



March 7, 2012

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The Honorable Rick Scott
Governor
State of Florida
Plaza Level 5, The Capitol
400 S. Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

The Honorable Mike Haridopolos
President
Florida Senate
409, The Capitol
404 S. Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100

The Honorable Dean Cannon
Speaker
Florida House of Representatives
420, The Capitol
402 S. Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

RE: Resolution requesting enactment of Senate Bill 1752 / House Bill 7129
(State Universities of Academic and Research Excellence and National
Preeminence)

Dear Governor Scott, President Haridopolos, and Speaker Cannon:

Because of the vital importance of education to Florida's economic success, the Florida Council of 100 has had a long-standing interest in the governance and performance of the State University System and its constituent institutions. It is in that spirit that the Council has adopted the attached resolution calling for the enactment of Senate Bill 1752 / House Bill 7129 and for state policymakers to continue to develop ways to optimally extend the powers under this legislation to all state higher educational institutions, based on a balanced analytical framework established by the Council.

Sincerely,

Steve Halverson
Chair, Florida Council of 100

Marshall Criser, III
Vice Chair, Florida Council of 100

Enclosure

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cc: The Honorable Jennifer Carroll, Lt. Governor, State of Florida
The Honorable Will Weatherford, Speaker Designate, Florida House of Representatives
The Honorable Don Gaetz, President Designate, Florida Senate
The Honorable J.D. Alexander, Chair, Budget Committee, Florida Senate
The Honorable Denise Grimsley, Chair, Appropriations Committee, Florida House of Representatives
The Honorable Evelyn Lynn, Chair, Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee, Florida Senate
The Honorable Marlene O'Toole, Chair, Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee, Florida House of Representatives
The Honorable Steve Oelrich, Chair, Higher Education Committee, Florida Senate
The Honorable Bill Proctor, Chair, Education Committee, Florida House of Representatives
The Honorable Erik Fresen, Chair, K-20 Competitiveness Subcommittee, Florida House of Representatives
The Honorable Kelli Stargel, Chair, K-20 Innovation Subcommittee, Florida House of Representatives
Honorable Members of the Florida Senate
Honorable Members of the Florida House of Representatives
Mr. Dean Colson, Chair, Florida Board of Governors
Mr. Mori Hosseini, Vice Chair, Florida Board of Governors
Mr. Frank Brogan, Chancellor, State University System of Florida

Resolution



WHEREAS, Since 1961, The Florida Council of 100, a private, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization representing key business leadership in Florida, has promoted the economic growth of Florida and a high quality of life for its citizens.

WHEREAS, Since inception, the Florida Council of 100 has had a vital, ongoing interest in improving Florida's education system, publishing such reports as Review of the A+ Plan to Improve Education in 1999, We Must Do Better! in 2004, and Closing the Talent Gap in 2010.

WHEREAS, The Florida Council of 100 has found that:

- Florida faces an emerging Talent Gap, an urgent shortage of a resource as basic as food, more valuable than gold, and in higher global demand than oil, and this crisis in human capital represents a vast and growing unmet need for a highly skilled and educated workforce, Florida's most important resource for driving sustainable economic development and a diversified economy, and
- While in the coming decades, new innovations will be developed to address the world's most pressing environmental, medical, and transportation challenges, and while the site of those breakthroughs will reap the economic rewards of leadership, without a thriving base of knowledge workers, that place may not be Florida, and
- While predicting the future of such economic development is difficult, one fact is certain -- the leading companies and clusters that will emerge over the next 20 years will locate themselves wherever they have access to a top-quality workforce, and Florida today is not leading the national or international race in providing its workers with the professional skills and education they need to compete and succeed in the economy of this new century.

WHEREAS, To begin to address this Talent Gap, the Florida Council of 100 recommended the settling of issues in 2010 relating to the Board of Governors/Legislature legal dispute, a compromise which now serves as the foundation for Senate Bill 1752 / House Bill 7129, which establishes a "collaborative partnership... between the Board of Governors and the Legislature to elevate the academic and research excellence and national preeminence of Florida's highest-performing state research universities in accordance with...the State University System Governance Agreement executed on March 24, 2010, wherein the Board of Governors and leaders of the Legislature agreed to a framework for the collaborative exercise of their joint authority and shared responsibility for the State University System...including continued collaboration on accountability measures, the use of data, and recommendations derived from such data."



Resolution



WHEREAS, The Florida Council of 100 has further recommended that the state adopt a new analytical framework under which all relevant higher education issues could be addressed based on three continuums: Funding vs. Accountability; Tuition vs. Financial Aid; and Institutional Independence vs. Need for Systemic Governance.

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 1752 / House Bill 7129 optimize performance along each of these continuums in the following ways:

- **Funding vs. Accountability:** The legislation enables funding flexibility only if a state substantially meets at least 11 of 14 academic and research excellence standards as verified by the Board of Governors.
- **Tuition vs. Financial Aid:** Both University of Florida President Bernie Machen and Florida State University President Eric Barron have publicly committed to the Legislature that their universities' first order of business with regard to using new tuition revenues generated under the legislation will be to provide students-in-need with levels of financial assistance that will ensure continued access to all university degree programs.
- **Institutional Independence vs. Need for Systemic Governance:** While the legislation provides "state universities of academic and research excellence and national preeminence" with the ability to charge differentiated and market-rate tuition and fees based on their unique programs and needs, such actions must still be approved by the Board of Governors and the Legislature. Additionally, the legislation encourages the Board of Governors to identify and grant additional authority and flexibilities to universities as may be appropriate to achieve state university and State University System goals; to identify state university programs of academic and research excellence; and to make recommendations to the Legislature for flexibilities designed to move such programs higher in appropriate nationally recognized rankings.

WHEREAS, The Florida Council of 100 has found that employers are looking for two kinds of graduates: those with Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) degrees having superior technical skills and liberal arts graduates with superior analytical, critical thinking, and communications skills who can quickly learn and apply industry/company-specific skills.

WHEREAS, That finding was repeatedly cited by the House Education Committee as it crafted House Bill 7129, including in the legislation the ability to charge differentiated and market-rate tuition and fees, which will help address STEM-related pricing inefficiencies, and the ability for a university to require students to take a 9-12 credit core curriculum focused on building analytical, critical thinking, and communications skills.



Resolution



NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED The Florida Council of 100 calls on the Governor and the Legislature to enact Senate Bill 1752 / House Bill 7129, or similar legislation, posthaste.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED The Florida Council of 100 calls on state policymakers to continue to develop ways to optimally extend the powers under Senate Bill 1752 / House Bill 7129 to all state higher educational institutions, based on the balanced framework of continuums established by the Council.



**Passed by the Executive Committee
of The Florida Council of 100
March 7, 2012**

Steven T. Halverson, Chair

Marshall Criser III, Vice Chair

