

**THE
FLORIDA COLLEGE SYSTEM:
ASSURING POSTSECONDARY ACCESS THAT SUPPORTS
FLORIDA'S FUTURE**

**A Report of the
Florida College System Task Force
December 2008**

Report of The Florida College System Task Force

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Summary of Recommendations (29)
The Florida College System Task Force

Articulation

1. The Task Force recommends amending s. 1007.23 F.S. to specifically include 2 + 2 transfer/admission guarantees between community colleges, public colleges, state colleges and state universities.

Mission and Governance

2. The Task Force recommends that the Legislature assure that all institutions within the Florida College System retain open admissions for associate degrees, certificates, and remedial education programs, outreach programs to underserved populations, policies and practices that enhance 2 + 2 articulation, and programs and services which serve the employment and economic development needs of their districts.
3. The Task Force recommends that the Legislature reaffirm local Board of Trustees governance for all institutions in the Florida College System under the oversight of the State Board of Education (SBOE) and the Commissioner of Education.
4. The Task Force recommends that the Legislature amend into statute the service districts for each of the colleges in the Florida College System.
5. The Task Force recommends that the Legislature consolidate the statutory provisions regarding baccalaureate degrees so that the same provisions apply to all colleges in the Florida College System.
6. The Task Force recommends that the Legislature reserve the designation “state college” for those colleges which have completed the transition to baccalaureate degree granting status. Such institutions are eligible, but not required, to use the term “state college”.
7. The Task Force recommends that the Legislature affirm that Boards of Trustees may act upon proposed college name changes, subject to final legislative approval.
8. The Task Force recommends that the Legislature replace references in statute to the Community College System with the Florida College System.
9. The Task Force recommends that the Legislature use the term Division of Florida Colleges wherever the term Division of Community Colleges appears in statute.

10. The Task Force recommends that the Legislature amend s. 1004.65(7)(a), F.S. to include “providing upper level instruction and awarding baccalaureate degrees as specifically authorized by law”, as part of the mission of state colleges within the Florida College System.
11. The Task Force recommends amending current statute to reflect one consistent process and legal framework for all institutions under the umbrella of the Florida College System requesting initial authorization to grant baccalaureate degrees/meet the definition of state college.
12. The Task Force recommends that s. 1007.33, F.S., “Site-determined baccalaureate degree access” be amended as follows:
 - a. Section 1007.33(3)(a), F.S.-Specify that an institution transitioning to state college status may develop a proposal to deliver specified baccalaureate degree programs to meet local and regional educational and employment needs as identified by the institution, local workforce advisory groups, local, and regional business and industry, chambers of commerce, or other constituents.

Transition and Program Approval Process

13. The Task Force recommends that the current *process* for transition to a baccalaureate-degree granting institution which supports s. 1007.33, F.S. and was approved by the State Board of Education in August 2005, be maintained, and **adopted in State Board Rule**. The process requires the following:
 - **Approval by district Board of Trustees** for addition of baccalaureate programs to institutional mission;
 - **Letter of Intent (LOI)** from district Board of Trustees to Commissioner/Chancellor/public and private universities in college’s service area;
 - **Submission of fully developed program proposal(s) (which meets all SBOE criteria adopted August 2005**, including evidence of cross-sector, “2 + 2” dialogue) and request for baccalaureate authorization to Department of Education (DOE) within 90 days of LOI;
 - **Proposal review by DOE (Florida College System) staff** within 60 days of receipt;
 - Finalized proposal is **placed on SBOE agenda as action item for approval** at request of college;
 - **SBOE takes action on request;**
 - Upon SBOE approval, college requests **SACS Level II Substantive Change**, which must be granted prior to program implementation.
14. The Task Force recommends that the current SBOE *criteria* for baccalaureate program approval, should be maintained, and **adopted in**

State Board Rule. These criteria require that all new baccalaureate proposals detail the following:

- Planning process, including Advisory and Community input;
- Implementation timeline;
- Analysis of need, demand and supply;
- Enrollment and FTE projections;
- Target populations, pipelines;
- 2 + 2 and Graduate Articulation ;
- Cost projections, funding sources, external resources
- Alignment with K20 Strategic Plan
- Academic Requirements:
 - Major/ Minor/Concentrations & CIP Code Classification;
 - Program length;
 - Curriculum; Course sequence;
 - Admission requirements (including need for limited access status);
 - General Education Requirements;
 - Common course pre-requisite requirements;
 - Foreign Language requirements;
 - Learning Outcomes;
 - CLAST requirements; (*See below)
 - Clinical requirements/internships;
 - Faculty credentials and ratios;
 - Need for specialized accreditation;
 - Delivery systems;
 - Facilities, including classrooms, labs, and offices;
 - Equipment;
 - Library holdings and staffing;
 - Academic and Student Support Services.

15. The Task Force recommends that the CLAST requirement be uniformly applied for all lower and upper-division students enrolled in public postsecondary institutions in Florida per s. 1008.29 F.S. Specifically, retain s. 1008.29 F.S. in statute; amend Florida law to eliminate s. 1004.875(3)(c)2, F.S.

16. The Task Force recommends replacing current proposal submission deadlines (e.g., LOI by June 1, Proposal by Sept. 1), with open “rolling” submissions, to maximize responsiveness and flexibility in planning in State Board Rule.

17. The Task Force recommends adding a section to State Board Rule which requires colleges seeking initial baccalaureate authorization to provide a statement of “strategic vision” which encompasses the institution’s long-range goals.

18. The Task Force recommends adding a section to State Board Rule replacing the “ex poste facto” Memorandum of Agreement (required in SBOE approval process) affirming college’s commitment to historical community college mission after each program approval, with an “up front” statement of commitment from BOT /President to accompany *initial* request for baccalaureate authorization.
19. The Task Force recommends that once a college has received SBOE baccalaureate authorization and Level II SACCS accreditation, the addition of subsequent programs should require the following per State Board Rule:
- Board of Trustees approval based upon SBOE program criteria;
 - Submission of proposal(s) to Department of Education (Florida College System staff) for criteria review, and opportunity for consultation between the Chancellor of the Florida College System and the Chancellor of the Board of Governors;
 - Submission of budget requirements for implementation purposes to DOE;
 - Placement of program approval on SBOE “consent” agenda for approval if no alternative proposals/appeals are submitted.

Funding Model

20. The Task Force recommends that funding for upper level programs in the Florida College System (FCS) be decoupled from State University System expenses by the Legislature and a cost-plus method be implemented using an initial ratio of FCS lower level base funding plus 35 percent to establish upper level funding.
21. The Task Force recommends that state funds and student fees for upper level programs remain segregated and accounted for separately at both the local and state level until such time as the review of actual cost data, over time, supports the need to modify the model.
22. The Task Force recommends that all state funding for both lower and upper division enrollments eventually be rolled into the Community College Program Fund (CCPF) or its successor and that the co-mingling of these funds and related student fees ultimately be authorized legislatively.
23. The Task Force recommends that colleges be held harmless when they don’t meet anticipated enrollment targets during the *developmental stages* (first five years) of a new upper level program, but beginning with the sixth year colleges must operate the upper level program with funding based on actual enrollments.
24. The Task Force recommends the establishment of a consistent level of start-up funding for upper level programs in the legislative appropriations process that is sensitive to both initial start-up costs for the first baccalaureate

program at a college and subsequent but lower start-up costs for each additional upper level program.

- 25. The Task Force recommends previously appropriated start-up costs and initially authorized funding levels be accommodated for in the Florida College System funding allocation model as well as in the development of future legislative budget requests.**
- 26. The Task Force recommends the Legislature annually set a standard tuition for all upper level enrollments in the Florida College System.**
- 27. The Task Force recommends that the Legislature authorize district boards of trustees to establish local tuition rates, mirroring the existing methodology in community college funding, where boards have the autonomy to set both lower and upper level tuition within a range between 10 percent below and up to 15 percent above the legislatively established standard tuition rates.**
- 28. The Task Force recommends the standard tuition for upper level enrollments should be indexed to standard tuition for lower level enrollments at a fixed rate equal to lower level standard tuition plus 27 percent.**
- 29. The Task Force recommends that the State Requirements for Educational Facilities (SREF) as well as applicable statutes and administrative rules guiding the planning and distribution of Public Education Capital Outlay (PECO) funds be adjusted to recognize and include upper level enrollments in the determination of capital outlay FTE (COFTE) for all institutions in the Florida College System.**

A Report of the Florida College System Task Force

Introduction

Task Authorization

During the 2008 legislative session, Section 1001.60 F.S. recreated the Florida community college system as the Florida College System. The purpose of the legislation was to maximize open access for students, respond to community needs for postsecondary academic education and career degree education, and provide associate and baccalaureate degrees that will best meet the state's employment needs. There are a projected 2.15 million baccalaureate graduates needed to bring Florida to the level of the 10 most productive states by 2027.

The Legislature further defined the system as public postsecondary educational institutions identified in s. 1000.21(3) that grant 2-year and 4-year academic degrees as provided by law. An institution within the Florida College System may not offer graduate degree programs and must provide associate and baccalaureate programs at a substantial cost savings to both students and the state over the same degree offered by a state university.

Important to note is that in 2005 there was a change to the Carnegie classification of undergraduate colleges. According to the 2005 Carnegie Classification, Associate's Colleges are now defined as institutions whose "highest degree conferred was the associate's degree or if bachelor's degrees accounted for less than 10 percent of all undergraduate degrees (2003-04 degree conferrals)." In addition, Associate's Dominant colleges are defined as those institutions at which bachelor's degrees accounted for less than 50 percent of all undergraduate degrees. Currently, none of the Florida community colleges are classified by Carnegie higher than Associate's Dominant, while most remain at the Associate's level.

The Florida College System Task Force was created by s. 1004.87 F.S., to develop recommendations for the transition of community colleges to baccalaureate-degree-granting institutions and to recommend criteria for establishing and funding state colleges.

Community College History

Florida's first public junior college, Palm Beach Junior College, was established in 1933. In 1939, the Legislature adopted a law which provided that a county or group of counties with a population of 50,000 or more could petition the State Board of Education to establish a public junior college.

The Community College Council was organized in the fall of 1955 with Dr. James Wattenbarger as Chair. In 1957 the Council issued its report to the Legislature which recommended a state plan that would provide twenty-eight junior colleges located within commuting distance of 99 percent of the state's population. The Legislature accepted the

report as the Master Plan for Florida's Community/Junior Colleges. The 1957 Legislature also approved statutory revisions that permitted the junior colleges to begin a separate existence apart from the K-12 programs, and the Division of Community Colleges was established as a separate division within the Florida Department of Education.

Today's Community College System

There are 28 locally-governed public community colleges in the Florida College System. While governed by local boards of trustees and headed by their presidents, the colleges are coordinated under the jurisdiction of the State Board of Education. State colleges serve lower division students within their district boundaries.

Administratively, the Chancellor of Community Colleges is the Chief Executive Officer of the System, reporting to the Commissioner of Education who serves as the Chief Executive Officer of Florida's K-20 System.

Policy of Florida's Community College System generates from activities of the State Board of Education (SBOE) and is authorized by the Florida Legislature. The SBOE meets bi-monthly to discuss policy and consider and approve system decision issues. Florida's 28 community colleges are open to everyone and many offer GED training and adult basic education, as well as certificate, associate, and bachelor's degree programs. Certificate and degree programs offered at the community colleges range from auto mechanics to nursing to the Associate in Arts degree, which guarantees transfer to a state university.

Articulation

Rapid expansion of the university and community college systems in the 1960s and 70s made articulation between the two public systems essential. Community college transfer students account for approximately half of baccalaureate degree recipients within the state university system. This "2+2" articulation system provides a seamless system to facilitate efficient and effective progression and transfer of students between and among public postsecondary institutions. Presently, Florida's public postsecondary education system is comprised of 11 state universities, 28 community colleges, and 40 career education centers. The authority for articulation is derived from Section 1007.23, Florida Statutes and State Board Rule 6A-10.024 and Board of Governors Regulation 6.004.

(Articulation)

Section 1007.23, Florida Statutes, states:

(1) The State Board of Education and the Board of Governors shall enter into a statewide articulation agreement which the State Board of Education shall adopt by rule. The agreement must preserve Florida's "2+2" system of articulation, facilitate the seamless articulation of student credit across and among Florida's educational entities, and reinforce the provisions of this chapter by governing:

- a. Articulation between secondary and postsecondary education;*
- b. Admission of associate in arts degree graduates from community colleges and state universities*

State Board Rule 6A-10.024 and Board of Governors Regulation 6.004 include specific provisions for the statewide articulation agreement (otherwise known as 2+2) which guarantee AA recipients priority admission to a state university. The 2+2 system is a vital feature of higher education in Florida and resounds across the nation as an articulation model. It should be reaffirmed by the Legislature as foundational to access to higher education in the state and the avenue by which students move from and among community colleges, colleges, state colleges and state universities in Florida.

In addition to the Statewide Articulation Agreement, Section 1007.24, Florida Statutes, guarantees the transfer of course credit for courses included in the Statewide Course Numbering System and determined equivalent. Course equivalencies are determined by discipline faculty and similar courses are designated by a common course number. If a student seeks to transfer an equivalent course as denoted by the course number, the receiving institution must award credit as if the student were native. All public and select nonpublic postsecondary institutions participate in the Statewide Course Numbering System.

The Florida College System also has an articulation agreement with the Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida (ICUF). Currently, there are 25 ICUF member institutions participating in the agreement. In addition to the ICUF agreement, statewide articulation agreements exist between other nonpublic institutions and the Florida College System. These agreements are collaboration between Florida's community colleges and the University of Phoenix, Keiser University, Strayer University and a recently approved agreement with the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities.

Recommendation

- 1. The Task Force recommends amending s. 1007.23 F.S. to specifically include 2 + 2 transfer/admission guarantees between community colleges, public colleges, state colleges and state universities.**

Concurrent-use Partnerships

Twenty-six of Florida's 28 community colleges currently make upper-level courses/programs available in their service area through concurrent-use or joint-use partnerships. These are programs offered in conjunction with a four year institution that are offered on a community college campus. In 2007, 83% of partnership programs offered all of the courses needed to complete select degree programs on the community college campuses. Additionally, statewide concurrent-use partnerships provided 22,616 community college students access to 346 baccalaureate degree programs and 118 graduate-level programs on community college campuses or shared facilities. Courses are taken on the community college campus or via distance learning, and the degree is awarded by the partnering four-year institution.

Some community colleges have even established on-site "university centers" where students may receive academic advising, financial aid assistance, and other student

services.

However, despite the great strides these partnerships have made in helping to overcome geographical and individual barriers to a college education, Florida is still falling short in its production of bachelor's degrees among its citizens, especially in critical areas.

The baccalaureate degrees granted from these partnerships were categorized by their two-digit Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code. Out of the 359 baccalaureate programs, the top five groupings are:

1. Business (99 programs offered)
2. Education (69 programs offered)
3. Liberal Studies (28 programs offered)
4. Public Administration and Social Services (21 programs offered)
5. Visual and Performing Arts (20 programs offered)

Degree Production

Florida community colleges rank among the top producers of associate degrees in the United States. According to Community College Week's annual Top 100 report conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Florida institutions lead America's more than 1,200 community colleges in an array of degree categories:

- Total Associate Degrees
- Degrees awarded to African-American students
- Degrees awarded to Hispanic students
- Health Professions and Related Sciences Degrees
- Nursing Degrees
- Liberal Arts and Sciences, General Students and Humanities Degrees

However, regarding baccalaureate degrees, Florida ranks 46th of the 50 states in baccalaureate degree production. At the same time, the state's economic opportunities are being reoriented from agricultural and service-based services to technology, health care, and other more sophisticated industries and services. Several studies point to the fact that Florida is experiencing a critical statewide need for trained teachers, nurses, and information technology employees, and that this need will only continue to grow throughout the next decade. As mentioned, there are a projected 2.15 million baccalaureate graduates needed to bring Florida to the level of the 10 most productive states by 2027.

In response to this shortage, community colleges have been granted authorization from the Legislature to offer bachelor's degrees in certain workforce areas (Sections 1007.33 & 1004.73, F.S.). Currently, Broward College, Chipola College, Daytona State College, Edison College, Florida Community College at Jacksonville, Indian River State College, Miami Dade College, Northwest Florida State College, Palm Beach Community College, and St. Petersburg College have been approved by the State Board of Education to offer bachelor's degrees. Predominant majors are education, business and nursing.

Baccalaureate degrees are also offered by community colleges in 13 other states: Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Washington, and West Virginia.

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Florida College System Mission, Governance and Naming

Statutory Provisions

Section 1001.60 (1), F. S., sets forth the following purposes for the Florida College System:

“In order to maximize open access for students, respond to community needs for postsecondary academic education and career education, and provide associate and baccalaureate degrees that will best meet the state’s employment needs, the Legislature establishes a system of governance for the Florida College System.”

The statute also identifies the system: “There shall be a single Florida College System comprised of the public postsecondary educational institutions identified in s. 1000.21(3) that grant 2-year and 4-year academic degrees as provided by law.” Section 1001.60(3), Florida Statutes.

Section 1007.33, F.S.

In addition, the statutes that follow define the powers and duties of the boards of trustees and the presidents of the institutions. The authority for baccalaureate degrees in 27 of the 28 colleges is contained in Section 1007.33, F.S., which also outlines the baccalaureate program approval process held by the State Board of Education.

Section 1004.73, F.S.

St. Petersburg College has a separate section of the statutes, s. 1004.73, F.S., which defines its mission, degree granting authority, student fee structure and other aspects of its operation. Much of the language in the statutes refers to the sections of law and legislative intent which pertains to the other 27 institutions in the FCS. The program approval process for baccalaureate degrees offered by St. Petersburg College is unique and different from the process followed by the other colleges in the FCS.

Section 1000.21(3), F.S.

The 28 colleges that comprise the Florida College System (FCS) are named in s. 1000.21(3), F.S. These colleges have defined service districts which have been assigned by the Legislature. The districts predate the advent of baccalaureate degrees in the system and were specified to assure that all 67 counties in Florida were included in a service district. It is the responsibility of the appropriate college to develop programs and services to meet the education needs of its district.

In 1989, the Florida Legislature amended the definition section of the statutes to add the specific counties served by each community college. In a special session subsequent to the 1989 general session, the Legislature amended this section again and deleted the counties from the list of the colleges. As a result, there is no listing of the college service districts in any current state document, however, the service areas are broadly recognized and respected by the colleges operating within the system.

Section 1004.65, F.S.

This statute describes the Florida Community College System and defines its mission and responsibilities. As such, it will need to be revised to reflect the broader programmatic scope/degrees offered by some colleges within the Florida College System.

FCS Mission

All colleges within the FCS operate under the statutes and rules which define the traditional community college mission in Florida. This primary mission is to be retained by all FCS institutions, regardless of name. Florida College System institutions will:

- offer associate degrees, technical and career certificates, developmental/remedial studies and adult education programs;
- offer open admissions access to students who seek postsecondary education;
- provide high quality affordable access to degrees and certificates;
- be responsive to local educational and employment needs;
- create strong partnerships with the public school districts within their service districts to provide early college/acceleration opportunities for high school students and reduce the need for remedial instruction after high school graduation;
- provide student development/academic support services such as counseling, financial aid, academic advising, and tutoring, which enhance a student's opportunity for success;
- ensure seamless transition to baccalaureate degrees through 2 + 2 articulation agreements with other colleges and universities, both public and private;
- promote local, regional and statewide economic development through programs and services designed to meet the employment needs of Florida;
- adhere to the requirements of the common course numbering system, common academic calendars, common prerequisite and degree requirements, common transcript requirements and other statewide provisions which facilitate student transfer and success.

Defining State Colleges

State Colleges are those institutions within the FCS that have been approved by the State Board of Education to award baccalaureate degrees and have received level II accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

The transition to state college status begins with the commitment of the institution to extend its mission to encompass baccalaureate degrees designed to meet identified unmet academic, employment ("workforce") and economic needs. To accomplish this expanded mission, state colleges will:

- provide high quality baccalaureate degrees that are lower in cost to the student and the state;
- increase baccalaureate degree production in Florida by expanding program access to place-bound, non-traditional and under-represented students;

- coordinate baccalaureate degrees offerings with other colleges and universities to assure maximum access, transferability and student success;
- establish upper division admissions criteria that are consistent with program quality, give priority to associate degree holders and comply with 2 + 2 articulation requirements.

Governance

Appointed local Boards of Trustees have been governing Florida's community colleges since 1968 and have been a critical factor in the success of the system. Their responsiveness to local educational needs and the excellent productivity of the colleges is a testament to the effectiveness of this governance model. Local trustee governance should be reaffirmed for the Florida College System.

The Florida College System is where the majority of Florida's high school graduates begin their postsecondary education. The close working relationship that exists between Florida's public schools and the Florida College System must be enhanced. Ongoing projects in curriculum alignment and remedial education reduction are examples of initiatives that hold great promise for the students of our state. The Commissioner of Education and the State Board of Education (SBOE) provide the leadership for statewide improvements in college readiness and enhanced graduation standards. Having Florida's public school system and its public college system under the same statewide leadership will enable both systems to work more productively together in service to the state of Florida.

Transition to State College Status and Naming

The Florida College System currently is comprised of 28 colleges that use four different types of names. Eighteen (18) are "community colleges"; five (5) are "colleges"; four (4) are "state colleges" and one (1) is "junior college". Historically, uniformity in naming has not been a concern. Prior to 2001, colleges used either "junior" or "community" in their names and the Legislature amended s. 1000.21 accordingly. From 2001-2008, the term "college" could be used by those institutions approved to offer baccalaureate degrees. In 2008, the Legislature provided a process for any FCS institution to use the term "college" under certain conditions. The term "state college" was also introduced in 2008, but its use was limited to the nine (9) pilot state colleges.

Consistent with the mission changes discussed earlier, the term "state college" should apply only to those FCS institutions which have been approved and accredited for baccalaureate degrees. Local Boards of Trustees should retain their right to initiate a name change provided it is consistent with its college's mission. Thus, any of the 28 institutions may use the terms "junior college", "community college", or "college" in their names, subject to legislative approval. The term "state college" is an option only for those institutions which have completed the baccalaureate degree transition. The use of the term "university" is expressly prohibited by law.

With the creation of the Florida College System, the division of the Department of Education which supports the FCS should also be renamed. The suggested name is Division of Florida Colleges.

Recommendations

- 2. The Task Force recommends that the Legislature assure that all institutions within the Florida College System retain open admissions for associate degrees, certificates, and remedial education programs, outreach programs to underserved populations, policies and practices that enhance 2 + 2 articulation, and programs and services which serve the employment and economic development needs of their districts.**
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- 10. The Task Force recommends that the Legislature amend s.1004.65(7)(a), F.S. to include “providing upper level instruction and awarding baccalaureate degrees as specifically authorized by law”, as part of the mission of state colleges within the Florida College System.**

Florida College System Process for Transition to a State College and Criteria for Program Approval

Each community college that decides to propose a baccalaureate program works closely with a team of faculty members, administrators, and other professionals from its campus, with input from its community, to draft a prospectus, following a detailed set of criteria, outlining how the program will be designed, implemented and supported. Upon approval from the college's Board of Trustees, each proposal is thoroughly reviewed by a cross-functional team at the DOE consisting of staff from the Division of Community Colleges, the Division of Accountability, Research and Measurement, the Community College Financial and Budget Services office and external reviewers, as needed. During a stringent six-month evaluation, the team of reviewers must reach consensus that the proposal(s) submitted meet or exceed the criteria required for approval by the State Board. This current review protocol (Appendix) has been modified from what was initially authorized by the Florida legislature. In 2002, the Council for Education Policy, Research, and Improvement (CEPRI) was delegated to provide an initial review prior to consideration by the State Board. However, when funding for CEPRI was eliminated in 2005, the State Board of Education strengthened and adopted comprehensive review criteria, and directed that proposals be evaluated by teams from the Department of Education and Board of Governors (BOG) staff. BOG staff subsequently recused themselves from the process, citing conflict of interest.

In 2007, House Bill 7147 amended s. 1007.33 F.S., reaffirming the State Board's role and authorizing community colleges to develop proposals to provide baccalaureate-level education in math and science for the purpose of preparing teachers. The revised section in statute also delineates and strengthens responsibilities for the State Board. The revision gives the State Board authorization to consider alternative proposals from state universities and regionally accredited private colleges and universities in making its decision to approve or deny a community college proposal. The SBOE transition process and criteria for baccalaureate program approval should be adopted in Florida Administrative Code, State Board Rule with minor revisions noted later in this report.

- The current combined local and state-level process is:
 - Rigorous and based upon comprehensive criteria;
 - Connected to, and engages stakeholders;
 - Has been “tested” over the past 5 years and “works;”
 - Grounded in research-based justification and supported by current data;
 - Consistent with Florida statute(s)
 - Foundational to SACS Level II accreditation

Recommendations

- 11. The Task Force recommends amending current statute to reflect one consistent process and legal framework for all institutions under the**

umbrella of the Florida College System requesting initial authorization to grant baccalaureate degrees/meet the definition of state college.

12. The Task Force recommends that s. 1007.33, “Site-determined baccalaureate degree access” be amended as follows:

- a. 1007.33(3)(a)-Specify that an institution transitioning to state college status may develop a proposal to deliver specified baccalaureate degree programs to meet local and regional educational and employment needs as identified by the institution, local workforce advisory groups, local and regional business and industry, chambers of commerce or other constituents.

13. **Process for Transition**—The Task Force recommends that the current *process* for transition to a baccalaureate-degree granting institution authorized by s. 1007.33, F.S. and approved by the State Board of Education in August 2005, be maintained, and **adopted in State Board Rule**. The process requires the following:

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- **Letter of Intent (LOI)** from district Board of Trustees to Commissioner/Chancellor/public and private universities in college’s service area;
- **Submission of fully developed program proposal(s) (which meets all SBOE criteria adopted August 2005**, including evidence of cross-sector, “2 + 2” dialogue) and request for baccalaureate authorization to Department of Education (DOE) within 90 days of LOI;
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14. **Criteria for Baccalaureate Approval Process**—The Task Force recommends that the current SBOE *criteria* for baccalaureate program approval, should be maintained, and **adopted in State Board Rule** for use by Boards of Trustees for program development as well as by the SBOE for approval purposes. These criteria require that all new baccalaureate proposals detail the following:

- **Planning process, including Advisory and Community input;**
- **Implementation timeline;**
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- Enrollment and FTE projections;
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***CLAST Requirement:** Senate Bill 1716 created s. 1004.875 (3)(c)2 which requires the administration of the CLAST upon admission to state colleges for students who could have been previously exempt and *creates two different laws governing CLAST*—s. 1004.875 F.S. for state colleges and s. 1008.29 F.S, for all other colleges in the Florida College System. **It further makes state college students subject to a requirement that is not part of student requirements at any other public postsecondary institution.**

Recommendation for CLAST Requirement

- 15. The Task Force recommends that the CLAST requirement be uniformly applied for all lower and upper-division students enrolled in public postsecondary institutions in Florida per s. 1008.29 F.S. Specifically, retain s. 1008.29 F.S. in statute; amend Florida law to eliminate s. 1004.875(3)(c)2.**

Recommended Revisions to Approval Process

The Task Force recommends that following **revisions** to the State Board of Education’s current baccalaureate Approval Process be **adopted in State Board Rule:**

- 16. The Task Force recommends replacing current proposal submission deadlines (e.g., LOI by June 1, Proposal by Sept. 1), with open “rolling”**

submissions, to maximize responsiveness and flexibility in planning in State Board Rule.

17. **The Task Force recommends adding a section to State Board Rule which requires colleges seeking initial baccalaureate authorization to provide a statement of “strategic vision” which encompasses the institution’s long-range goals.**
18. **The Task Force recommends adding a section to State Board Rule replacing the “ex poste facto” Memorandum of Agreement (required in SBE approval process) affirming college’s commitment to historical community college mission after each program approval, with an “up front” statement of commitment from BOT /President to accompany *initial* request for baccalaureate authorization.**

In s. 1004.87(3)(e), the Legislature requests that the Task Force “recommend priorities and criteria for baccalaureate programs that may be offered *without* specific approval by the State Board of Education.” In response, the Task Force offers the following recommendation as an amendment to s. 1007.33, F.S. and/or for addition to State Board Rule, to provide efficiency to the approval process, yet protect the SBOE’s legal and fiduciary responsibility for educational programs:

19. **The Task Force recommends that once a college has received SBOE baccalaureate authorization and Level II SACS accreditation, the addition of subsequent programs should require the following per State Board Rule:**
 - **Board of Trustees approval based upon SBOE program criteria;**
 - **Submission of proposal(s) to Department of Education (Florida College System staff) for criteria review, and an opportunity for consultation between the Chancellor of the Florida College System and the Chancellor of the Board of Governors;**
 - **Submission of budget requirements for implementation purposes to the DOE;**
 - **Placement of program approval on SBOE “consent” agenda for approval if no alternative proposals/appeals are submitted.**

Florida College System Task Force Funding

In order to maximize open access for students, respond to community-based academic needs, and to provide associate and baccalaureate degrees that best meet state-wide employment needs, the 2008 Florida Legislature is establishing a system of governance for the Florida College System. The establishment of this governance model involved a two prong approach with the creation of both the State College Pilot Project and the Florida College System Task Force. While both groups were tasked with providing recommendations to the Legislature on a variety of topics including funding methodology, Florida Statute 1004.87 (3)(b) states that the Florida College System Task Force shall “Recommend a funding model that considers projected enrollment, adjustments for actual enrollment, program mix, and comparable support for similar programs across all institutions, including state colleges and community colleges authorized by the State Board of Education to award baccalaureate degrees pursuant to s. 1007.33.” The statute goes on to say that “The funding model must ensure that the programs and services offered by institutions in the Florida College System in providing associate and baccalaureate degrees are delivered in a cost-effective manner that demonstrates substantial savings to the student and to the state over the cost of providing the degree at a state university.”

In meeting the previously described statutory charge, the Florida College System Task Force’s recommendations, as they relate to funding, fall into five distinct areas:

- the establishment of sufficient base funding levels and the equitable distribution of all state funding using a single allocation model,
- the accurate calculation of enrollment estimates and projections,
- the establishment of applicable start-up cost and appropriation of sufficient start-up funding for new upper division programs,
- the determination of appropriate upper division tuition costs for students, and
- the adjustment of Public Education Capital Outlay (PECO) guidelines to incorporate upper division FTE.

The Task Force acknowledges the necessity to phase in some of the recommendations over time in order to allow for a smooth transition to a funding methodology capable of supporting the diverse programmatic mix of a college system offering a variety of certificate, associate, and baccalaureate programs. The Task Force’s recommendations are predicated on the requirement that all 28 FCS colleges be governed by common statutory authority and law.

Funding Base:

The Florida College System Task Force examined several methods for determining the sufficient state funding of upper division work in Florida's colleges; *two involved funding as a deductive ratio* of various expenses reported by the State University System (SUS) for upper division work (cost-minus approaches) and *the third involved funding as an additive ratio* of expenses reported by the FCS for lower division work (cost-plus approach). The first two methods have historical precedence in Florida, having both been utilized by the Legislature to determine the maximum level of state funding that could be provided to baccalaureate degree granting colleges. However, the latter method relies on the reliability and validity of the current, lower division formula, which is a proven, standards-based model created by a state-wide committee and reviewed annually for recommendations to the standards and weighted funding of component elements and factors.

Funding as a Deductive Ratio of SUS Expense

The first two methods, cost-minus approaches, used 85% of either direct costs of instruction or full cost of instruction of upper division work in the SUS, with the former being the method currently in use. **Advantage:** The indexing of funding to SUS-related costs does satisfy the legislative intent of insuring FCS degrees are delivered in a cost-effective manner, demonstrating substantial savings to student and the state over the cost of similar programs at a state university. **Disadvantages:** However, these methods have significant inherent disadvantages in that they are both based on reported expenses by the SUS and subject to significant unintended consequences (positive or negative) based on changing policies and accounting methodologies at the institutional and state levels. In addition, even fully funded the current methodology delineated in s. 1011.83(4) (85% of SUS upper division direct instructional costs) provides colleges with only 62% of the full cost of instruction received by SUS institutions – insufficient fiscal resources necessary to meet all of the instructional and support needs of upper division students.

Funding as an Additive Ratio of FCS Lower-Division Expense

The last method, a cost-plus approach, used both the component elements and factors that lower and upper division instruction have in common (including but not limited to academic support, student services, institutional support, and physical plant/maintenance operations) and those components or factors in which differences between the levels can occur (including but not limited to class size, faculty load, faculty credentials and salary, and libraries). **Advantages:** This approach has the advantage of decoupling FCS funding decisions from existing and future SUS-related issues and concerns, while allowing for funding to impact and be impacted by flexible decision making at the local college level. An additional advantage of this type of funding is that it is already widely seen as fair way to provide a funding mechanism that accounts for all of the diversity found in and between FCS colleges at the lower division level. **Disadvantage:** The disadvantage, during the first few years of implementation of new baccalaureate programs, is that there would be insufficient data upon which to determine the actual increased costs generated by the upper division programs. **Hybrid Approach:** This disadvantage could be easily alleviated by implementing a hybrid program of cost-plus funding during the initial years of program start-up; establishing a set and fixed level of funding per FTE during the

formative years, and then moving to a model, after a predetermined period of time, based on actual costs related to FTE production. The use of this hybrid approach is the most expedient and direct way to begin utilizing real cost data as quickly as possible.

The Florida College System Task Force strongly believes that there should ultimately be a single funding allocation formula for the distribution of state funds for both lower and upper division work at all 28 colleges within the Florida College System. One of the primary strengths of the Florida Community College System has been the development, refinement, and responsiveness of the existing funding allocation formula to accommodate the diversity of 28 institutions. The model has been used to promote equity in funding levels, to allow for growth and decline, to alleviate negative impact of catastrophes like hurricanes, and to change with both public policy (performance funding, adult education, e.g.) and local decisions (new programs, e.g.). In times of reduced state revenues, the model has also been equally effective in accommodating necessary reductions while minimizing destructive infighting between colleges. An additional benefit is that the current funding allocation model is understood by and enjoys the confidence of legislative and executive leaders and key staff members.

While a historical comparison of upper to lower division expenditures in the SUS indicates that funding ratios have, over time, been remarkably consistent with an average difference of 45 percent, a review of regional and national peer groups indicates this same ratio typically ranges from a low of 35 to a high of 50 percent, varying most significantly because of the type and complexity of the academic programs being compared. However, a review of the initial funding levels for the existing state college baccalaureate programs in Florida gives evidence that there is no operational relationship of costs per FTE between state colleges and SUS funding levels currently in place.

The Task Force believes the utilization of funding levels indexed to SUS costs, while a useful vehicle at the time, is no longer appropriate in the determination of long term funding strategies for the FCS. Utilizing actual cost data as it becomes available over the next several years in setting the final funding ratios between upper and lower division work in the FCS will both accommodate the flexibility needed to adequately develop or expand upper division academic programs while insuring that overall costs for upper division work remains substantially below the cost for similar work in the SUS. This recommendation would address a deep-seated concern that new baccalaureate FTE would be a drain on the remainder of the support for the rapidly growing base of the non-baccalaureate mission. The effect of this recommendation is that new upper division programs would be recognized as they are incorporated into a college's programmatic mix, but that the financial health of these programs would be tied to the overall health of the entire mission of the college(s).

Recommendations

- 20. The Task Force recommends that funding for upper level programs in the Florida College System (FCS) be decoupled from State University System expenses by the Legislature and a cost-plus method be**

implemented using an initial ratio of FCS lower level base funding plus 35 percent to establish upper level funding.

21. The Task Force recommends that state funds and student fees for upper level programs remain segregated and accounted for separately at both the local and state level until such time as the review of actual cost data, over time, supports the need to modify the model.
22. The Task Force recommends that all state funding for both lower and upper division enrollments eventually be rolled into the Community College Program Fund (CCPF) or its successor and that the co-mingling of these funds and related student fees ultimately be authorized legislatively.

Enrollment Calculations:

Lower Division Methodology-The Florida College System Task Force examined the differences between existing methods used to determine how lower and upper division enrollments are calculated for the purposes of funding. *The current policy for lower division programs is that enrollments used for funding distribution purposes are calculated based on actual enrollment data and a three year rolling average (current year estimate and two years historical).* **Advantage:** The significant advantage of this rolling average is that it has a moderating effect on funding levels from year to year; - decreasing the significant peaks and valleys in funding that can result from dramatic changes in FTE from year to year. The current allocation model also allows the flexibility for periodic modifications in the “enrollment factor” necessary to accommodate rapid declines in enrollment caused by issues beyond a college’s control. The ability to hold a college harmless, over a fixed period of time, for significant enrollment declines resulting from impacts on the college’s service district by a hurricane would be an example of the flexibility built into the current allocation model.

Disadvantages: The current policy of a rolling average also has two distinct disadvantages; funding based on prior-year enrollments does not allow significant growth to be funded in the year it occurs (even if accurately anticipated), and this type of enrollment funding is also quite problematic during periods of limited or declining state resources and the often consequential increase in enrollments (due to the counter-cyclical relationship between the economy and enrollment).

Upper Division Methodology-For upper division programs enrollment projections are currently used for funding purposes, though full funding for these projections has not always been appropriated equitably for all baccalaureate degree granting colleges.

Advantage: The primary advantage of this method of using enrollment projections for funding purposes is that anticipated or expected growth can be funded for the same year in which the growth occurs and applicable costs can perhaps be spread over multiple years. **Disadvantage:** The primary disadvantages of this funding is that there can be significant variations from year to year in funding levels and the likelihood of over or under funded FTE in any given year result, over time, in disparate funding per FTE between colleges offering similar programs.

It is expected that the needs assessment underlying the program approval process will be

strong enough to project a healthy program enrollment level after an initial start-up period. The use of projected enrollments (and the co-requisite hold-harmless arrangement) during the formative years of a new program allows for growth and institutional flexibility in the expansion of access to baccalaureate degree programs, while the use of actual enrollment data and the subsequent responsibility for over-funding after program maturity insures accountability at both the institutional and state-wide level.

Recommendation

23. The Task Force recommends that colleges be held harmless when they don't meet anticipated enrollment targets during the *developmental stages* (first five years) of a new upper level program, but beginning with the sixth year colleges must operate the upper level program with funding based on actual enrollments.

Start-up Costs:

The Florida College System Task Force discussed the experiences with lower division program start-up costs at member's colleges and upper division program start-up costs in the SUS. Task Force members recognized that while new lower division programs can utilize existing college resources surplused from existing programs or other institutional resources to meet required start-up cost needs, current statutory limitations in s. 1011.83(3) and existing policy preclude the co-mingling of upper and lower division state funding and fees for anything other than incidental institutional, academic, and student services support functions (such as utilities, plant operations, tutors, counselors, and the like).

Task Force members were cognizant of the requirement that no lower division programs be reduced or eliminated in order to redirect their funding to the support of upper division programs. Given the limited system-wide history with upper division programming, external funds (from the state or some other non-institutional funding source) must be utilized to meet the start-up needs of any new baccalaureate degree programs. State-supplied start-up costs should be accommodated for in a single (first) year categorical appropriation.

The annual identification of available start-up funding can be viewed as a regulation mechanism, at the state level, on the growth of upper division programs. This process should support the phase-in of new enrollment for identified programs at levels that sustain instructional quality. Some planning limit on new program implementation would assist in maintaining the balance between new programs and the historical open door access.

Recommendations

24. The Task Force recommends the establishment of a consistent level of start-up funding for upper level programs in the legislative appropriations process that is sensitive to both initial start-up costs for the first baccalaureate program at a college and subsequent but lower start-up costs for each additional upper level program.

- 25. The Task Force recommends previously appropriated start-up costs and initially authorized funding levels be accommodated for in the Florida College System funding allocation model as well as in the development of future legislative budget requests.**

Tuition Rates:

The Florida College System Task Force discussed the current tuition policies in place for baccalaureate degree granting colleges. For all colleges except St. Petersburg College (SPC) the tuition for upper division enrollment was set in the Legislature's annual General Appropriations Act. Until 2008 SPC had a separate statute authorizing their programs (s. 1044.73, F.S.) which gives their board flexibility in setting tuition and fees as long as they remained consistent with law and the General Appropriations Act. The SPC statute went on to direct that the tuition and fees shall be set at a rate that recognizes the college does not incur the cost of major research programs and is therefore within a range that is lower than the fees established for students at a state university but higher than fees for community college students. In 2008 the upper division tuition for all baccalaureate degree granting colleges was set in the General Appropriations Act.

Advantage: The advantage of having all upper division tuition set in the General Appropriations Act is that tuition for upper division work is the same across all baccalaureate degree granting colleges. **Disadvantage:** The major disadvantage of this method and conversely the major advantage of the earlier SPC model is that local boards lose the flexibility to meet local needs and accommodate local economic factors. This authority of local boards to address and accommodate varying local community needs has been the cornerstone of Florida's very success community college system. Allowing local boards to retain authority for both lower and upper division tuition will insure maximum flexibility to meet local and state needs while also insuring costs for upper division instruction at colleges remains substantially below those in universities.

Recommendations

- 26. The Task Force recommends the Legislature annually set a standard tuition for all upper level enrollments in the Florida College System.**

- 27. The Task Force recommends that the Legislature authorize district boards of trustees to establish local tuition rates, mirroring the existing methodology in community college funding, where boards have the autonomy to set both lower and upper level tuition within a range between 10 percent below and up to 15 percent above the legislatively established standard tuition rates.**

In the FCS, the difference between lower and upper division tuition in the baccalaureate granting colleges has remained historically constant at 27%. The Task Force believes the continued use of such a linked relationship between standard fees for both the lower and upper divisions will serve to simplify state and local decision coordination on this item, as well as insuring that upper division costs remain substantially below the cost for similar work in the SUS. This approach also allows for legislative and executive decision

leaders to moderate (or encourage) annual tuition increases through the continued establishment and use of a single standard tuition.

Recommendation

28. The Task Force recommends the standard tuition for upper level enrollments should be indexed to standard tuition for lower level enrollments at a fixed rate equal to lower level standard tuition plus 27 percent.

Public Education Capital Outlay:

The Florida College System Task Force discussed facility needs necessary to accommodate existing and future upper division enrollments in the FCS. Currently, existing facilities on most college campuses have ample capacity to absorb the initial enrollments of newly established upper division academic programs. However, the significant growth of enrollments experienced in existing lower division program, combined with the anticipated growth in upper division programs at the college level, necessitates the development of a capital outlay planning and funding process that includes the consideration of all enrollments at a college, regardless of division level.

Florida College System institutions, other than SPC, are not currently authorized to request PECO funding to accommodate upper division enrollments. And, while SPC is legislatively authorized (s. 1004.73) to request PECO funding for their upper division enrollments, as a “university”, such funding has not historically been forthcoming. *Methodology should be changed to allow the use of all lower and upper division enrollments in Capital Outlay-Full Time Enrollment (CO-FTE) calculations.* In addition, the Commissioner of Education and the Legislature may want to examine the existing distribution of PECO resources to accommodate for the expanded mission of FCS institutions as well as the shifting enrollments associated with this expanded mission and the significant enrollment growth currently being experienced in the FCS at all levels. The value of this recommendation is that, if implemented, it would establish the important precedent that funding, to the extent possible, will follow the students. Such a precedent is critically important in assuring the vitality of the baccalaureate program mission now assigned to the FCS by the Legislature.

Recommendation

29. The Task Force recommends that the State Requirements for Educational Facilities (SREF) as well as applicable statutes and administrative rules guiding the planning and distribution of Public Education Capital Outlay (PECO) funds be adjusted to recognize and include upper level enrollments in the determination of capital outlay FTE (COFTE) for all institutions in the Florida College System.