

## The Florida College System Leads SREB States on Key Student Success Measures

The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) was created in 1948 by Southern governors and legislators who recognized the link between education and economic vitality.<sup>1</sup> The SREB is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that works with 16 member states: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia. Founded in 1969-70, the SREB-State Data Exchange is a cooperative effort of the SREB and the statewide higher education governing and coordinating boards in the South.<sup>2</sup> The SREB's [State Data Exchange Indicators Report](#) provides the most up-to-date "SREB averages" that shows where each SREB state's universities, colleges, and technical institutions stand on a number of indicators. Comparative state data for the following indicators are presented in this report:

- First-year Student Persistence Rates (students enrolled 2011 through Fall 2012)
- Graduation Rates for Degrees and Certificates (three-year graduation rates, 2009 cohort)
- Degrees and Certificates Conferred (2011-12)
- Full-Year, Full-time Equivalent Enrollments (2012-13)
- Appropriations (2012-13)
- Tuition and Fees (2012-13)

As with previous years, the Florida College System's (FCS) performance has surpassed other member states on key measures such as first-year persistence, three-year graduation rates, and number of degrees and certificates awarded. For the FCS, appropriations and tuition and fees revenue have continued to remain among the lowest in the SREB region.

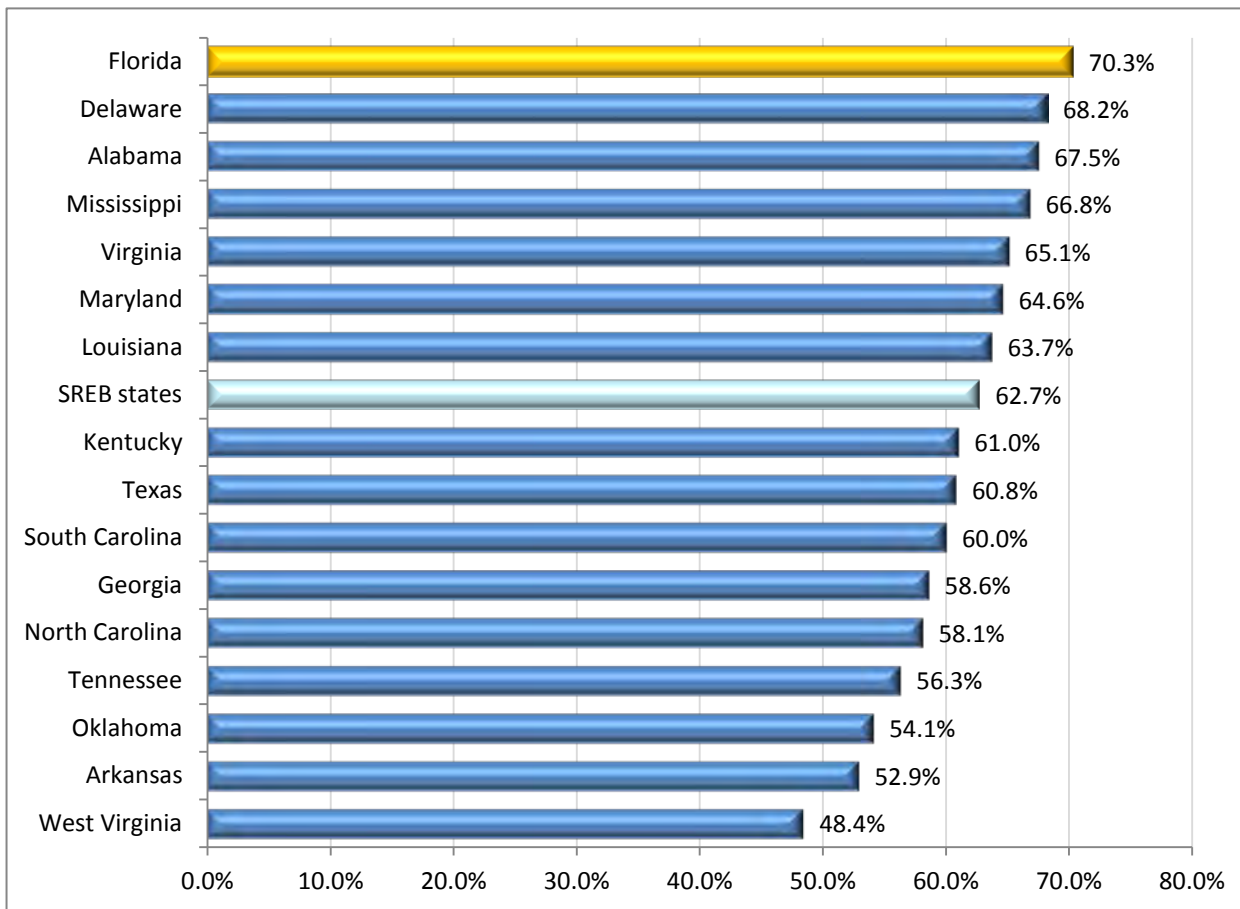
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<sup>1</sup> Southern Regional Education Board, [http://www.sreb.org/page/1068/about\\_SREB.html](http://www.sreb.org/page/1068/about_SREB.html)

<sup>2</sup> SREB State Data Exchange, [http://www.sreb.org/page/1126/srebstate\\_data\\_exchange.html](http://www.sreb.org/page/1126/srebstate_data_exchange.html)



Figure 1. First-Year Persistence for Students Enrolling Fall 2011 to Fall 2012



Source: SREB State Data Exchange

Figure 1 provides the first-year persistence rates for full-time, first-time, degree- or certificate-seeking students (2011 cohort) from all public two-year institutions in the SREB member states from Fall 2011 through Fall 2012. Persistence is often used as an indicator to represent student progress (through continuous enrollment) towards completing a degree or certificate.<sup>3</sup> The SREB defines “persistence” as students re-enrolling or transferring out in the second year.<sup>4</sup> Among the 16 SREB member states, the FCS had the highest first-year persistence rate at 70.3 percent. More specifically, 64 percent of students in the FCS re-enrolled the following year, while 6.3 percent transferred out of the system.<sup>5</sup> The latest FCS retention rate was similar to last year – one percentage point below results for the 2010 cohort. Taken together, this is 7.6 percentage points higher than the SREB average of 62.7 percent. Delaware’s first-year persistence rate of 68.2 percent was second to Florida, followed by Alabama (67.5 percent), Mississippi (66.8 percent), and Virginia (65.1 percent) to round out the top five SREB states with high first-year persistence.

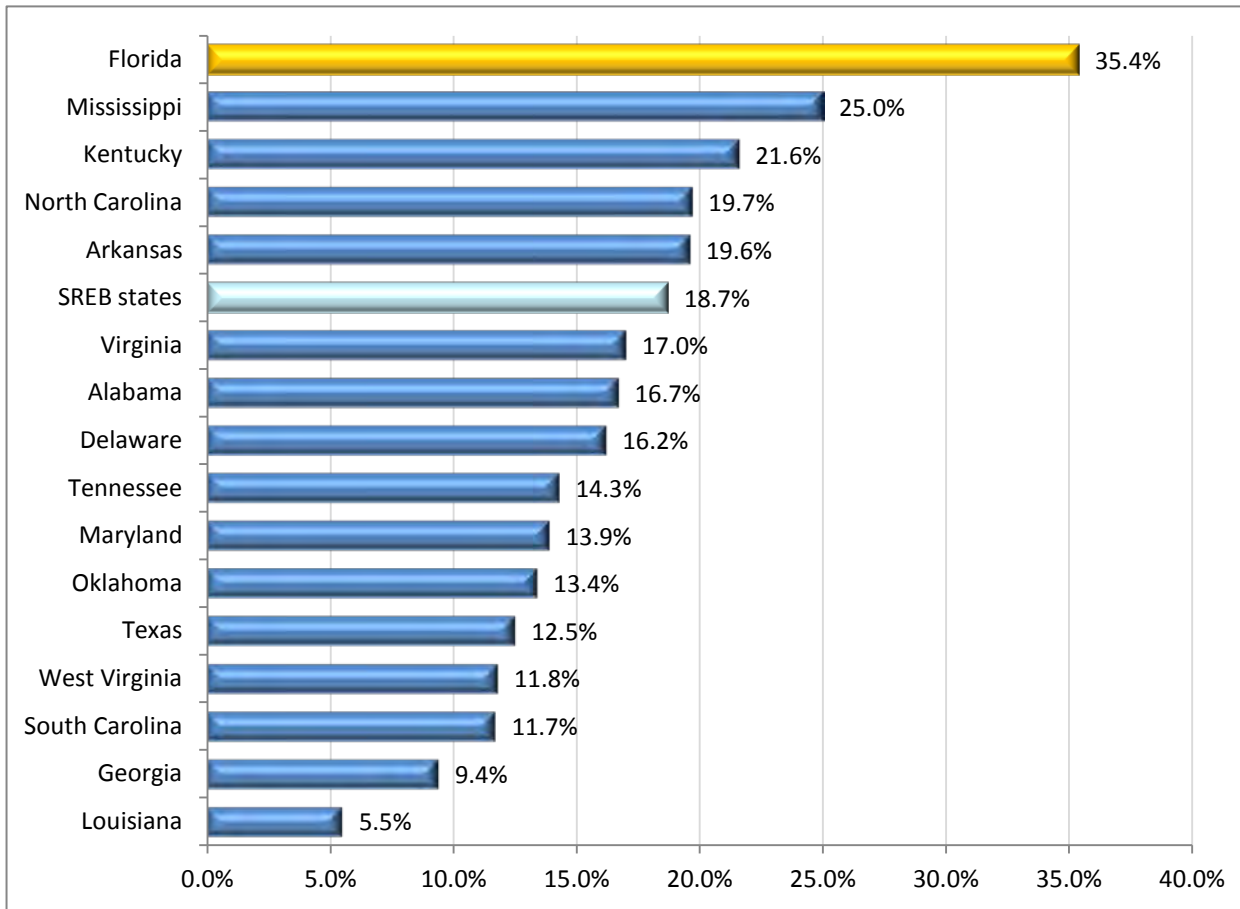
<sup>3</sup> College Board Advocacy & Policy Center and MPR Associates, Inc. The Completion Arch: Measuring Community College Student Success 2012. [http://media.collegeboard.com/digitalServices/pdf/advocacy/arch/10b-3074\\_Completion\\_Arch\\_Web\\_120410.pdf](http://media.collegeboard.com/digitalServices/pdf/advocacy/arch/10b-3074_Completion_Arch_Web_120410.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> SREB State Data Exchange, 2012-2013 Indicators Report, [http://publications.sreb.org/2014/DEIndicators13\\_Jan14\\_Final\\_wEdits6.pdf](http://publications.sreb.org/2014/DEIndicators13_Jan14_Final_wEdits6.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, Table 20.



Figure 2. Three-Year Graduation Rates, 2009 Cohort



Source: SREB State Data Exchange

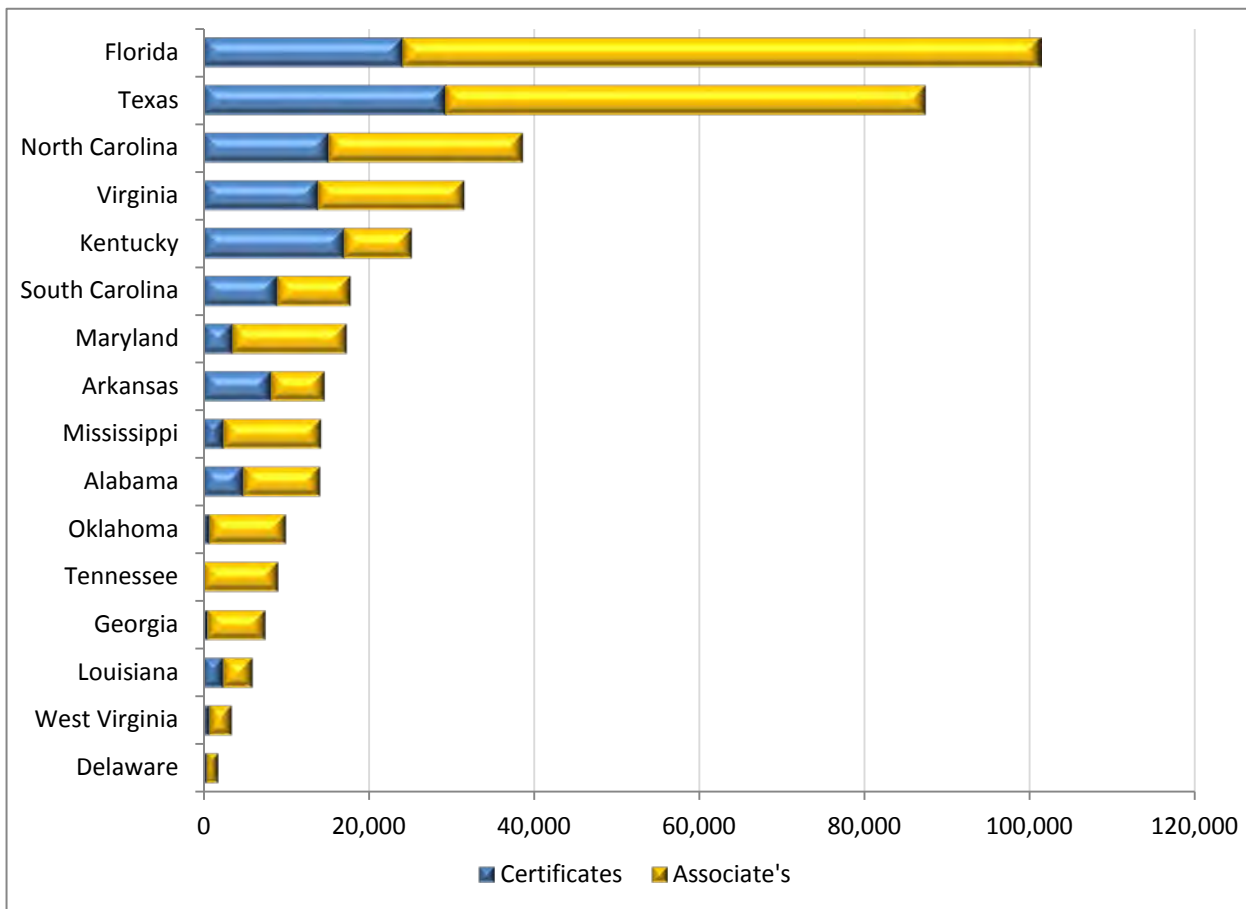
Student graduation rate is categorized as a progression indicator by the SREB, which is comparable to the National Center for Education Statistics Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System Graduation Rate Survey (IPEDS GRS) graduation rate within 150 percent of catalog time.<sup>6</sup> Graduation rates shown in **Figure 2** represent a combined three-year completion rate for certificates and degrees below the baccalaureate level. Florida/FCS had the highest three-year graduation rate at 35.4 percent. This is slightly over 10 percentage points higher than Mississippi’s graduation rate of 25 percent (second behind Florida) and 16.7 percentage points higher than the SREB average.

<sup>6</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, <http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/glossary/?charindex=G>



Florida’s “2+2” articulation system eases the transfer process for students who earn an associate’s degree and continue on to a baccalaureate program in the FCS or the State University System of Florida by guaranteeing admission to a college or university. Earning an associate’s degree first from an FCS institution provides a smooth transition to the upper division course work required for a baccalaureate degree. In the SREB [Policy Brief](#) on Statewide Transfer Policies a single, comprehensive, statewide transfer and articulation agreement is reported as a way to enable students to move from one public institution to another with relative ease and understanding—in a clear and less cumbersome process.<sup>7</sup> Florida is among five SREB states that “have set the highest examples of guaranteed transfer from a state’s two-year college system to four-year institutions. The examples each embody the most necessary elements of a comprehensive, statewide transfer system.”<sup>8</sup>

Figure 3. Associate Degrees and Certificates Awarded, 2011-12



Source: SREB State Data Exchange

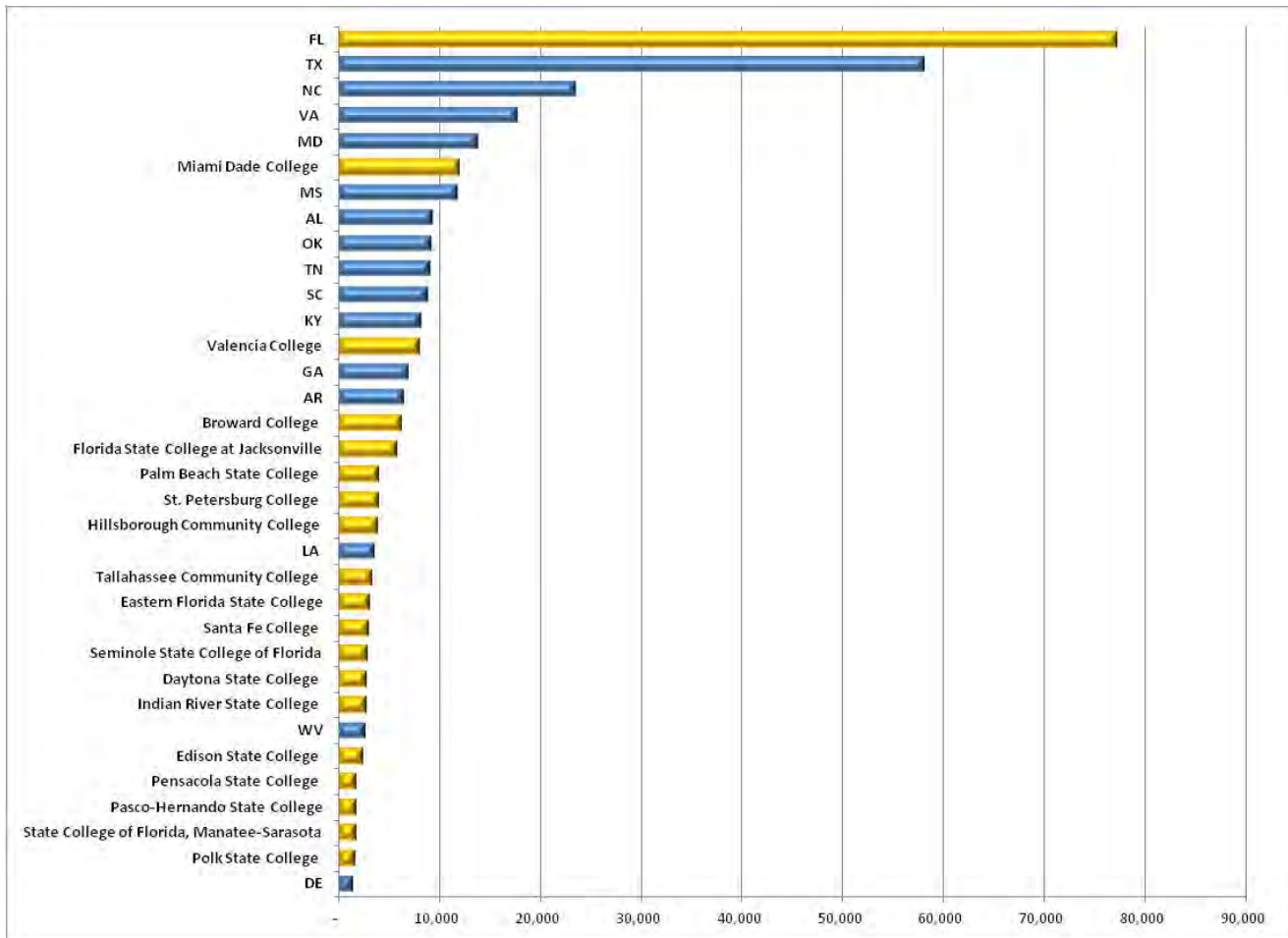
<sup>7</sup> SREB Policy Brief: Essential Elements of State Policy for College Completion (March 2013), [http://publications.sreb.org/2013/013\\_Ess\\_Elem\\_State\\_Tran.pdf](http://publications.sreb.org/2013/013_Ess_Elem_State_Tran.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.



More Associate in Arts (A.A.) degrees are awarded in the Florida College System than any other degree or certificate offered in the system. The FCS’s high degree and certificate productivity is reflected in Figure 3; the FCS was first among all SREB member states in awarding degrees and certificates. In 2011-12, 77,227 associate degrees and 24,097 certificates were awarded by FCS institutions, for a total of 101,324 unduplicated awards. Texas was second to Florida with 58,152 associate degrees and 29,249 certificates, totaling 87,401. Together, SREB member states awarded 268,404 associate degrees and 132,175 certificates for a total of 400,579 awards. FCS institutions awarded one in four associate degrees and nearly one in five certificates attained across the sixteen reporting SREB member states.

Figure 4. Associate Degrees Awarded: FCS Institutions vs. SREB States, 2011-12

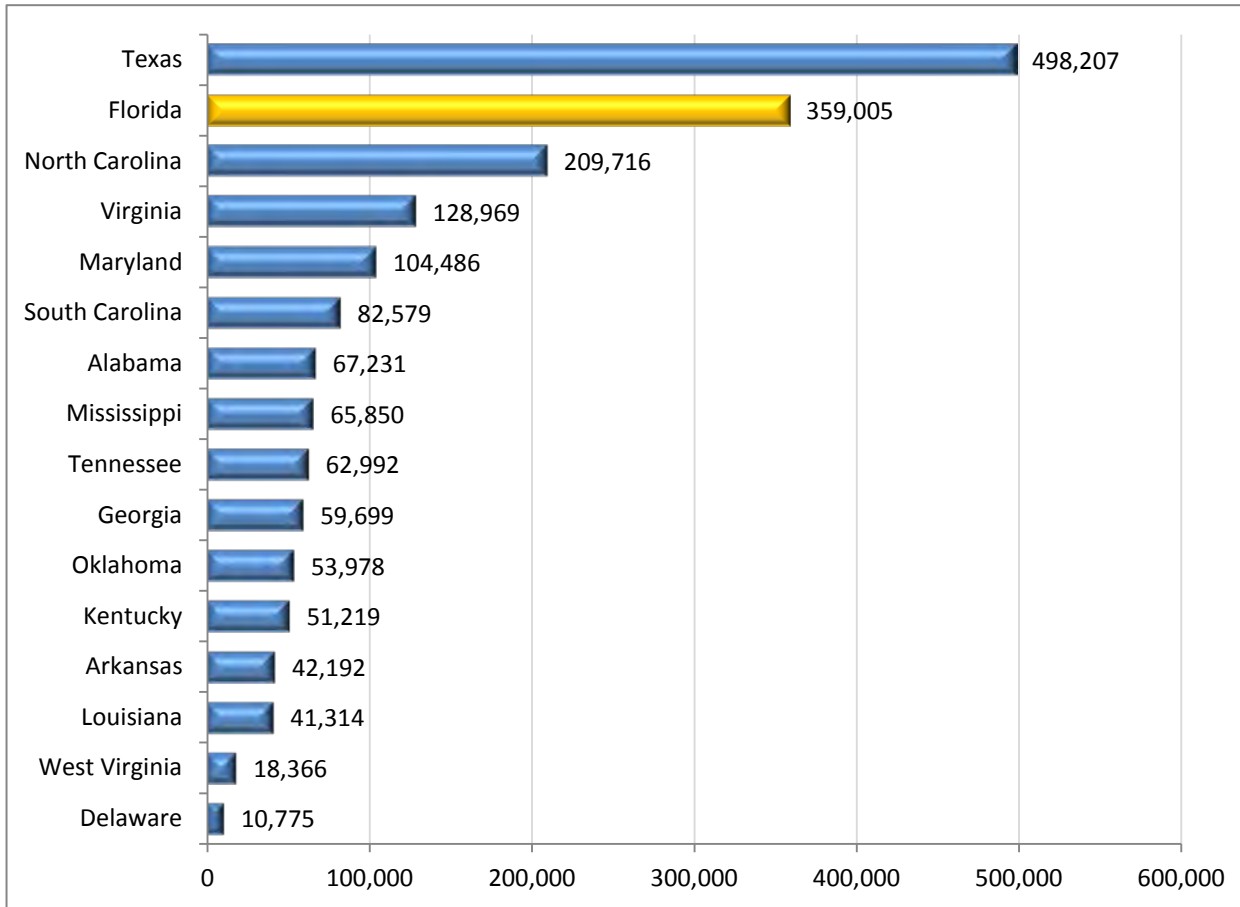


Source: SREB State Data Exchange

Not only is the FCS as a whole a prolific producer of associate degrees and certificates, 18 of the 28 FCS institutions generated more associate degrees than some SREB member states. As shown in Figure 4, Miami Dade College’s – the largest institution of higher education in Florida – associate degree production surpassed Mississippi, Alabama, Oklahoma, Tennessee, South Carolina, Kentucky, Georgia, Arkansas, Louisiana, West Virginia, and Delaware. Valencia College’s awards were higher than five states. The remaining 16 Florida colleges shown also exceeded other SREB states (Louisiana, West Virginia, and Delaware).



Figure 5. Total Full-Year, Full-Time Equivalent Enrollment, 2012-13



Source: SREB State Data Exchange

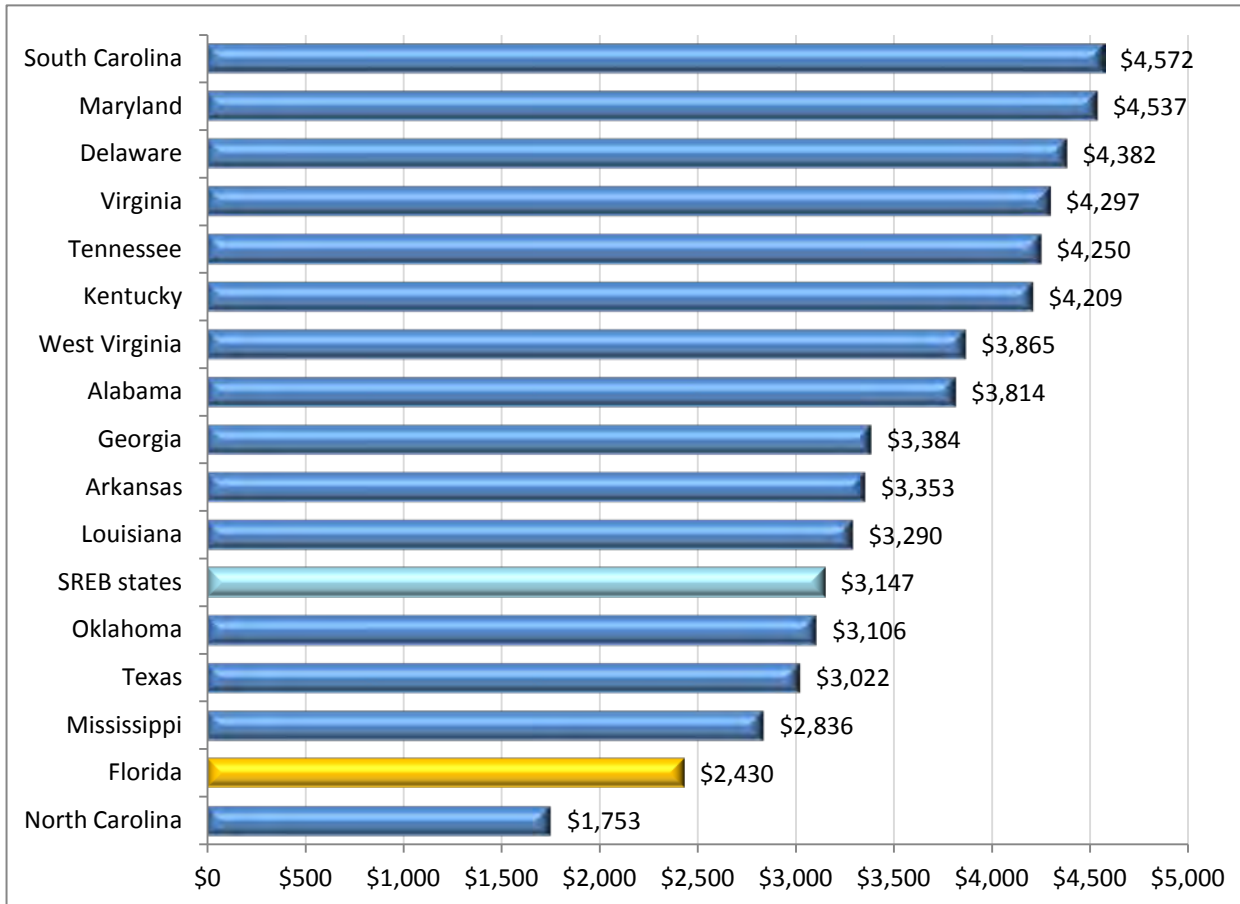
Full-time equivalent is a count of one student attending full-time for a full academic year. It is a measure of instructional effort reflecting the total credit hours taken by students.<sup>9</sup> Figure 5 shows the total full-year, full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollments by SREB state for 2012-13. The SREB methodology estimates FTE undergraduate enrollment for 2012-13 by taking the credit hours from calendar year 2012 (i.e., winter, spring, summer, and fall terms of 2012) and divides total undergraduates semester credit hours by 20, and total undergraduate quarter hours by 45.<sup>10</sup> As shown, Florida was second among SREB states in FTE enrollments with 395,005. Texas had the highest FTE enrollments at 498,207 and Delaware had the fewest at 10,775.

<sup>9</sup> Florida Board of Governors Information Brief. Headcount versus Full-Time-Equivalent Enrollment: What's the difference? [http://www.flbog.edu/resources/doc/factbooks/quickfacts/InfBrief\\_1.pdf](http://www.flbog.edu/resources/doc/factbooks/quickfacts/InfBrief_1.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> SREB State Data Exchange, 2012-13 Indicators Report, [http://publications.sreb.org/2014/DEIndicators13\\_Jan14\\_Final\\_wEdits6.pdf](http://publications.sreb.org/2014/DEIndicators13_Jan14_Final_wEdits6.pdf)



Figure 6. Tuition and Fees Revenue\* per FTE, 2012-13



\*Excludes amounts mandated or used for debt service.

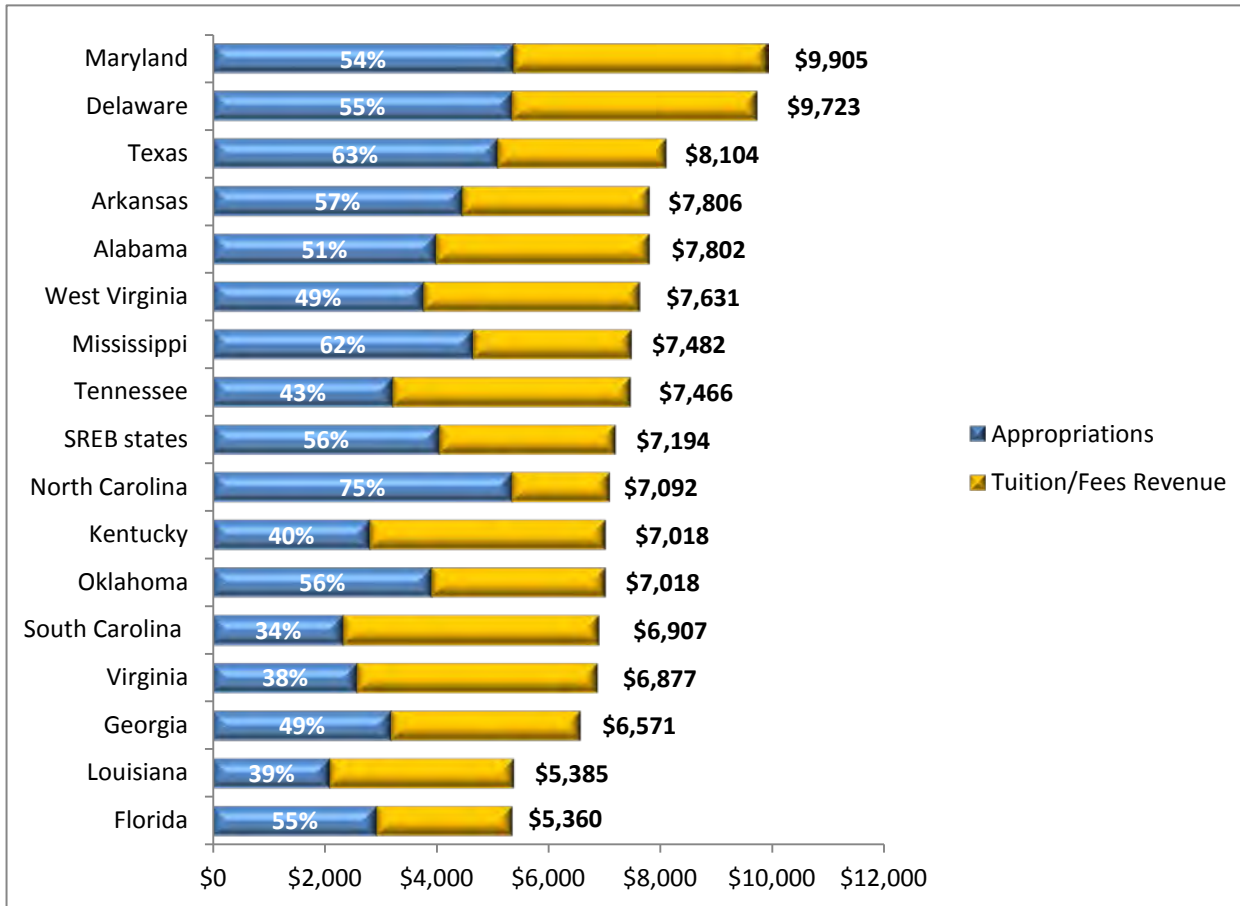
Source: SREB State Data Exchange

The Florida College System has a long history of providing quality education at an affordable price for students. According to IPEDS Financial Aid Survey figures for the FCS, nearly a quarter of million students (225,453) received Pell Grants in 2011-12.<sup>11</sup> Figure 6 shows tuition and fees revenue per FTE student by SREB states in 2012-13. For this category, South Carolina topped the SREB states at \$4,572—a difference of \$2,142 from the FCS and \$1,425 higher than the SREB average of \$3,147. FCS results were positive registering the second lowest tuition and fee revenues per FTE in SREB at \$2,430, which is \$717 below the SREB average.

<sup>11</sup> Florida College System Research & Analytics. How many students in the Florida College System receive Pell Grant financial aid?  
<http://www.fldoe.org/fcs/pdf/fcspellgrant.pdf>



Figure 7. Appropriations and Tuition/Fees Revenue per FTE Student, 2012-13



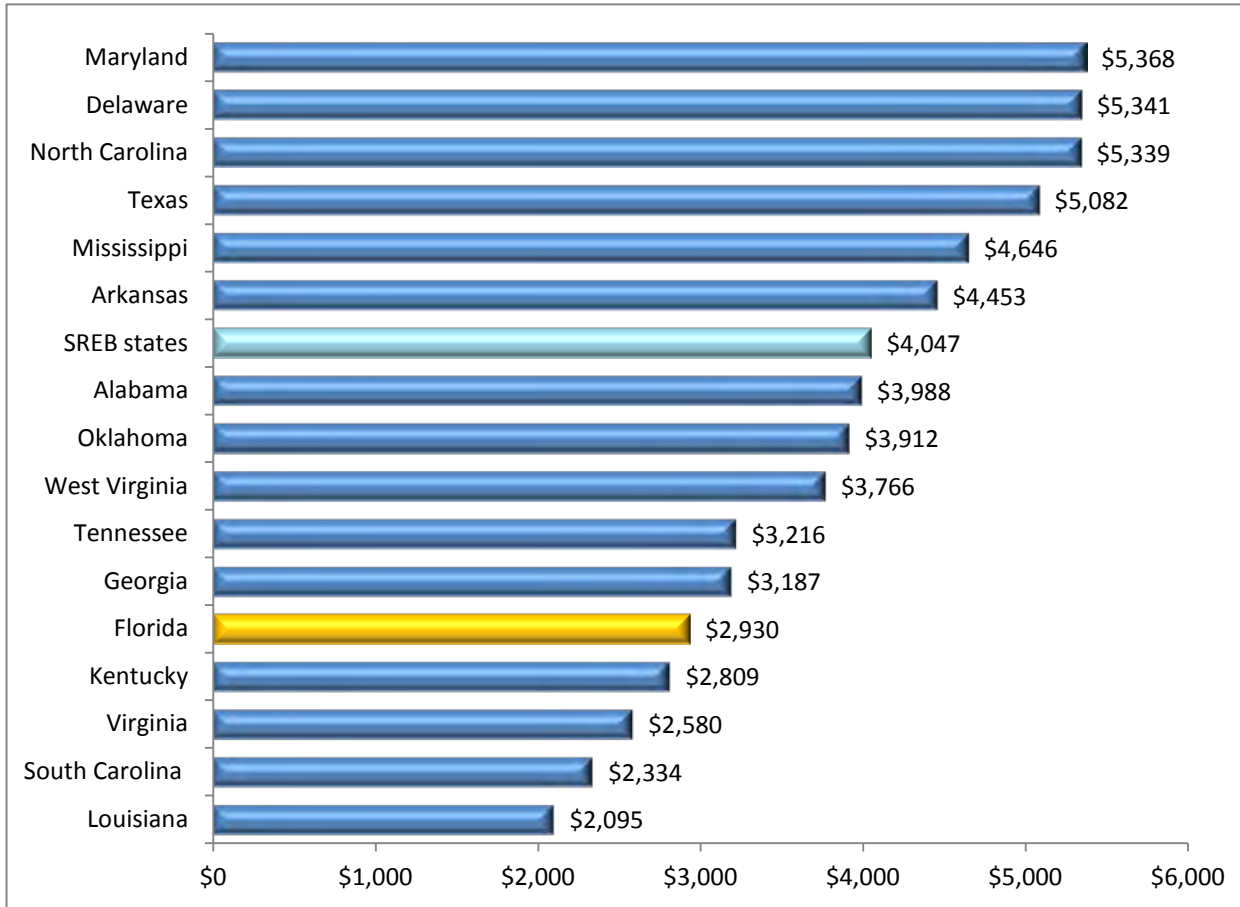
Source: SREB State Data Exchange

State and local appropriations and tuition and fees are typically the primary funding sources for public colleges. Figure 7 show the proportion of appropriations in relation to total revenue generated per FTE (total dollar amount shown above represents appropriations plus tuition and fees). The FCS recived the most cost effective ranking among SREB member states in terms of total revenue (\$5,360) per FTE; 55 percent of total revenue comes from appropriations. North Carolina had the highest proportion of appropriations of all SREB states at 75 percent, while South Carolina had the lowest proportion of appropriations at 34 percent. Maryland topped the list, generating \$9,905 per FTE student.





Figure 8. Appropriations\* per FTE, 2012-13



\*Includes state and local general purpose and educational special purpose appropriations to campuses.

Source: SREB State Data Exchange

Figure 8 shows appropriations per FTE by SREB state. The FCS is at the top of the second quartile and fifth from the last at \$2,930, which is \$226 higher than the previous year. Florida was also below the SREB average of \$4,047. Kentucky, Virginia, South Carolina, and Louisiana were below Florida in appropriations per FTE. Maryland topped the SREB member states at \$5,368.

Conclusion

As shown throughout the report, the FCS remains first among SREB member states on a number of student indicators (i.e., persistence, three-year graduation rates, and associate degrees and certificates awarded). The FCS continues to exemplify affordability, efficiency and effectiveness while also being recognized nationally and regionally as a top producer of associate degrees. The Florida College System continuously strives to provide excellent and affordable educational opportunities.



To review the 2012-13 SREB State Data Exchange Indicators Report, please visit SREB's [page](#). The SREB also publishes Florida's [Featured Facts](#) reports based on the [SREB Fact Book on Higher Education](#).

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