

Vision and Guiding Principles for Florida's State Colleges
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Vision for Florida's State Colleges:

Florida ranks in the 3rd quartile of states measuring bachelor's degree holders or higher among individuals 25-44 years old: scoring 25.2% in 2005 compared to 29% nationally.¹

The Florida College System has grown over time to become the state's foremost resource for postsecondary academic and workforce credentials such as the Associate in Arts, Associate in Science, Associate in Applied Science degrees, and many workforce certificates. In much the same manner, the transition to state colleges is now essential to respond effectively to local, regional, state, national and global workforce demands through expanded affordable access to the baccalaureate degree.

Guiding Principles for the State College Pilot Project:

1. State colleges are part of the Florida College System composed of 28 two-year and four-year public institutions. Based on their mission, level of accreditation and appropriate authorization, the colleges within this system offer Bachelor's degrees, Associate degrees, career and technical certificates, remedial studies, and/or adult education.

Statutes and rules which apply to Florida community colleges are assumed to apply to the Florida College System, including State Colleges, unless such statutes and rules are specifically revised through the legislative process.

2. State colleges will uphold the traditional community college mission for lower division:

State colleges are locally based and governed by the district board of trustees appointed by the Governor. Even if a state college serves upper division students regionally or statewide, the great majority of activity of the college will remain in the lower division. Therefore the district board of trustees shall remain as presently constituted in Florida law.

State colleges provide an open door access to lower division students and provide quality and affordable access to lower division undergraduate academic and technical degrees and certificates.

State colleges are responsive to local educational needs and challenges and maintain strong connections with K-12 education in order to provide dual enrollment for K-12 students and reduce the need for remediation beyond high school graduation.

State colleges primary focus is on student success through student development services such as advising, counseling, financial aid and remedial education.

State colleges promote local, regional and statewide economic development.

State colleges ensure seamless transition to a baccalaureate degree through 2+2 articulation and partnerships with community colleges, state universities, ICUF institutions, and others.

¹ National Science Foundation Science and Engineering Indicators 2008

State colleges will participate in the systems that enable seamless transition and statewide articulation including the common course numbering system and common academic calendar, transfer guarantee, and other conventions included in the Statewide Articulation Manual.

State colleges are aligned with Florida's Bright Futures and Florida Prepaid awards.

3. In addition to fulfilling the lower-division Florida College System mission, State Colleges will:

Provide high-quality Baccalaureate degrees responsive to local, regional, and statewide educational and workforce needs, while maintaining the flexibility to respond quickly to emerging trends.

Meet all requirements to attain and maintain SACS Level II accreditation.

Be authorized for local program approval to add additional baccalaureate degree programs once initial approval to offer baccalaureate degrees has been granted by the State Board of Education and Level 2 accreditation has been received from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

Place the highest priority on effective teaching and learning.

Bolster and support Florida's economic productivity and competitiveness by increasing access to affordable Baccalaureate degrees, thus helping to supply the projected 2.15 million Baccalaureate graduates needed to bring Florida to the level of the 10 most productive states by 2027.

Base new program offerings on unmet and emerging needs, workforce demand, market forces, and institutional capacity.

Structure programs and services to respond to the educational needs of all student populations including place-bound, non-traditional, and under-represented students.

Maintain a "one faculty" philosophy since courses taught at both the lower and upper-division ultimately apply toward the Bachelor's degree.

Promote the value of the Associate degree by mandating that admission to upper-division programs require prior completion of an Associate degree (or equivalent).

Seek discipline level national accreditation where applicable as way to demonstrate a commitment to the highest quality instruction.

Ignite Florida's long-term economic potential by providing Florida residents with readily available means to maximize their own productivity through higher education, in much the same way the GI Bill helped spark the U.S. economy to become among the strongest in the world.