



DEGREES IN DEMAND

Policy Options for Managing Long-term
State University System Growth

May 2023





Formed in 1961 at the request of Governor Farris Bryant and as the first organization of its kind in the United States, the Florida Council of 100 is a private, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization of business, civic, and academic leaders which exists to promote the economic growth of Florida and a high quality of life for its citizens.

MISSION STATEMENT

To improve the quality of life and economic well-being of all Floridians through the relentless pursuit of better, business-driven public policy.

Introduction

The Florida Council of 100 is a private, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization of business leaders committed to promoting economic growth and improving the quality of life for the people of our state. First established in 1961 by Governor Farris Bryant, for more than six decades, the Council has been charged with providing advice on key policy issues from the business community's perspective to Florida's elected leaders and government officials across the political and ideological spectrum. Today, the Florida Council of 100 represents more than 140 businesses that employ over 1.3 million people throughout Florida.

Since inception, the Council of 100 has had a vital, ongoing interest in improving Florida's postsecondary educational system. We have always fervently held that Florida needs a world-class workforce infrastructure if our citizens are to have the career tools they need to compete and prosper in the ever-changing economy of the 21st century. Empirical research has demonstrated that education is the leading driver of long-term economic growth, driven mostly by achievement, rather than mere attainment.

Over the past two decades, the Council of 100 has issued several position papers relating to higher education in the state, as well as addressing topics relating to the State University System, in comprehensive reports such as:

- *The Emerging Catastrophe, Catastrophe Forestalled, and Bursting at the Seams* written under the auspices of the Business/Higher Education Partnership formed by the Council in the late 1990's;
- *We Must Do Better!* by the Council's Higher Education Funding Task Force in the mid-2000's;
- *Closing the Talent Gap: A Business Perspective* in 2010; and
- *Best Practices in Business-Academic R&D Collaboration* in 2018.

Following the lead of Governor DeSantis in 2019 with his charge to become the #1 state in the nation for workforce education and the Governor and the Legislature with their creation of the Reimagining Education and Career Help

Passed by the Legislature in 2021, the Reimagining Education and Career Help (REACH) Act addresses the evolving needs of Florida's economy by increasing the level of collaboration and cooperation among state businesses and education communities while improving training within and access to a more integrated workforce and education system for all Floridians.

“ I am thrilled to see our universities’ significant achievements reflected in the national rankings. None of this would be possible without the steadfast commitment of our university leadership, faculty, and most importantly, our students. We appreciate the significant support from Governor DeSantis and our legislative leaders who have consistently prioritized higher education in Florida. This success will inspire our university system to continue reaching upward to ensure a place of excellence and opportunity for our students. ”

Brian Lamb,
Chair of the Board
of Governors

(REACH) Act in 2021, the Council of 100 formed a Talent Committee to study ways to improve the State University System (SUS).

Not that the SUS hasn’t been flourishing—Florida’s higher education system has been ranked #1 in the nation by *U.S. News & World Report* for six years running.¹ That’s due in part to a system that has seen its four-year graduation rates increase 12% in the past five years while lowering costs to an net average of less than \$3,400 for a four-year degree.² Additionally, *U.S. News & World Report* counts five SUS institutions among the top 100 public universities in the country, including the University of Florida, which is now ranked the #5 public university in the nation.³

That said, our Talent Committee wanted to look specifically at how the SUS can manage its undergraduate growth, while maintaining its performance, over the long-term, 10-20 years from now. Florida will continue to grow over that time frame, generating a new, larger demand pool for a state university education. As Dr. Nathan Grawe, Professor of Economics at Carleton College and author of *Demographics and the Demand for Higher Education* and *The Agile College*, noted, “Waiting to take action until 2030, only after demographic changes are fully upon us, necessarily implies making large adjustments in a short period of time. On the other hand, by setting out on a path for change today, it is possible to design and implement institutional changes over more time and so reduce the inherent stresses.”⁴

After much careful analysis and debate among our Talent Committee’s business leaders and public-sector experts, the following are our findings and ideas for how the SUS can take steps to manage its growth in undergraduate enrollment over the next two decades. It is vital to note that these are long-term policy options—not ideas that we anticipate implementing in the next year or even five years. Thus, they should be considered within that context, knowing, though, that if we don’t start the process for addressing these issues now, the university system will have to make much more difficult decisions down the line.

Executive Summary

Florida will continue experiencing population growth over the next two decades, meaning the statewide demand pool for a State University System (SUS) education is expected to grow as well. This report examines ways that the SUS might manage this growth in undergraduate students over the long-term. While the following policy options are not expected to be implemented in a year (or even five years), given the current slowing or freezing of state universities' projected enrollment, it is important that the state start considering this issue now or face more difficult growth management decisions down the line. Additionally, it is important to note that these policy options are not mutually exclusive and, thus, could be implemented in combination.

Policy Option #1: Fund additional undergraduate enrollment growth where the population growth will be occurring

Over the next two decades, population growth in Florida is expected to center around the I-4 corridor (Tampa and Orlando) and Southeast Florida (Miami). These areas align with the local markets of the University of South Florida (Tampa), the University of Central Florida (Orlando), and Florida International University (Miami). The state could consider funding additional enrollment growth at these universities provided they maintain a high level of performance.

Policy Option #2: Efficiently, effectively, and appropriately capitalize on distance learning for undergraduates

Distance learning has been a university strategy for meeting SUS undergraduate growth in recent years. Thus, knowing students' (the "consumers'") perspectives relating to distance learning is key. To that end, the Council of 100 partnered with the Florida Student Association to conduct a first-of-its-kind widespread survey of currently enrolled state university students to obtain their input. In summary, it appears that the SUS should tread carefully when increasing distance learning because, while online courses may be popular with students from a scheduling standpoint, in-person courses remain very necessary due to student choice, differences in subject-matter, and perceived amount of learning that takes place. Furthermore, as state universities expand the delivery of online classes to meet student demand, the development of new online classes should occur with careful deliberation and include demonstrated quality standards for online course delivery, faculty professional development, and technological advances.

Policy Option #3: Capitalize on the Florida College System to further help the state meet its baccalaureate degree needs

Governed by the State Board of Education, the Florida College System (FCS) is composed of 28 institutions located throughout the state, which offer Bachelor of Science or Bachelor of Applied Science degrees that must be tied to local workforce needs. That said, FCS institutions could lighten the load of state universities in providing baccalaureate degrees in three ways:

- Increase the number of joint- or concurrent-use agreements between universities and colleges in order to serve the needs of place-bound students seeking B.A. degrees. Such agreements involve a university teaching general B.A. degrees and other programs on an FCS campus.
- Incentivize state colleges to offer more B.S. and B.A.S. degrees by replicating a new state nursing education program. Just like the nursing program provides matching funds to participating agencies that partner with certain health care providers needing more nurses, a similar program could be established to provide matching funds relating to businesses needing more FCS baccalaureate degree graduates in certain locations or fields.
- Reinvigorate Florida's "2+2" articulation program. The 2+2 program guarantees that a

student who completes an Associate of Arts degree at a state college has the opportunity to earn a baccalaureate degree at a state university or state college that offers baccalaureate degrees. While participation in 2+2 could lessen the burden on state universities to provide lower-division courses, thus creating the possibility of serving more students overall, such participation has waned in recent years.

Policy Option #4: Capitalize on the flexible capacity of nonprofit colleges and universities

There are 30 private, nonprofit Independent Colleges and Universities (ICUF) in Florida. As expressed by the Florida Legislature, the state believes that a “strong and viable system of independent nonprofit colleges and universities reduces the tax burden on the citizens of the state” because, under zero-sum conditions, ICUF institutions can produce baccalaureate degrees at a fraction of what it costs state universities to do so. This is as a result of the Effective Access to Student Education Grant Program (EASE) that provides vital tuition assistance to students who attend ICUF institutions. EASE funding could be increased as long as ICUF schools exceed certain performance benchmarks, such as graduation rate and post-graduation student employment outcomes.

Policy Option #5: Expand Credit for Prior Learning to include work experience

Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) can be defined as academic credit granted for demonstrated college-level equivalencies gained through learning experiences outside of the college classroom. In short, it means converting one’s prior work experience, military training, or education into college credit toward specific courses in a degree program to reduce the duration of the program. Currently, Florida articulation rules provide for state universities to accept CPL based on the results of various standardized exams. Awarding a student credit for their documented outside-the-classroom learning could help them move through their degree program more expeditiously, thus freeing space for new enrollment. Thus, the state could formally push for the recognition of CPL for work experience and the utilization of ePortfolios as a means of documenting CPL-related knowledge and skills.

The Council of 100’s Talent Committee also considered and studied the following ways by which the SUS might be able to manage its growth, but they were ultimately discarded because of their various drawbacks.

- Increase the economic incentive for serving undergraduate students by unfreezing tuition
- Build a new university(ies)
- Implement new construction projects on existing university campuses
- Replace out-of-state undergraduate students with in-state students
- Further reduce time-to-degree in order to graduate students faster, including by making time-to-degree a performance-based funding metric, expanding scheduled classroom hours, fully implementing year-round schooling, implementing block tuition, increasing Bright Futures hours requirements, providing cash bonuses to students for early graduation, and counting credits from accelerated programs toward excess hour limits
- Take no action and let the market determine solutions for managing increased baccalaureate degree demand

Lastly, we recommend that the state create a Higher Education Enrollment Estimating Conference to develop a system-wide higher education enrollment forecast, both short-term and long-term. This conference should be based on the work of the Legislature’s Office of Economic and Demographic Research performed in response to a 2007 legislative mandate for such a report.

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Source: State University System of Florida. (2022, November). *2025 System Strategic Plan*.
https://www.fibog.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/2025_System_Strategic_Plan_Amended_Nov_2022.pdf

The State University System of Florida

Regulated by the Board of Governors, the State University System (SUS) is composed of 12 universities located throughout the state. Their three-pronged mission is to provide high-quality degree programs that align with the state’s economic needs, conduct groundbreaking research and development to address the state’s and nation’s most challenging problems, and practice community outreach to enhance the lives of all Floridians. While all 12 universities host students from around the state, nation, and world, three universities have unique purposes. Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University is a Historically Black College & University (HBCU). The state’s two smallest colleges, Florida Polytechnic University and New College of Florida are dedicated STEM and Liberal Arts institutions, respectively. In all, state universities enroll approximately 330,000 full-time-equivalent students (student FTEs), including more than 265,000 undergraduate student FTEs, and offer more than 1,700 degree programs that generate more than 91,000 degrees at the baccalaureate, graduate, and professional levels.⁵

SUS Undergraduate Growth and the State Demand Pool

In 2014, the Legislature began moving away from enrollment-driven funding for state universities and toward providing them with performance-based funding to emphasize student quality over quantity—a successful endeavor that has led to Florida having the #1 higher education system in the country for the past six years and higher national rankings for Florida’s public institutions. Due in part to this shift and related Board of Governors’ policy guidance and individual universities’ enrollment decisions, undergraduate enrollment at state universities is expected to grow at a rate of less than 1% between 2020 and 2027.⁶ In fact, the state’s five-largest institutions have essentially frozen enrollment or plan on decreasing enrollment.⁷

However, a decision to significantly slow or freeze enrollment growth does not appear to be aligned with projected increases in Florida’s demand pool for a state university education. Research shows

Enrollment Planning

Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Enrollment | Undergraduate Level

ACTUAL	FAMU	FAU	FGCU	FIU	FPOLY	FSU	NCF	UCF	UF	UNF	USF	UWF	SUS
2016-17	7,435	21,437	11,870	37,254	1,242	32,195	952	48,602	35,034	12,303	34,215	8,497	251,035
2017-18	7,642	21,439	12,118	38,534	1,361	32,408	937	50,180	36,292	12,839	34,837	8,507	257,093
2018-19	7,768	21,922	12,449	39,896	1,266	32,257	879	52,423	37,786	13,282	34,992	8,445	263,363
2019-20	7,527	22,306	12,476	40,823	1,171	32,933	765	53,350	38,124	13,643	35,306	8,314	266,737
2020-21	7,076	23,151	12,678	41,043	1,196	32,583	710	55,920	38,420	13,401	35,596	8,406	270,178
1YR % Δ	-6	4	2	1	2	-1	-7	5	1	-2	1	1	1
GOALS	FAMU	FAU	FGCU	FIU	FPOLY	FSU	NCF	UCF	UF	UNF	USF	UWF	SUS
2021-22	6,984	22,025	12,789	40,041	1,238	33,238	693	53,712	38,185	13,061	35,734	8,071	265,771
2022-23	7,189	22,034	12,872	39,394	1,238	33,320	675	53,780	38,185	13,430	35,117	8,207	265,441
2023-24	7,325	22,043	13,002	40,062	1,566	32,680	690	53,830	38,185	14,090	35,299	8,276	267,048
2024-25	7,525	22,052	13,136	40,478	1,835	32,990	720	53,810	38,185	15,210	35,850	8,354	270,145
2025-26	7,703	22,063	13,268	40,771	2,031	32,000	760	53,780	38,185	15,650	36,400	8,424	271,035
2027-28	7,813	22,081	13,539	40,771	2,234	31,620	860	53,710	38,185	16,500	36,477	8,450	272,240
7YR % Δ	10	-5	7	-1	87	-3	21	-4	-1	23	2	1	0.8

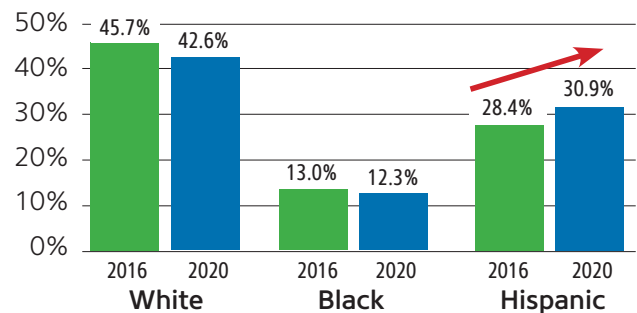
Source: State University System of Florida. (2022, September 14). *2022 System Accountability Plan: Summary*. https://www.flbog.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/2022_SYSTEM_Accountability_Plan_Final.pdf



that the main long-term driver of higher education enrollment is population growth.⁸ While it is true that “as with any forecasting effort, the further out in time one looks, the less accurate the projection is likely to be,” Florida, the fastest growing state in the nation in 2021-22, is expected to continue growing over the next 20 years.⁹ Between 2020 and 2030, Florida is projected to add approximately 170,000 18-24 year-olds (the main age-range for undergraduates) and approximately 800,000 25-54 year-olds (adult learners).¹⁰ While Florida’s population growth is expected to slow between 2030 and 2040, the state is still expected to add approximately 120,000 18-24 year-olds and 700,000 25-54 year-olds during that decade.¹¹ Furthermore, the growth in the Hispanic population is expected to outstrip the other races—significant because nationally, between 2013 and 2017, a 40% increase in the number of Hispanic students enrolled at public four-year

universities was a primary driver of increased enrollments.¹² Hispanic student growth has also been evident in the SUS.

Percentage of SUS Undergraduate Enrollment



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

18-24 Year-old

	2010	2020	2030	2040
All Races	1,739,854	1,852,548	2,025,147	2,144,140
White	866,371	806,300	776,364	834,067
Black	359,742	370,172	406,051	444,767
Hispanic	456,716	609,917	761,982	776,063

25-54 Year-old

	2010	2020	2030	2040
All Races	7,463,561	7,967,983	8,759,948	9,449,803
White	4,124,820	3,815,265	3,824,833	3,937,684
Black	1,209,042	1,418,329	1,633,451	1,767,502
Hispanic	1,863,535	2,434,287	2,973,432	3,384,402

Source: University of Florida Bureau of Economic and Business Research. (2021, June). *Population Projections By Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin For Florida and Its Counties, 2025–2045, With Estimates for 2020*. https://bebr.livewire-web-applications.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/projections_2021_asrh.pdf

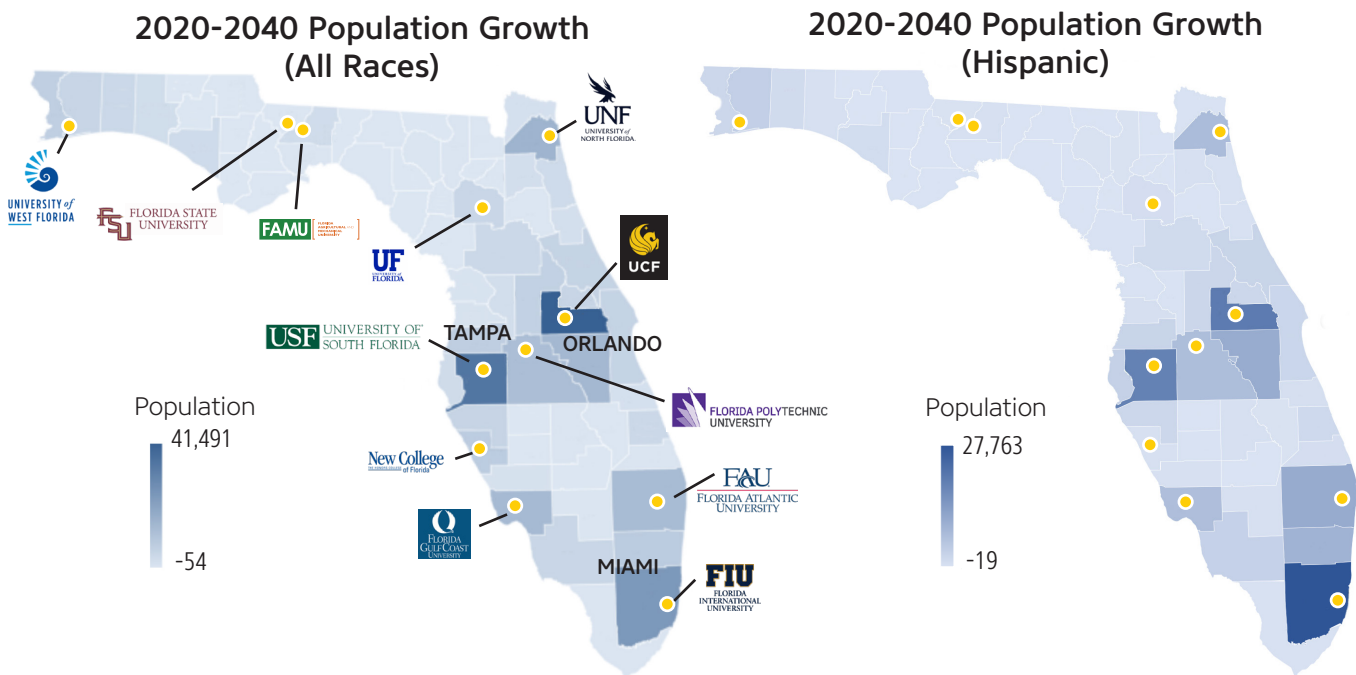
Policy Options

This report examines ways that the SUS might manage its growth in undergraduate students over the long-term. While the following five policy options are not expected to be implemented in a year (or even five years), given the current slowing or freezing of SUS universities' projected enrollment, it is important that the state start considering this issue now or face more difficult growth management decisions down the line. Additionally, it is important to note that these policy options are not mutually exclusive and, thus, could be implemented in combination.

POLICY OPTION #1: Fund additional undergraduate enrollment growth where the population growth will be occurring

Over the next two decades, population growth in Florida is expected to center around the I-4 corridor (Tampa and Orlando) and Southeast

Florida (Miami), with most of that growth being Hispanic in nature.



Source: University of Florida Bureau of Economic and Business Research. (2021, June). *Population Projections By Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin For Florida and Its Counties, 2025–2045, With Estimates for 2020*. https://bebr.livewire-web-applications.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/projections_2021_asrh.pdf

These areas align with the local markets of the University of South Florida (Tampa), the University of Central Florida (Orlando), and Florida International University (Miami). And while these universities serve students from around the state, location is the most commonly cited reason for why students choose their institution of attendance — ahead of affordability, school reputation and fit,

and preparation for a good job or career.¹³ While location is slightly more important among those who earned a two-year degree, Strada and Gallup found that it is the most common answer among those with four-year degrees as well.¹⁴

Thus, this policy option focuses on on performance and enrollment funding for the Florida Consortium

of Metropolitan Research Universities, composed of UCF, USF, and FIU. Collectively, these universities serve half of the students in the SUS and, more importantly, they're located in the areas where population growth is expected to occur most over the next 10 to 20 years.¹⁵ These universities would need to maintain their high levels of performance to receive additional enrollment funding. (USF was #2, FIU #3, and UCF #5 in the 2022 ranking for performance-based funding.)¹⁶ And we would need to equalize undergraduate funding for both UCF and FIU, which currently receive approximately \$2,000 less per student than the state average. Such a deficit hurts the universities' ability to provide services for their students, especially those in high-cost STEM majors.

SUMMARY: The Legislature could fund additional enrollment growth at the metropolitan universities and equalize per student undergraduate funding where appropriate.

Sources: Estimates based on 2022 *General Appropriations Act*. State University System of Florida. (2022, September 14). *2022 System Accountability Plan: Summary*. https://www.flbog.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/2022_SYSTEM_Accountability_Plan_Final.pdf. State University System of Florida. *Tuition and Required Fees, 2021-22*. <https://www.flbog.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/2021-2022-SUS-Tuition-and-Fees-Report.pdf>

Education & General Funding per Undergraduate FTE	
NCF	\$38,679
FPU	\$27,854
FAMU	\$9,685
FSU	\$8,687
UF	\$6,934
USF	\$6,828
SUS	\$6,489
FGCU	\$6,266
UWF	\$6,218
UNF	\$5,862
FAU	\$5,800
UCF	\$4,422
FIU	\$4,375

POLICY OPTION #2: Efficiently, effectively, and appropriately capitalize on distance learning for undergraduates

The SUS defines distance learning as a “course in which at least 80% of the direct instruction of the course is delivered using some form of technology when the student and instructor are separated by time or space, or both.”¹⁷ In 2019 (the year

before the Covid pandemic), 78% of undergraduate students enrolled in at least one distance learning course.¹⁸ Moreover, Florida ranks 2nd in the nation for the percentage of students enrolled in distance learning.¹⁹

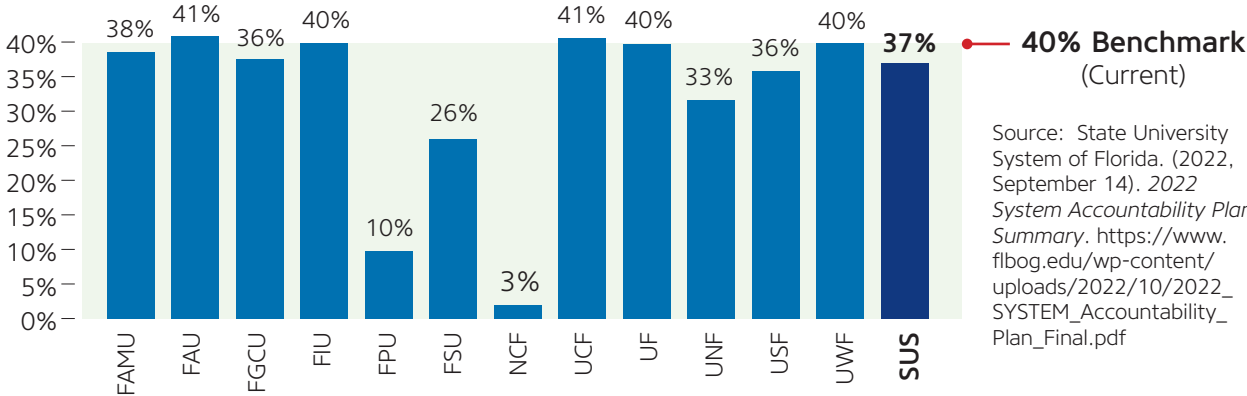
Distance learning has been a university strategy for meeting undergraduate growth in recent years. In fact, both the overall SUS and 7 out of the 10 state universities offering distance learning have added distance learning students at a faster pace than students overall. (New College of Florida and Florida Polytechnic University did not offer distance learning.) Additionally, UF Online, which was created in 2013 to provide “high quality, fully online baccalaureate degree programs at an affordable cost,” enrolled 4,524 students in 2019.²⁰

2016-2020 Change in Full-Time Equivalent Students (FTEs)			
	Change in Total FTEs	Change in Distance Learning FTEs	Net Distance Learning FTEs
FAMU	-259	890	1,149
FAU	998	2,386	1,388
FGCU	747	302	-445
FIU	4,311	6,136	1,825
FSU	1,321	3,156	1,835
UCF	6,070	6,030	-40
UF	4,442	3,712	-730
UNF	1,651	1,790	139
USF	1,087	2,509	1,422
UWF	-214	682	896
SUS	20,154	27,593	7,439

Green = Added Distance Learning FTEs faster than Total FTEs

Sources: State University of Florida. (2021, June 23). *Online Education 2020 Annual Report*. <https://www.flbog.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/FINAL-2020-Annual-Report-for-Online-Education.pdf>. State University System of Florida. (2021, September 1). *2021 System Accountability Plan: Summary*. https://www.flbog.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/2021_SYSTEM_Accountability_Plan_Final.pdf

Projected 2025-2026 Percentage of Undergraduate Student FTEs Enrolled in Distance Learning



The current benchmark for the percentage of undergraduate student FTEs enrolled in distance learning at state universities is 40%. The SUS is projected to near that level, though the percentage varies by university.

To ensure the quality of distance learning courses, such courses must meet certain standards and pass an approved review process. Additionally, faculty must have related professional development. As a result, SUS institutions have had their distance learning programs rated highly by *Best Colleges* and *U.S. News & World Report*.

There are both pros and cons to distance learning. On the pro side, it can help place-bound and nontraditional students and, under certain circumstances, provide economies of scale and scalability. And, in fact, in 2021 undergraduate students who took one-quarter or more of their courses via distance learning graduated, on average, in 3.33 - 3.75 years while students who took no courses via distance learning graduated, on average, in 4.92 years.²¹ On the con side, distance

learning is inappropriate for some courses such as hands-on science, engineering, and fine arts classes, and there are questions regarding whether it provides the same learning experience as in-person classes.

But what do students think? If distance learning is to be a university growth management tool, knowing the perspectives of the consumer is key. To that end, the Council of 100 partnered with the Florida Student Association to conduct a first-of-its-kind widespread survey of currently enrolled state university students to obtain their input. We asked them questions about their perspectives on distance learning and received more than 5,000 responses from undergraduate students at the 10 state universities that offer distance learning.²² 84% of responses were from students younger than 25 years-old (“younger”), and 16% were from students at least 25 years-old (“older”)—very similar to the overall distribution of such undergraduate students in the SUS.²³ Of the younger students, 60% were in the upper division, while 40% were either freshmen or sophomores.

Online Colleges and Universities Rankings

Best Colleges: Best Online Colleges and Universities

UF Online #4, UCF #5

U.S. News & World Report Online Colleges and Universities: Best Online Bachelor’s Programs

UF #3, UCF #14

U.S. News & World Report Online Colleges and Universities: Best Online Bachelor’s in Business Programs

UF #1, FIU #11

U.S. News & World Report Online Colleges and Universities: Best Online Psychology Programs

UF #2, UCF #6

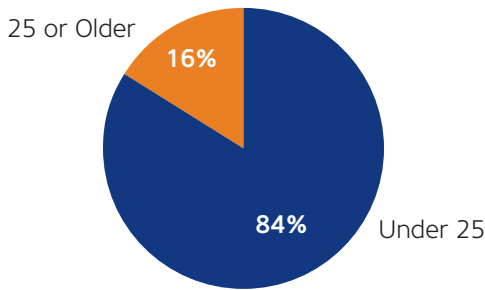
Source: State University System of Florida. (2021, June 23). *Online Education 2020 Annual Report*. <https://www.flbog.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/FINAL-2020-Annual-Report-for-Online-Education.pdf>

In general, students who completed the survey stated that they prefer taking a mix of in-person and online courses over taking them all in-person or all online. Approximately one-quarter of younger respondents reported that they prefer taking all their classes in-person, but 60% prefer taking a mix of in-person and online courses. However, while older respondents were more likely to

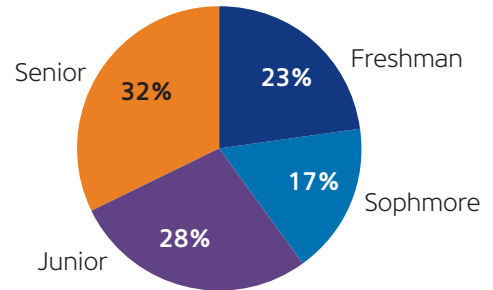
prefer taking online classes than their younger counterparts (35% vs. 11%), nearly half of older students expressed that they still like taking a mix of in-person and online classes.

So why did students who completed the survey prefer taking a mix of courses? For younger students, more than half reported that they do so because it enables them to optimize their

Response by Age

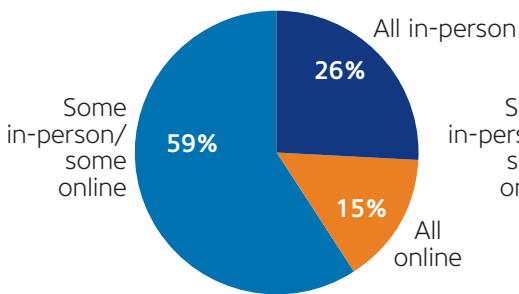


Response by Class

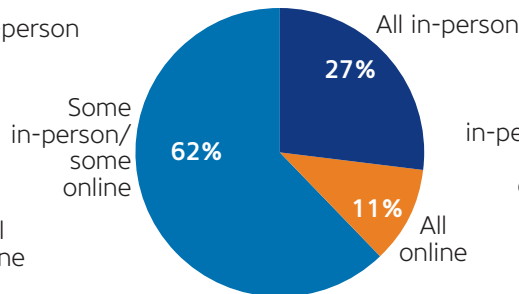


I Prefer Taking My Courses...

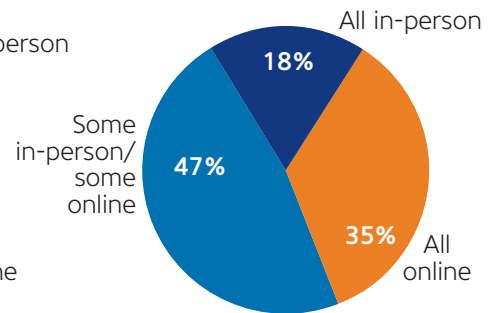
All Undergraduate Respondents



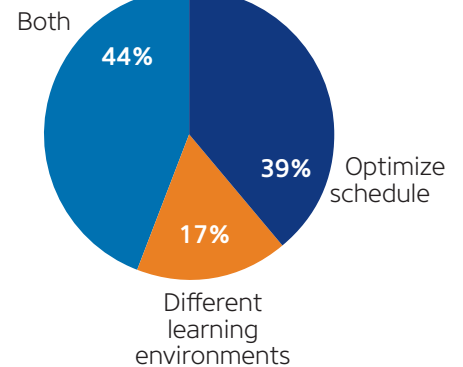
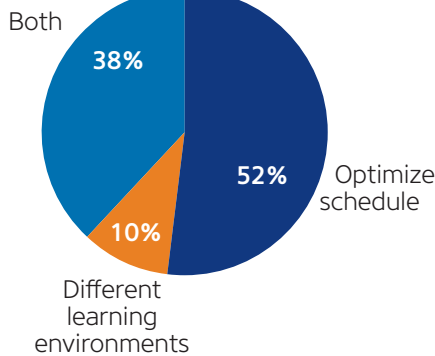
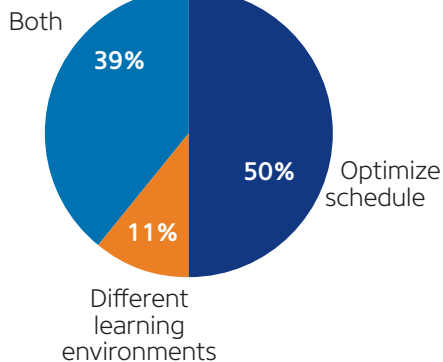
Age <25



Age 25+



I Prefer Taking Some Classes In-Person and Some Online Because...



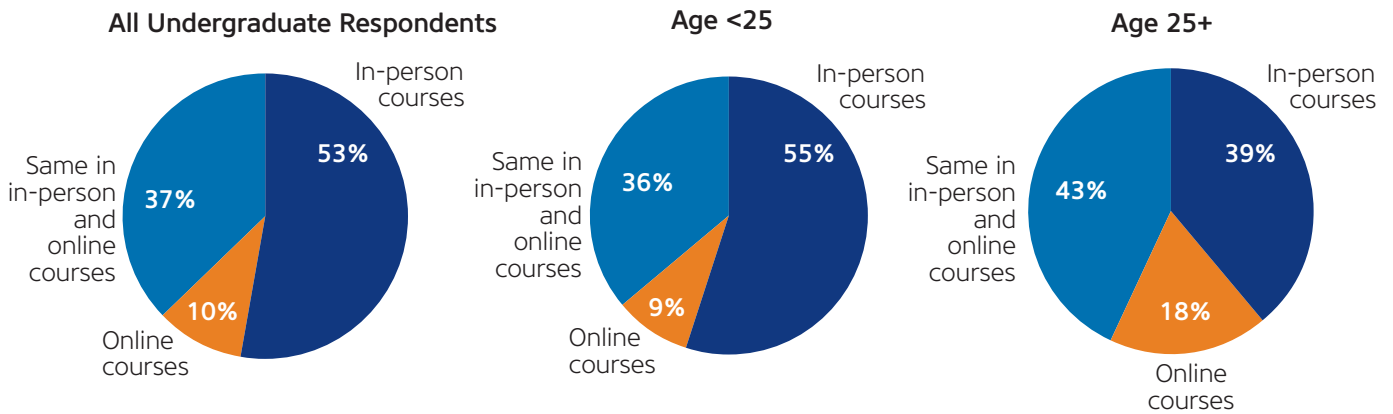
schedule, and another third expressed that they like the modality both because of schedule optimization and because they need different learning environments for different types of courses (e.g., history vs. math). Interestingly, schedule optimization is a driver for relatively fewer of the older respondents while the motivation of needing differing learning environments is relatively more important to them. That said, nearly half of older respondents cited both reasons for their preference for taking a mix of courses.

However, while student preferences are important, the perceived amount of learning relating to each modality is also important in determining the appropriateness of managing university growth via distance learning. Just over half of students who completed the survey stated that they learn more in in-person classes, and another third communicated that they learn equally as much in in-person and online courses. However, only 10% said that they learn more in online

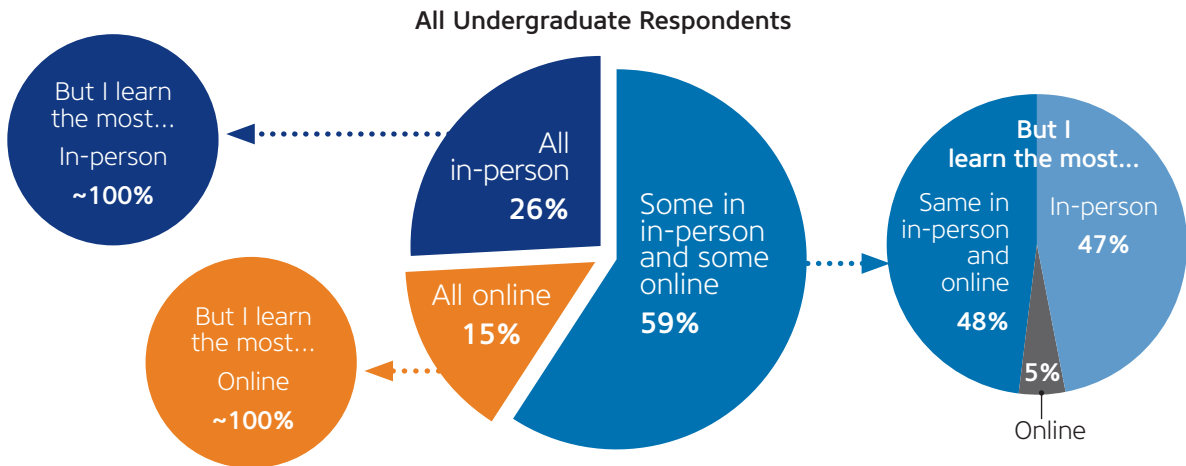
courses. Furthermore, there was almost perfect correlation between the modality of choice and perceived learning level for those responding students who reported that they prefer either all in-person courses (26% of students) or all online courses (15%). Thus, for more than a quarter of students, it is important to maintain in-person class opportunities. Furthermore, of the 59% of students who said that they prefer a mix of in-person and online courses, nearly half communicated that they learn more in in-person courses while only 5% said they learn more in online classes. (The remainder reported that they learn equally as much whether a course is in-person or online.) Thus, from a learning perspective, it would appear to be vital to maintain a prevalence of in-person courses, not only for those who prefer in-person learning but also for those who prefer a mix of courses.

We also asked undergraduate students about the ways they believe online learning at their universities could be improved. While approximately

I Learn the Most in...



I Prefer Taking My Courses...



I've had some trouble with online teachers' lack of communication. Emailing and inboxing them with no response back is quite hard when dealing with online school. It's our only source of communication.

– Anonymous Student

It would be nice if some instructors would return calls and emails when receiving them about the assignments from students. Also, I think that they should check on students to see if they need any help.

– Anonymous Student

There are many professors that when assigned to online, they simply forget about them. They open all the assignments up but do not respond to email, don't grade in a timely manner, and overall don't tend to their online classes.

– Anonymous Student

40% of younger students and nearly half of older students who completed the survey reported that their online experiences had been satisfactory, 40% also cited the need to improve instruction and/or course structure or material. Only about a fifth of students cited technological improvement as an area of need.

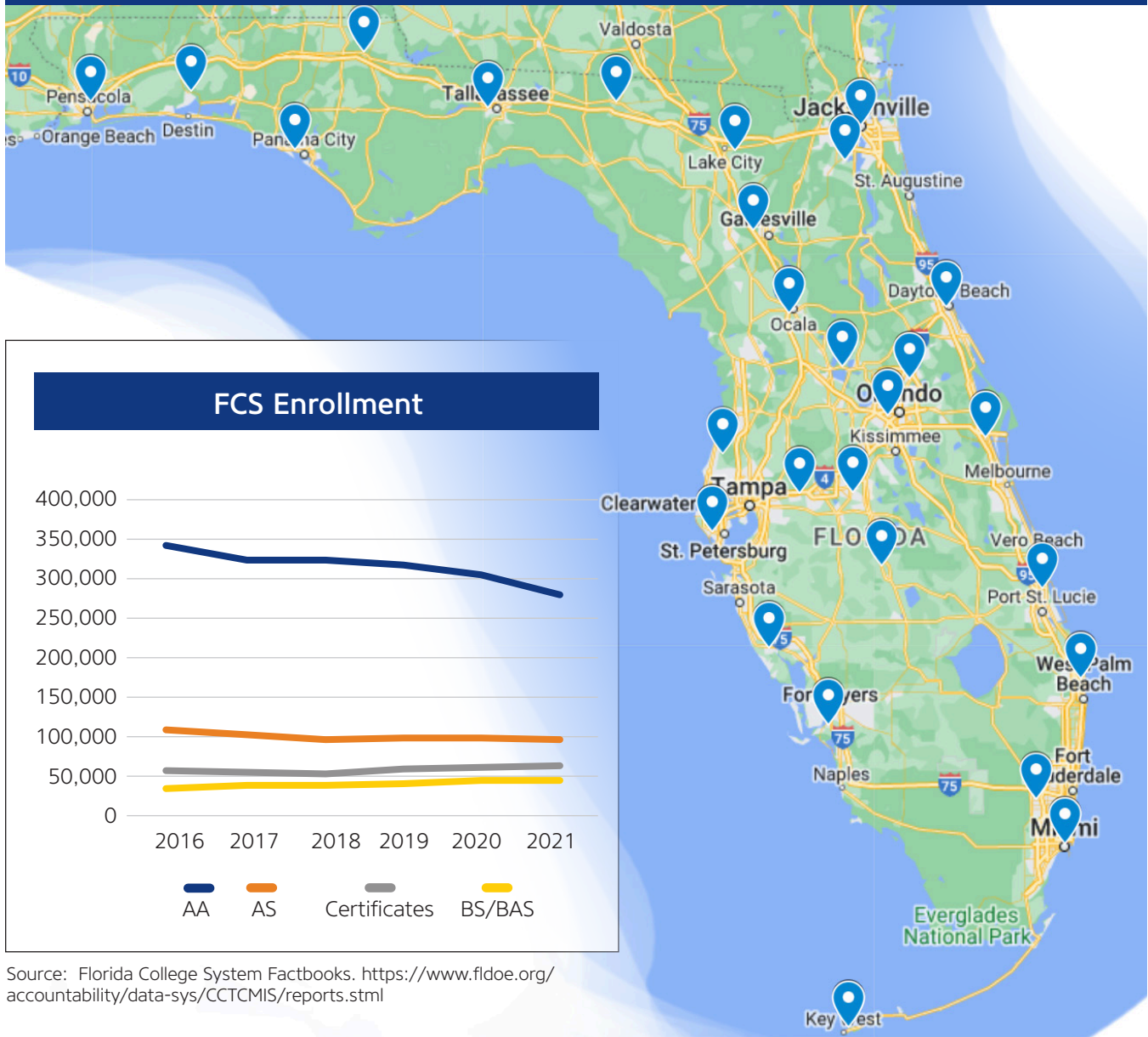
More specifically, enhancements to the online experience might be more important outside the classroom than in it. Several students who completed the survey said that a major problem with online learning is a lack of interaction between student and professor. As one student stated, "Interaction between instructor and student is key to understanding and absorbing content, clarifying confusion, and obtaining feedback for improvement." Student access to timely teacher assistance and feedback may be an area in need of improvement as demonstrated by this sample of students' open-ended survey responses.

SUMMARY: A majority of undergraduate students who completed the survey reported that they prefer to take a mix of online and in-person classes, mostly as a way to optimize their schedules, though that preference varies some by age. However, it appears that, while online courses may be popular with responding students from a scheduling standpoint,

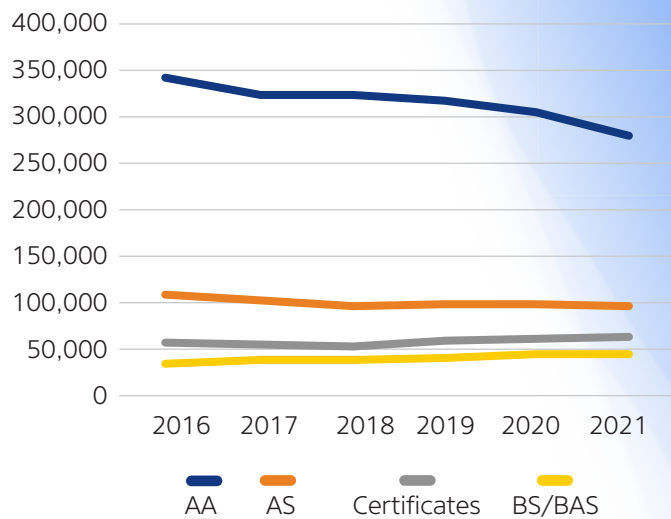
in-person courses remain very necessary due to student choice, differences in subject-matter, and perceived amount of learning that takes place. Thus, the SUS should tread carefully as it expands distance learning. That said, as state universities expand the delivery of online classes to meet student demand, the development of new online classes should occur with careful deliberation and include demonstrated quality standards for online course delivery, faculty professional development, and technological advances.

One cautionary note, however, is that survey respondents' only experiences with online learning may have been during the Covid pandemic when universities were required to convert in-person classes to remote learning in a short span of time. In fact, the percentage of students taking an online class increased from 78% to 99% during the pandemic.²⁴ This change in course delivery might not have been of the same overall quality as online courses created under more rigorous standards before or after that time.

Florida College System



FCS Enrollment



Source: Florida College System Factbooks. <https://www.fldoe.org/accountability/data-sys/CCTCMIS/reports.html>

POLICY OPTION #3:

Capitalize on the Florida College System to further help the state meet its baccalaureate degree needs

Governed by the State Board of Education, the Florida College System (FCS) is composed of 28 institutions located throughout the state, serving nearly 650,000 students.²⁵ Having distinct service areas, the FCS provides options for place-bound students or students who live far away from universities.

Enrollment has declined at state colleges over the past few years, with the effect being most

pronounced in the Associate of Arts programs. Conversely, participation in and graduation from baccalaureate degree programs has been on the rise with approximately 47,000 enrollees and more than 11,000 graduates in 2020-2021.²⁶

State colleges offer at least one of two types of baccalaureate degrees: a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) and a Bachelor of Applied Science (B.A.S.). Programs are approved in select areas with

demonstrated workforce needs (e.g., nursing, information technology, education).

Statutory authorization for state colleges to offer baccalaureate degree programs comes with several stipulations, including:

- There must be an emphasis on place-bound, nontraditional students needing local access to baccalaureate degree programs.
- Local workforce demand and unmet need must exist.
- The programs can't alter the FCS

mission of preparing students directly for careers requiring less than baccalaureate degrees.

- The programs must pass a strict approval process including consideration of alternative solutions from the public and private universities in the state.

Our committee has three policy options for ways that state colleges can take some of the pressure off state universities to provide more baccalaureate degree graduates to meet the state's long-term demand.

POLICY OPTION 3A

Increase the number of joint- or concurrent-use agreements between universities and colleges

As mentioned above, state colleges may only offer workforce-related B.S. and B.A.S. degrees. However, a handful of state universities already have some joint- or concurrent-use agreements where the university teaches general B.A. and other programs on an FCS campus (e.g., Northwest Florida State College and the University of West Florida). This could help solve the problem of students seeking B.A. and non-local-workforce-related B.S. degrees who are geographically place-bound (e.g., have a job in the area) or live far away from universities.

A joint-use partnership program is a partnership program offered at FCS/university joint-use facilities ("co-owned" facilities on an FCS site). Joint-use includes upper-division programs taking place in facilities that are recognized on the official "Florida College System Designated Sites for PECO Funding" report. These sites have all been funded through the Florida Legislature.

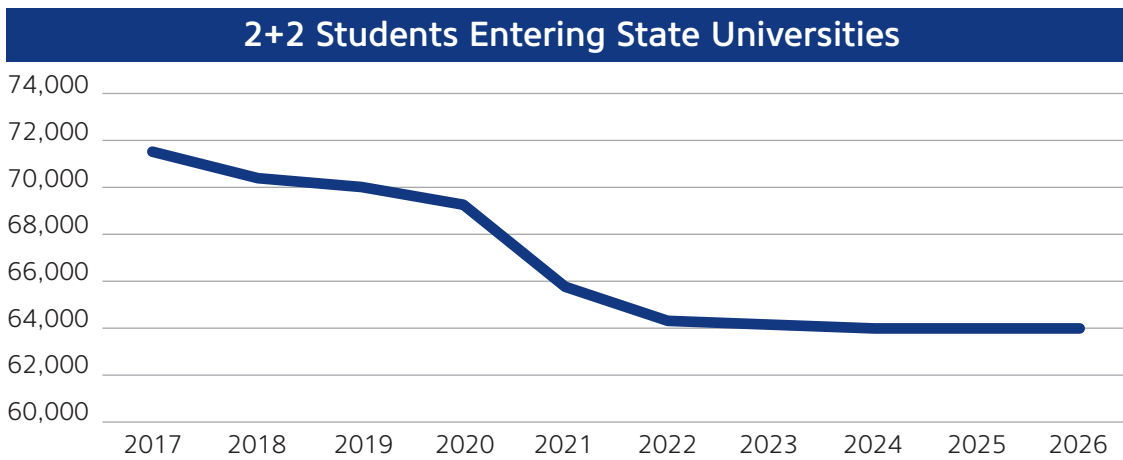
Concurrent-use includes all upper-division programs offered at Florida College System (FCS) facilities in partnership with four-year public or private institutions. The degree is conferred by another institution, but the upper-division courses for the program are conducted at the Florida College System campus.

POLICY OPTION 3B

Incentivize state colleges to offer more B.S. and B.A.S. degrees

In 2022, the Florida Legislature created the Linking Industry to Nursing Education Fund (LINE). LINE is a competitive grant opportunity for school district tech centers, state colleges, and independent nonprofit colleges and universities in Florida created to incentivize collaboration between nursing education programs and health care partners to combat the growing nursing

shortage in the state. LINE provides matching funds, on a dollar-to-dollar basis, to participating agencies that partner with certain health care providers needing more nurses. A similar program could be established to provide matching funds relating to businesses needing more FCS baccalaureate degree graduates in certain locations or fields.



Source: State University System of Florida. (2022, September 14). *2022 System Accountability Plan: Summary*. https://www.flbog.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/2022_SYSTEM_Accountability_Plan_Final.pdf

POLICY OPTION 3C

Reinvigorate Florida’s “2+2” articulation program

Florida has a “2+2” articulation program whereby the state guarantees that a student who completes an Associate of Arts degree at a state college has the opportunity to earn a baccalaureate degree at a state university or state college that offers baccalaureate degrees. Students, though, are not guaranteed admittance to the institution of their choice. While participation in 2+2 could lessen the burden on state universities to provide lower-division courses, thus creating the possibility of serving more students overall, such participation has waned in recent years. The FCS, SUS, and Florida Talent Development Council are currently studying the program to pinpoint issues (e.g.,

unique state university prerequisites) and develop solutions.

SUMMARY: The state could use the Florida College System to absorb some growth in the state demand pool for baccalaureate degrees. Approaches could include expansion of joint- or concurrent-use agreements, creation of a matching program for investment in baccalaureate degrees, and reinvigoration of the 2+2 articulation system.

POLICY OPTION #4:

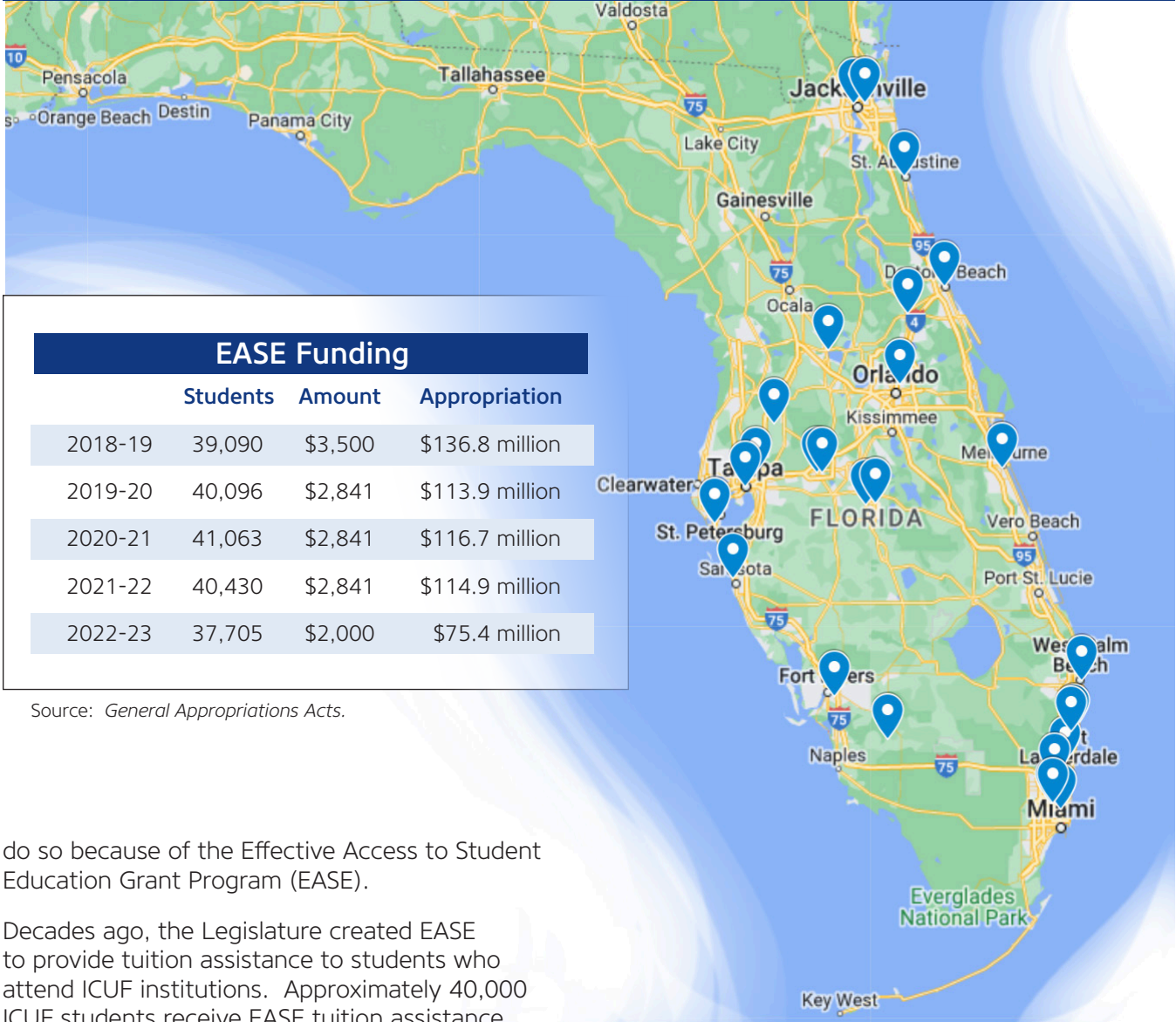
Capitalize on the flexible capacity of nonprofit colleges and universities

There are 30 private, nonprofit Independent Colleges and Universities (ICUF) in Florida, serving approximately 160,000 students.²⁷ Spread throughout the state, 6 are official Hispanic Serving Institutions, and 3 are Historically Black Colleges and Universities. ICUF institutions currently award approximately 20% of baccalaureate degrees annually in the state.²⁸ Compared to the state universities, ICUF institutions have lower student-to-faculty ratios, a similar degree mix, and a similar full-time to part-time student ratio, but they

generally serve an older population of students.²⁹

As expressed by the Florida Legislature, the state believes that a “strong and viable system of independent nonprofit colleges and universities reduces the tax burden on the citizens of the state.”³⁰ Why? Simply put, under conditions in which state universities have reached capacity as evidenced by restricted or frozen enrollment, ICUF institutions can produce baccalaureate degrees at a fraction of what it costs state universities to

Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida (ICUF)



EASE Funding

	Students	Amount	Appropriation
2018-19	39,090	\$3,500	\$136.8 million
2019-20	40,096	\$2,841	\$113.9 million
2020-21	41,063	\$2,841	\$116.7 million
2021-22	40,430	\$2,841	\$114.9 million
2022-23	37,705	\$2,000	\$75.4 million

Source: General Appropriations Acts.

do so because of the Effective Access to Student Education Grant Program (EASE).

Decades ago, the Legislature created EASE to provide tuition assistance to students who attend ICUF institutions. Approximately 40,000 ICUF students receive EASE tuition assistance annually.³¹ Such assistance often plays a major role in students' financial aid packages that enable them to attend ICUF schools. In fact, almost half of ICUF students have families with income less than \$60,000, and 8 of the 10 Florida public and independent universities with the highest percentages of students from families with income below \$60,000 are ICUF institutions.³² And the average per capita debt for ICUF graduates is only marginally higher than for state university students (\$6,300).³³

EASE grants are an effective way for the state to produce baccalaureate degrees at a lower cost than what it costs the state to educate undergraduate students (\$8,900 per student per year plus the significant cost of providing infrastructure).³⁴

Moreover, ICUF baccalaureate degree programs are easily scalable based on demand. That said, due to differing legislative policy perspectives, EASE funding has decreased from \$3,500 per student a few years ago to \$2,000 per student in 2022-2023. EASE funding could be increased as long as ICUF schools exceed certain performance benchmarks, such as graduation rate and post-graduation student employment outcomes.³⁵

SUMMARY: The Legislature could increase funding for the EASE tuition assistance program as long as participating institutions exceed certain performance benchmarks.

POLICY OPTION #5:

Expand Credit for Prior Learning to include work experience

A primary educational principle has long been learning from experience. According to John Dewey, academic philosopher and early proponent of education reform, in order for both the individual learner and society to fully benefit, education “must be based on experience - which is always the actual life experience of some individual.”³⁶ However, it is only now that the concept of measuring learning purely based on seat-time is becoming anachronistic. In fact, it is increasingly being recognized that valuable knowledge and skills can be obtained through work experience in addition to sitting in college classrooms.

When I submitted my portfolio, I was awarded 18 credit hours for my computer-related work experience. That’s the equivalent of over half a year of college (6 classes).

– *Anonymous Student*

Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) can be defined as “academic credit granted for demonstrated college-level equivalencies gained through learning experiences outside of the college classroom, using one of the well-established methods for assessing extra-institutional learning, including third-party validation of formal training or individualized assessment, such as portfolios.”³⁷ In short, it means converting one’s prior work experience, military training, or education into college credit toward specific courses in a degree program to reduce the duration of the program.

CPL has many benefits. Research from the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning and the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education found that adult students who used CPL were 17% more likely to graduate than those without CPL, and their time-to-degree was shortened by 9-14 months.³⁸ Another study validated similar results across ethnicity, gender, age, and socio-economic status lines.³⁹ Still other studies showed that students who earn CPL have better academic outcomes than their non-CPL peers.⁴⁰

CPL can be awarded based on several different types of documentation, including standardized exam scores, military experience, certificates, licenses, corporate training, and academic portfolios. Many schools like Berklee College of

Music and Central Michigan University provide credit for work experience that is typically evidenced by a portfolio. A portfolio must provide evidence that the work experience is aligned with a course’s learning objectives. It can include items such as a narrative explaining why the experience is worthy of academic credit, letters from employers, reports, presentations, certifications earned, etc. From the university’s perspective, a portfolio should be assessed by trained experts on the topic for which the student seeks credit.

Currently, Florida articulation rules provide for state universities to accept CPL based on the results of various standardized exams. These tests include:

- Advanced Placement (AP);
- International Baccalaureate (IB);
- Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE);
- Defense Subject Standardized Test (DSST);
- Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT);
- UExcel (credit-by-exam program offered through an alliance between Pearson, an education company, and Excelsior College); and
- College-Level Examination Program (CLEP).

Awarding a student credit for their documented outside-the-classroom learning could help them move through their degree program more expeditiously, thus freeing space for new enrollment. The state could also formally emphasize the use of ePortfolios to document the CPL earned by students who might have on-the-job experience that has provided them with skills equivalent to or even better than a related course.

SUMMARY: The state could formally push for the recognition of CPL for work experience and the utilization of ePortfolios as a means of documenting CPL-related knowledge and skills.

Recommendation

Lastly, we recommend that the state create a Higher Education Enrollment Estimating Conference to develop a system-wide higher education enrollment forecast, both short-term and long-term.

In fact, Chapter 2007-246, *Laws of Florida*, required the Legislature's Office of Economic and Demographic Research (EDR) to "conduct a study of the higher education enrollment forecasting models currently used in the state. The study must analyze the current models and provide options for improvements. The review shall specifically examine ways to include Florida's changing demographics in the forecasts."⁴¹

The EDR's detailed methodological recommendations can be found on pages 23-25, but, in short, the report recommended the following:

- Creation of a new estimating conference, the Higher Education Enrollment Estimating Conference.
- Development of a system-wide higher education enrollment forecast.
- Activation of all existing conferences, with slightly revised roles, subject to the new Higher Education Enrollment Estimating Conference.
- Production of uniform consensus products by public delivery system:
 - o Prior year actual enrollment and FTE
 - o Current year enrollment and FTE
 - o Constitutionally required three out-year forecast

We propose that such a conference also provide longer-term estimates of the statewide demand pool for higher education.

Legislature’s Office of Economic and Demographic Research 2008 Recommendations re: Higher Education Enrollment Estimating Conference



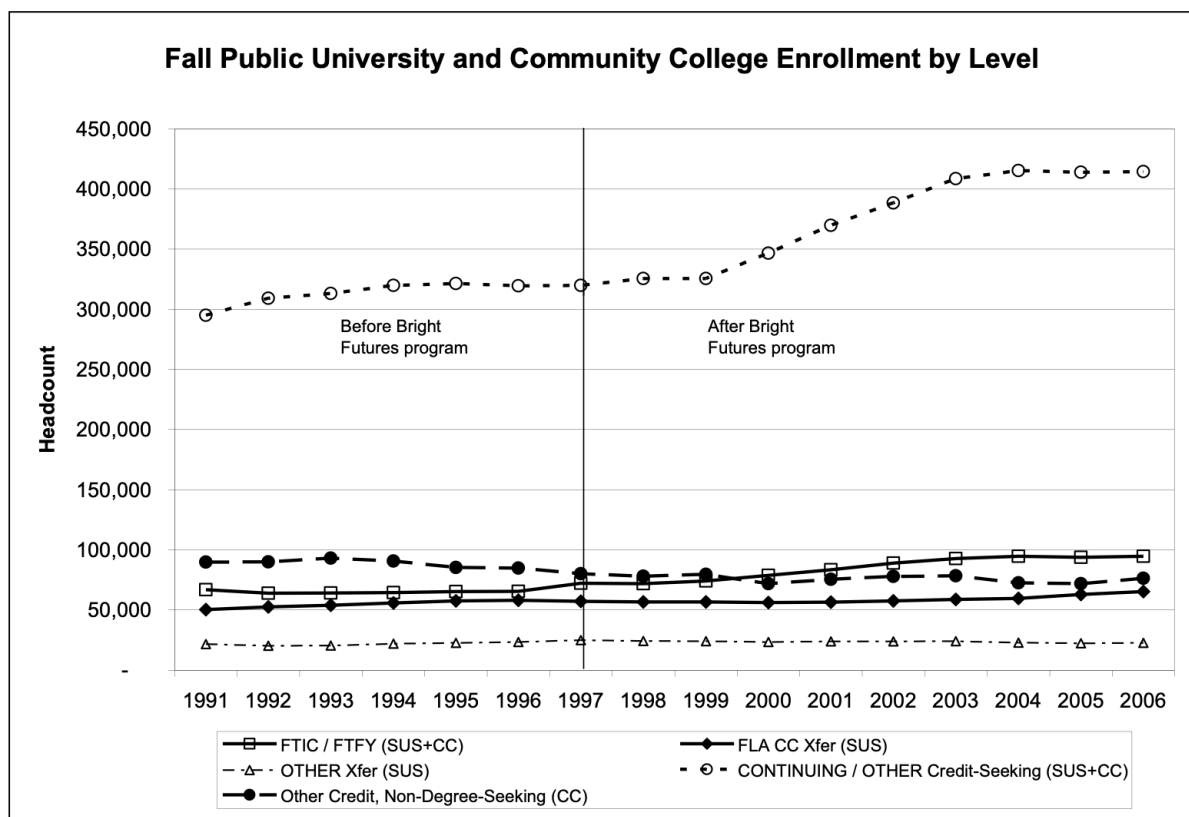
Estimating enrollment in a single delivery system fails to account for the interactive nature of postsecondary enrollment. Estimating a state-level demand pool provides a way to control for this interplay among delivery systems.

For example, entry to postsecondary education in both universities and community colleges can begin immediately after graduation. However, entry at the university level is constrained by enrollment “targets”, while entry to the community college system is open to all high school graduates and GED certificate holders. When the first-time student completes an associate’s degree, the university system is committed to accepting that student into the university system. (However, there is no guarantee of admission to a particular school or course sequence.) Thus, university enrollment policies that limit first-time-in-college enrollment may result, two to three years later, in a larger transfers-from-community-college cohort. Trends in enrollment at public community colleges

and universities are shown in the chart below. An example of policy effects may be revealed by the rise of First Time in College students and Continuing students visible from the start of the Bright Futures Scholarship Program in 1997. At both public universities and community colleges, behavior of continuing students is responsible for the largest amount of enrollment.

To more accurately measure policy impacts on postsecondary education enrollment as a whole requires consistency of assumptions within and across the delivery systems. Policy choices made at any level can, and do, impact all the delivery systems. This is true for policies set at the state level as well as policies developed by each institution.

Moreover, emerging trends can be more easily identified and incorporated at the statewide level. Integration of knowledge gained through other conferences is a particularly important component



of this process. Through the official long-range forecasts from other conferences, estimates forming a consistent state picture will emerge. Florida's changing demographics can best be addressed in this manner.

Setting up a process that establishes a preliminary top-down enrollment demand estimate, based on quantitative data, together with a robust review by delivery systems and individual institutions before a final estimate is adopted, will provide a more integrated and policy-driven view of enrollment. The process would begin by determining the total demand for higher education enrollment at a state-level estimating conference. This conference should be formulated in the same manner as the other statutorily created conferences. Inputs to the demand calculations would come from a variety of existing conferences and data. For example, the Florida Demographic Estimating Conference would provide estimates and forecasts of changing demographic trends, age group composition and ethnic mix. The Florida Economic Estimating Conference would provide the job growth forecasts that may impact enrollment. Florida high school graduates including disaggregated data by ethnicity could continue to be reported and forecast by the Department of Education. Out-of-State students are reported by the public sector and by the private not-for-profit sector in reports currently produced.

From the initial demand value, the level of public postsecondary enrollment would be calculated. Leakages from the public sector would include students who do not choose to continue their education, students who choose to attend out-of-state institutions, and students who elect to attend private not-for-profit and private for-profit institutions. Initially, leakages would be estimated based on existing data from prior years; however, data would be developed over the life of the conference that could render these estimates more precise over time.

Once a state level public sector demand has been established, current policies and/or relationships could be used to allocate the demand into the appropriate delivery systems. Policy decisions both within delivery systems and from state-level policymakers could impact this division. For example, if state universities elect to freeze First-Time-in-College enrollment, a larger share might be allocated to community colleges and/or the leakage to the private sector and to out-of-state schools might increase.

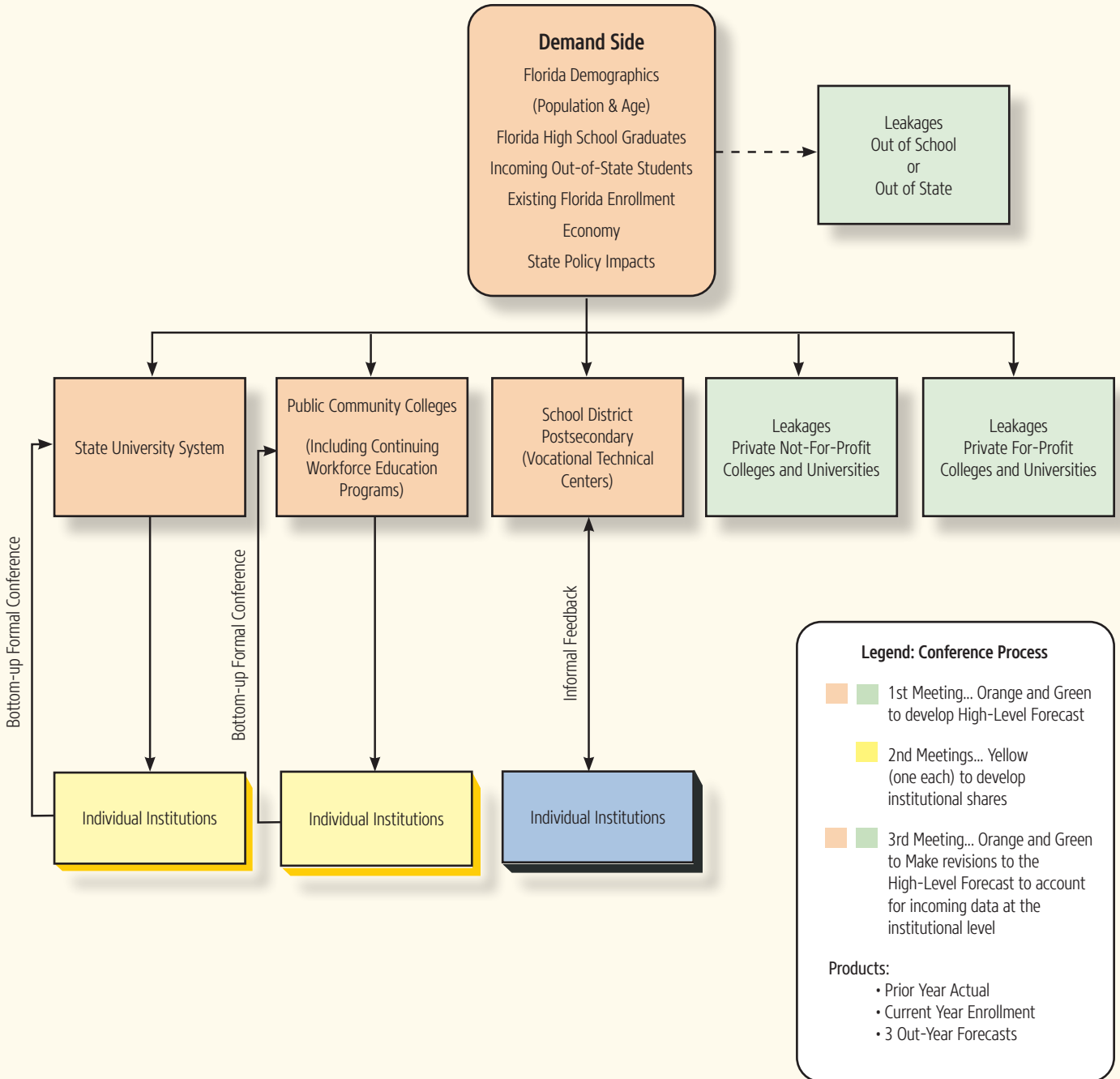
When state level estimates have been established, each delivery system would transmit those estimates to the individual institutions for review. Suggested adjustments to the estimates would require justification and explanation. Separate conferences would be held for the state university system and the community colleges to consider adjustments to the base demand estimate. At these conferences, headcount estimates could be converted to FTE estimates, as these conversion factors will vary by institution and program. Since there is no conference process for school district postsecondary technical centers, input from these institutions would be received informally through the Department of Education or a formal conference process could be established in the future.

Finally, the state-level conference would reconvene to adopt a final estimate, based on input from the delivery system conferences. Products of the state-level conference would be consensus on prior year actual enrollment and FTE, on current year enrollment and FTE, and on the constitutionally-required three out-year forecast for each public delivery system. The diagram on the next page illustrates the proposed structure.

Without structural and process changes, adjustments to the specific models used by the various systems will have limited effect. To produce credible and transparent forecasts for the planning and budgeting process, a more significant reform is needed. In this regard, there are four specific recommendations to improve the current process:

1. Creation of a new estimating conference, the *Higher Education Enrollment Estimating Conference*.
2. Development of a system-wide enrollment forecast.
3. Activation of all existing conferences, with slightly revised roles subject to the new *Higher Education Enrollment Estimating Conference*.
4. Production of uniform consensus products by public delivery system:
 - a. Prior year actual enrollment and FTE;
 - b. Current year enrollment and FTE;
 - c. Constitutionally required three out-year forecast.

Enrollment Estimating Conference Process Recommendations





Policy Options Considered But Tabled

The Council of 100's Talent Committee also studied several other policy options that could be potentially used to help manage undergraduate growth at state universities. However, given the nature of the drawbacks to each idea, the following six options were tabled.

■ Increase the economic incentive for serving undergraduate students by unfreezing tuition

A financial incentive exists for adding graduate students rather than undergraduate. While graduate tuition for resident students is \$9,900 annually, undergraduate tuition is only \$6,000.⁴² Moreover, undergraduate tuition has been frozen since 2014-2015 at a level that's the lowest in the country for in-state students at public 4-year institutions.⁴³ It makes sense then that the SUS is projected to add graduate students at a faster rate than undergraduate students. While the 7-year change in undergraduate students is projected to be less than 1%, the projected change for graduate students is projected to be 10%.⁴⁴

While increasing undergraduate tuition as an incentive to take on more undergraduate students makes economic sense, there are several drawbacks. For example, an increase in tuition also means more of a cost shift to the state in terms of having to pay for Bright Futures. Additionally, increasing tuition could potentially increase the debt of "doughnut" students who don't earn Bright Futures but also don't qualify for low-income PELL grants. Most importantly, though, the idea of increasing undergraduate tuition has been a political third rail, and there is no indication of that changing any time soon.

■ Build a new university(ies)

Building a new university is costly. For example, the 760 acres of land required to build Florida Gulf Coast University, which hosts approximately 13,000 undergraduate students, was donated—a \$50 million value in 1991—and the university has cost an average of \$18 million annually just

for non-debt infrastructure in inflation-adjusted terms.⁴⁵ When added to the 2022 Education & General Activity appropriation for FGCU from the General Revenue Fund, Lottery funds, and performance-based funding, the state has to pay approximately \$9,500 per student FTE, and that's not considering additional auxiliary construction (e.g., dorms) that would be needed to provide for additional students.⁴⁶

More important is the question of where to build a new university. As demonstrated earlier, population growth in Florida is projected to be spread throughout the state with concentrations in three regions, Tampa, Orlando, and Miami. Given the propensity of students to study where they live and the need to provide for the geographic dispersion of such growth, it is likely that more than one university would need to be built, meaning duplication of land, infrastructure, and overhead costs.

Lastly, building a new university is a relatively inflexible way to manage growth. As mentioned above, the longer the time horizon for population projections, the less certain they are, and given the anticipated slowing of population growth between 2030 and 2040, it will likely be important from an efficiency perspective to be able to scale-up and scale-down student services as needed.

■ Implement new construction projects on existing university campuses

The state universities already have a significant space deficit (and a deferred maintenance/capital needs deficit) even before considering taking on additional student FTEs. Every five years, a state university must undergo an education plant survey to determine the amount of usable Education & General space it has to serve students and the surplus or deficit of that space as compared to state standards. According to the state universities' education plant surveys, campuses are currently meeting only 65% of their need for classroom space and 60% of their need for overall space.⁴⁷ And that is not even considering the

need there would be for additional related facilities to meet student needs (e.g., dorms).

Additionally, for all practical purposes, there is a lack of funding for fixed capital outlay on existing campuses. The funding situation is driven by two main factors. First, currently 75% of annual Public Education Capital Outlay (PECO)-related revenue is dedicated to debt service on prior PECO projects.⁴⁸ This means that the available cash for non-bonded PECO projects is relatively low compared to overall university requests.⁴⁹ Second, if the Legislature is to fund more PECO projects than there is cash available, it must do so by using General Revenue—a funding source for which there are many competing interests.

■ **Replace out-of-state undergraduate students with in-state students**

There is a financial incentive for state universities to enroll nonresident students rather than resident students. Tuition for nonresident students is \$14,700 more than for resident students.⁵⁰ Given this incentive, the SUS has a regulation limiting the number of nonresident undergraduate students to 10% of total systemwide enrollment, and the system is up to or near its cap.⁵¹

In theory, the cap could be lowered, thus freeing up space for more resident students. However, doing so would have two drawbacks. First, universities would lose a significant source of revenue that is used to offset costs for all students. Second, campuses might suffer from a loss of intellectual power and diversity that contributes to a successful university environment.

■ **Further reduce time-to-degree in order to graduate students faster**

In short, there might not be much juice left to squeeze. The SUS's strategic plan goal for time-to-degree for first-time-in-college students in 120-hour programs is 4.0 years, and the system is already down to 4.1 years.⁵² Additionally, the goal for percent of baccalaureate degrees awarded without excess hours is 80% with the system already being at 82%.⁵³

Furthermore, we looked at several possible ways to reduce time-to-degree, but they all appear to be problematic. They include:

1. Making time-to-degree a performance-based funding metric. Currently, the SUS considers time-to-degree as a “key performance indicator.” However, it is not a metric on which university performance funding is determined. There could be a perverse incentive created if the metric were to become part of the performance-based funding system. Universities would likely strive to reduce time-to-degree even further—even to the detriment of disincentivizing valuable outside-the-classroom experiential learning, such as jobs or internships, which, according to a Council of 100 survey of businesses, make a material difference in a college student's future employability.
2. Expanding scheduled classroom hours. According to a consultant retained by the state, six state universities, including the “metropolitan universities,” already meet or exceed key standards for classroom utilization.⁵⁴ Furthermore, adding additional classes would require more faculty funding and create potentially undesirable course hours for certain students (e.g., those with jobs).
3. Fully implementing year-round schooling. Per #1 and #2, above, additional faculty funding would be necessary, and this might prevent students from engaging in experiential learning, such as internships.
4. Implementing block tuition. Block tuition plans involve students paying a set amount of tuition for a semester but being able to take as many courses as they like during that time period. This would reduce university revenue and, thus, affect other services.
5. Increasing Bright Futures hours requirements. This would potentially hurt working students.
6. Providing cash bonuses to students for early graduation. Per #1, this would reward behavior (e.g., skipping internships and other forms of experiential learning opportunities) that could be a detriment to students attempting to find and excel in jobs post-graduation.

- Counting credits from accelerated programs toward excess hour limits. Currently, credits earned through Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) do not count toward excess hours limits. Changing this could have a chilling effect on program participation if students know that credits earned in high school will limit their flexibility in college. Furthermore, it would limit career exploration in high school and college.

■ Take no action and let the market determine solutions for managing increased baccalaureate degree demand

One possibility for baccalaureate degree-seeking students for whom there is no space in the SUS is turning to the Florida College System to earn workforce-specific B.S. or B.A.S. degrees rather than, for example, B.A. degrees. An increase in the percentage of SUS students earning STEM-related baccalaureate degrees over the past 10 years might be an indication of a growing interest in B.S. and B.A.S. degrees. However, there are two considerations relating to this approach. First, B.S. degree-seeking students might not be looking for degrees tied only to an area with local workforce demand. Second, there will still be significant demand for B.A. degrees in the future, and it is unrealistic to expect that a liberal arts student can simply “flip a switch” and become a STEM major.

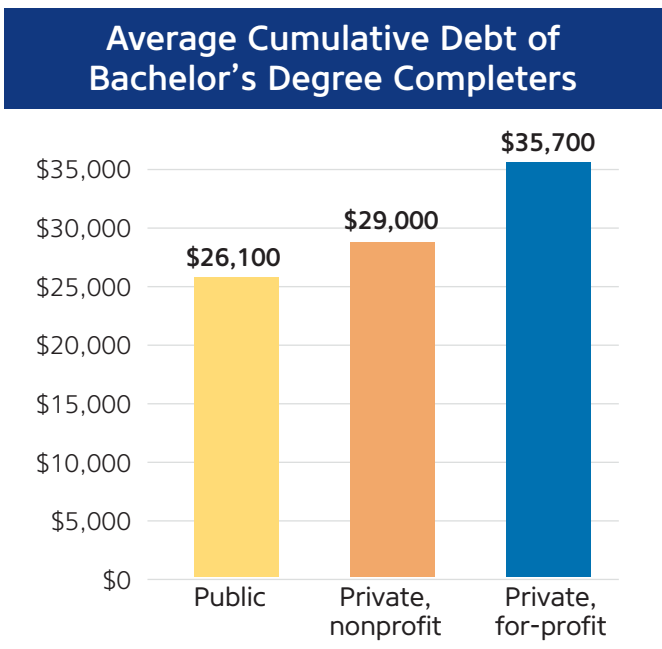
Another possibility is that baccalaureate degree-seeking students could turn to the for-profit market for a postsecondary education. However, such an action might saddle students with relatively more debt than if they were to attend a public or private nonprofit institution. Furthermore, for-profit colleges and universities are subject to relatively fewer state regulatory and accountability controls than their public and private nonprofit counterparts.

A final possibility is that baccalaureate degree-seeking students could simply leave the state and take their talents elsewhere. Unfortunately, this would represent a brain drain of students educated in the state’s

high-performing PreK-12 system. Furthermore, it would reduce the likelihood of such students contributing to Florida’s workforce and economy post-graduation.

Percentage of Total SUS Bachelor’s Degrees Awarded			
	2010	2015	2020
STEM	31.7%	39.5%	42.8%
Business	22.5%	19.2%	18.6%
Education	7.6%	5.0%	4.1%
Other Non-STEM	38.2%	36.3%	34.5%

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)



Source: National Center for Education Statistics. (2022). *Fast Facts: Student Debt*. <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=900>

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