

**Florida College System Task Force
Report of the
Mission/Vision/Values & Governance Subcommittee**

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Vision

Senate Bill 1716 changed the name of the Florida Community College System to the Florida College System in recognition of the importance these institutions play in the economic future of Florida. That legislation contains the following concise statement of purpose:

“In order 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, the Legislature establishes a system of governance for the Florida College System, “ Chapter 1001.60(1), Florida Statutes.

Mission/Values

Consensus supports the following values for all institutions under the umbrella of the Florida College System

The Florida College System (FCS) is composed of 28 public institutions which are accredited at either SACS Level I or Level II. This includes colleges that may be named junior college, community college, college or state college.

Colleges within the Florida College System promote local, regional and statewide economic development.

Colleges within Florida College System provide quality and affordable access for students enrolled in undergraduate academic, technical and certificate programs.

Colleges within the Florida College System provide remedial education and outreach to underserved populations.

Colleges within the Florida College System provide open door access to lower division students and require an associate degree for admission to the upper division.

Florida College System Level II colleges 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.

Colleges within the Florida College System work to ensure seamless transition to a baccalaureate degree through 2+2 articulation and partnerships with community colleges, state universities, ICUF institutions, and other regionally accredited licensed private and public institutions.

Colleges within the Florida College System provide programs in a cost-effective manner that demonstrates substantial savings to the student and the state.

State Colleges are colleges within the Florida College System that are Level II SACS accredited. The name of a college is a local board of trustee decision consistent with its program status.

Statutes and rules which apply to Florida community colleges are assumed to apply to all colleges within the Florida College System.

Rationale:

- The Florida College System should be the umbrella for all the public institutions that provide Level I & Level II curriculum.
- Florida’s community colleges are an integral part of the education system and rank among the top producers of associate degrees in the United States.¹
- The long-standing commitment to open access for all students and the invaluable role they play in preparing a skilled workforce for Florida’s economy should continue under the Florida College System
- Florida would need *4.5 million working-age adults with bachelor degrees by 2030* for a third of its projected age 25-64 population to be college-educated—on a par with the ten states with the highest per capita incomes. It is 1.5 million more than the state has today.²
- With a recognized history of being a top producer of degrees, the Florida College System can support Florida’s economic productivity and competitiveness by increasing access to affordable Baccalaureate degrees.

Governance

Colleges within the Florida College System shall report to the State Board of Education.

Colleges within the Florida College System are locally based and governed by a district board of trustees appointed by the Governor.

The Florida College System shall work collaboratively with the Board of Governors, ICUF, the Commission for Independent Education and the business community regarding

¹ Community College Week’s annual Top 100 report conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

² Florida Board of Governor’s White Paper

the development of baccalaureate programs which meet the postsecondary needs of the state.

The Florida College System shall be supported by the Division of Florida Colleges within the Department of Education reporting to the Commissioner of Education.

Rationale:

- Fifty-six percent of Florida’s prior high school students go to a community college. The Florida College System under the purview of the State Board of Education enables Florida to strengthen the relationship between K-12 and postsecondary education allowing for a seamless transition. This structure also allows Florida to continue its strong workforce development programs.
 - Local control has been a critical factor for community colleges to be flexible and responsive in meeting local and regional educational needs for the past 50 years. It is important to preserve this principle while providing statewide coordination with the Department of Education.
 - The Division of Florida Colleges will assist in program review and coordination of the Florida College System.
- **Option:** A Coordinating Board for the Florida College System was discussed by the workgroup as a body which could provide additional advocacy and support for higher education issues. The concept is not recommended by the subcommittee at this point in time, due to a consensus that the current governance framework is “working” satisfactorily.

Advantages:

- Additional attention to, and consideration of, issues specific to postsecondary education
- Information conduit to the State Board of Education

Disadvantages:

- Additional layer of state-level bureaucracy