and Florida Atlantic University ("FAU"). My colleagues and I have reviewed the proposals and interviewed each university. In ranking the universities, I primarily considered their experience and knowledge of and connections to Broward County.

UF's lead professors, Dr. Smith and Dr. McDonald, are both nationally recognized, preeminent experts in voting, elections, and redistricting. Their redistricting experience (both as litigation experts and in drawing maps) and relevant scholarly work are extensive. UF would use a web-based platform, DistrictBuilder, that Dr. McDonald previously developed, which would allow members of the public to create district maps. UF would do most of its work in Gainesville (but would conduct public outreach here, barring unforeseen developments with the pandemic). Both Dr. McDonald and Dr. Smith have successfully drawn statewide districts and identified communities of interest despite having no significant connection to the specific localities. Finally, UF's proposal is the least expensive, with a total budget of \$110,000 for base required contractual services.

FIU's lead professors, Dr. Moreno and Dr. Ilcheva, are also highly qualified. Dr. Moreno is a nationally recognized political expert and has drawn districts for both municipalities in South Florida and the State of Florida. Dr. Ilcheva has worked successfully with

Broward County on recent projects, including the Broward County Equity Action Plan, Broward County Affordable Housing Needs Assessments, and Broward County Commercial Linkage Fee Nexus Study. The team also has significant insight into Broward County's demographics and communities of interest, which may aid it in addressing some of the unique challenges the County will face in its upcoming redistricting efforts. While FIU plans to use well-known software not readily available to the public, it would explore the use of a publicly facing mapping platform made available through the County's website. The work for this project would be based at FIU's Miramar office. FIU's proposal has a total cost of \$147,653.45 for base required contractual services.

Finally, FAU's team of experts, Dr. Bourassa, Dr. Gammack-Clark, Dr. Schultz, and Mr. Stamm, is also highly qualified and experienced. Notably, members of the team have drawn districts for several municipalities in Broward County throughout the past three decades. FAU's team is based at FAU's Boca Raton Campus. FAU's proposal is \$150,000 for all base required contractual services.

It is my opinion that UF and FIU are both extraordinarily and equally qualified. I recommend choosing either of them, depending on the factor the Board finds most important. Whereas it appears to us that UF has the most significant redistricting experience, FIU has significant knowledge of Broward County's demographics, is locally based (something that might assume heightened importance given the uncertainty of the pandemic), and has a strong and recent history of working on County projects.

While any redistricting plan can be challenged, we are confident any of the three proposers can produce a high quality, defensible plan.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

AJM/JKJ/mb

c: Bertha Henry, County Administrator
Bob Melton, County Auditor