

The Florida College System (FCS) Transparency, Accountability, Progress, and Performance

How do the net prices of FCS institutions compare to other postsecondary sectors?

Selecting which college to attend is an important decision for students and their families. The questions of value and cost inevitably arise. Having information readily available on these topics helps students and families make informed decisions. In an effort to provide more transparency about college costs, the latest [Higher Education Opportunity Act](#) requires colleges to post estimated net price calculators on their websites for students and their families to compare costs between institutions. The U.S. Department of Education's [College Affordability and Transparency Center](#) (CATC) provides lists of institutions with the highest and lowest tuition and net prices. **Net price is calculated by subtracting the average amount of federal, state/local government, or institutional grant or scholarship aid from the total cost of attendance (sum of published tuition and required fees; books and supplies; and the weighted average for room and board and other expenses).** Another component that students should factor into their decision-making is the employment and earnings of graduates from specific programs of study, which FCS makes available at [Smart-College-Choices](#).

Table 1. Net Prices: Bottom 10 Percent National Average and Highest 5 Percent, 2010-11

Sector	Number of Institutions in Bottom 10%	Net Price National Average	Number of Institutions in Top 5%
Public, less-than-2-year	3	\$ 7,723	2
Private, not-for-profit, less-than-2-year	2	\$11,093	1
Private, for-profit, less-than-2-year	7	\$15,164	4
Public, 2-year	98	\$ 6,711	49
Private, not-for-profit, 2-year	12	\$16,872	6
Private, for-profit, 2-year	43	\$19,018	22
Public, 4-year or above	65	\$10,863	65
Private, not-for-profit, 4-year or above	126	\$19,330	63
Private, for-profit, 4-year or above	63	\$22,636	32

Source: U.S. Department of Education, College Affordability & Transparency Center

Florida College System (FCS) institutions provide a quality education at price points that makes them exceptional values. All FCS institutions have low tuition and fee rates and several are among the most affordable colleges in the nation, which is reflected in the CATC lists. Seven FCS institutions were listed among those with the lowest net prices in the nation for public four-year or above institutions: Indian River State College, Palm Beach State College, Chipola College, Gulf Coast State College, Saint Johns River State College, Polk State College and Florida State College at Jacksonville. Table 1 shows that the national average for institutions classified as public, four-year or above was \$10,863. The unweighted average for FCS four-year institutions was \$6,757 and the median was \$7,062. At the time of the data collection, 19 FCS institutions offered a select number of baccalaureate degrees. In 2010-11, 72 percent of Indian River State College's full-time beginning undergraduate students received grant aid. The net price was \$1,440, \$9,423 below the national average. Sixty-six percent of Florida State College of Jacksonville's full-time beginning undergraduates received grant aid. The net price was \$6,038, which is \$4,825 below the national average.

The table also shows the number of colleges that were listed in the top five percent of the highest net prices in the nation, by sector. The 2010-11 national average net price for public, two-year colleges was \$6,711. The unweighted average for FCS two-year institutions was \$6,735 (based on nine colleges) and the median net cost was \$4,966. The substantial difference between the two measures is primarily due to Florida Keys Community College with a reported net price of \$22,933 – due primarily to room, board and transportation costs. Although island living is expensive, costs for longtime area residents are typically lower.

To examine net price and tuition information for all types of Florida higher education institutions [see the attachments](#) or visit the College Affordability and Transparency Center [website](#).

For assistance, contact the Florida College System Research & Analytics
Scott J. Parke, Ph.D. or Kathyrine L. Scheuch, Ed.D. at 850-245-0407

