

# **IMPROVING ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL FLORIDIANS**

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## **A Report of the 2005-2006 Florida Education Access Task Force**

### **Final Report**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Florida's economy increasingly requires a skilled workforce as new jobs rely on emerging technologies and existing jobs become more complex. There is a clear imbalance between the expected needs of Florida's economy going forward into the future and the expected supply of those with the necessary level of participation in postsecondary education. To address this imbalance, an active approach needs to be undertaken. Such an approach needs to focus not on what the various components of our education system have historically done or may want to do, rather it should focus on:

- ◆ What is best for our students; and
- ◆ What is required to satisfy the projected growth of Florida's economy and to place Florida in the best position to compete for new or relocating business.

The approach needed to meet these criteria may deal with sensitive issues or require breaking down historical barriers, which should be done and not avoided.

Despite public college and university tuition costs below the national average, participation in postsecondary education and program completion have failed to keep pace with the state's economic growth goals. This persistent low participation is due to a variety of financial, geographic, programmatic, and preparation barriers.

The Access Task Force, a lay board representing K-20 constituencies, was appointed by the Chairpersons of the Florida State Board of Education and the Florida Board of Governors. The Task Force was charged with recommending policies that would focus on helping students move efficiently through their programs of study, and providing mechanisms to ensure that they graduate and succeed in their chosen field of work. The Task Force was strategic in its approach to reviewing and assessing demand in both the immediate and long-term future of Florida's economy, evaluating the capacity of public and private delivery systems and institutions to meet targeted needs, and determining budget and policy strategies to close the gap between demand and supply.

The Access Task Force recognizes that a significant expansion in the capacity of the state's postsecondary education delivery system will be needed to accommodate the growth in student demand. In addition, the Task Force believes that state policy can influence institutions to offer, and individuals to complete, programs in high-priority, targeted areas that provide vital services and are critical to the state's success as a competitor in the global economy.

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**Access Task Force Member Quote:**

*The Access Task Force focused its efforts on a coordinated approach to aligning resources and making policy decisions that address the immediate and long-term needs of Florida business and education leaders. Closing the gap between supply and demand of trained workers will change the direction of Florida's economy.*

*~F. Philip Handy, Chair,  
Florida State Board of Education*

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***The members identified those recommendations believed to have high probability of changing student and/or institutional behavior in a way that yields a significant, quantifiable increase in the number of students enrolling in and completing postsecondary education, especially in critical need programs.***

***The members believe that these recommendations will positively impact Florida's economic future and improve the quality of life of all Floridians.***

The recommendations of the Task Force were developed to address student demand, influence student and institutional decision making toward targeted areas of economic need, build and improve current supply and capacity efforts, and offer innovative ways to expand supply and capacity. The collective recommendations will work in concert to build demand and capacity for postsecondary education. While the Task Force made numerous recommendations, the members identified those recommendations believed to have high probability of changing student and/or institutional behavior in a way that yields a significant, quantifiable increase in the number of students enrolling in and completing postsecondary education, especially in critical need programs. The members believe that these recommendations will positively impact Florida's economic future and improve the quality of life of all Floridians. Access Task Force members identified the following recommendations as those with the greatest potential for improving access to postsecondary education, if adopted and implemented.

### ***RECOMMENDATIONS TO BUILD DEMAND FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION***

#### **◆ Expand student financial aid:**

- Expand and fully fund the Florida Student Assistance Grant (FSAG) Program for students attending public and private institutions.
- Expand the FSAG program to students enrolled in programs tied to critical need occupational areas, including vocational certificate programs.
- Expand the FSAG program to supplement awards to first generation college students.
- Revise the Bright Futures Scholarship Program to implement a supplemental award for students enrolled in a critical workforce occupational area/program.

#### **◆ Motivate student behavior:**

- Authorize tuition differentiation at the institutional level (both premiums and discounts) to promote student access.

#### **◆ Motivate institutional behavior:**

- Establish performance funding mechanisms to increase the recruitment, enrollment, retention, and graduation of community

college transfer students in critical need baccalaureate programs.

***RECOMMENDATIONS TO BUILD CAPACITY FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION***

◆ **Support educational sector strategic efforts:**

- Support the State University System and the Community College System plans to expand student growth and programmatic offerings in targeted workforce and economic demand areas, and require state and institutional accountability mechanisms to monitor the progress of the two systems toward achieving their goals.
- Establish regional plans that maximize access to critical need bachelor degree programs.
- Continue to implement current state policy and newly adopted procedures authorizing the approval of bachelor degrees granted by community colleges to address unmet need in applied fields and/or critical workforce areas and in high-demand fields where state and private universities are unable to satisfy demand, including university limited access programs.

◆ **Authorize alternative facility funding mechanisms:**

- Authorize local communities to levy facilities-related financial support for their respective community college(s) and/or regional university campus(es) through a local tax referendum as a means of providing alternative funding mechanisms.
- Designate a portion of Public Enrollment Capital Outlay (PECO) funds to support joint recommendations of the Florida State Board of Education and Florida Board of Governors to fund institutional-level agreements that establish community college and state university joint-use workforce program facilities.

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***Access Task Force Member Quote:***

*These recommendations will ensure that Florida has a postsecondary education system that is ready to serve its students today, and prepare its workforce for tomorrow. By developing policies that focus on students, instead of institutions, we ensure the strength of Florida's economy and a better quality of life.*

*~F. Philip Handy, Chair,  
Florida State Board of Education*

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Between June 2005 and January 2006, the Access Task Force explored issues related to demand for postsecondary education based on student participation and needs of the economy, and considered policy options that would expand educational opportunity, ensure quality, and align resources to prepare Floridians for the future. In developing strategies to be recommended, members built upon the following conclusions.

- ◆ State support to implement the strategic plans of the Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Education and the Florida Board of Governors will most likely be able to accommodate the conservative projections of student access demands.
- ◆ Achieving degree production estimates in targeted programs is essential to help shape the “new Florida economy” goals of the business sectors.
- ◆ Strategies that increase student demand for postsecondary education (such as improved high school student graduation, readiness, and continuation rates; improved postsecondary education retention rates; and improved recruitment efforts) will increase demand beyond conservative estimates.
- ◆ Limited resources require focused and coordinated efforts of all governing boards to ensure effective and efficient accomplishment of strategic goals.
- ◆ The use of student and institutional strategic incentives offers the best solution to closing the gap between demand and capacity, but only if the incentives are meaningful.

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***Access Task Force Member Quote:***

*These recommendations, when adopted, will guarantee a quality education for all students enrolled in Florida's K-20 system in the future.*

*~ T. Willard Fair, Vice Chair,  
Florida State Board of Education*

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In conclusion, the Task Force offers its recommendations to decision-making bodies as an active approach toward improving the state's capacity to address student demand and access issues and increasing the supply of individuals with skills acquired through postsecondary education. The recommendations offer alternative and innovative policy ideas, with an emphasis on supporting changes in areas that facilitate state economic goals and improved quality of life.

# CHAPTER 1

## ***PERSPECTIVE AND UNDERSTANDING***

Florida's economy increasingly requires a skilled workforce as new jobs rely on emerging technologies and existing jobs become more complex. This trend is expected to intensify as the global economy further develops and even more unskilled jobs are shifted to countries with lower wage levels. There is a clear imbalance between the expected needs of Florida's economy going forward into the future and the expected supply of those with the necessary level of participation in postsecondary education. To address this imbalance, an active approach needs to be undertaken. It is not prudent for the state to merely hope that historical trends will improve and result in an increased supply of individuals with the necessary level of postsecondary education. Such an active approach needs to focus not on what the various components of our education system have historically done or may want to do, rather it should focus on:

- ◆ What is best for our students; and
- ◆ What is required to satisfy the projected growth of Florida's economy and to place Florida in the best position to compete for new or relocating business by virtue of the quality of its workforce.

The approach needed to meet these criteria may deal with sensitive issues or require breaking down historical barriers, which should be done and not avoided.

The state has maintained its commitment to preparing the workforce by offering high-quality public postsecondary education opportunities throughout Florida at a low cost, and supporting Florida-based private not-for-profit and private for-profit postsecondary education institutions that offer certificates and degrees that respond to workforce needs.

Despite public college and university tuition costs below the national average, participation in postsecondary education and program completion have failed to keep pace with the state's economic growth goals. This persistent low participation is due to a variety of financial, geographic, programmatic, and preparation barriers. The Access Task Force was created to develop recommendations to increase access and reduce barriers to postsecondary education opportunities in Florida by:

- ◆ Exploring, considering, and prioritizing potential strategies for meeting the growing demand for access to quality higher education in Florida by assessing the current and expected capacity of

***There is a clear imbalance between the expected needs of Florida's economy going forward into the future and the expected supply of those with the necessary level of participation in postsecondary education. To address this imbalance, an active approach needs to be undertaken.***

public and private delivery systems and institutions; and

- ◆ Examining how the maximum number of students can be served by institutions and programs that meet the demands of economic development, emerging careers, and advanced research fields.

The Access Task Force, a lay board representing K-20 constituencies, was appointed by the Chairpersons of the Florida State Board of Education and the Florida Board of Governors. The Task Force was charged with recommending policies that would focus on helping students move efficiently through their programs of study, and providing mechanisms to ensure that they graduate and succeed in their chosen field of work. The Access Task Force contracted with MGT of America, Inc., a private research and planning firm, to assist in the development of strategies to address barriers to access to postsecondary education in Florida. MGT assisted the Task Force by reviewing issues and strategies in previous reports on access to postsecondary education in Florida; reviewing policies, practices, and programs that other states have implemented to address access; compiling a broad list of potential access strategies; and refining strategies based on public testimony and Task Force discussion.

The Task Force developed the following set of assumptions to guide their work.

- Policy outcomes must at least meet, if not exceed, anticipated access demands and needs.
- Any solution must engage public schools, technical and adult centers, community colleges, state universities and colleges, and independent private career schools, colleges, and universities.
- The access solution must cut across all program areas including, but not limited to, secondary and postsecondary career programs, adult education, certificates, associate degrees, bachelor degrees, graduate and post-graduate level degrees, and other credentials that ultimately support a foundation for Florida's workforce economy.
- Governance, funding, and instructional delivery models must allow flexibility to adjust and accommodate to changing populations, demographics, economic conditions, workforce needs, technological advances, and other

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***Access Task Force Member Quote:***

*The impending student demand on Florida's postsecondary institutions presents both a challenge and an opportunity. Maximizing our limited resources will require innovative planning to ensure adequate enrollment opportunities in educational programs that will facilitate growth in Florida's economic future.*

*~ F. Philip Handy, Chair,  
Florida State Board of Education*

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variables that might require both traditional and alternative models.

- The package of strategies will represent the views of a majority of Task Force members. While in some instances one or more members of the Task Force may not support a specific recommendation, the overall package of proposed strategies will reflect the shared best judgment of a significant majority of Task Force members.

The mission of the Access Task Force is to explore, consider, and recommend policies for meeting the growing demand for access to quality higher education in Florida. Within constitutional parameters, the Task Force was strategic in its approach to reviewing and assessing demand in both the immediate and long-term future of Florida's economy, evaluating the capacity of public and private delivery systems and institutions to meet targeted needs, and determining budget and policy strategies to close the gap between demand and supply.

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**Access Task Force Member Quote:**

*Access to college should be access to good jobs. Access is more comprehensive than just "get them a degree." It should parallel some kind of economic plan.*

*~ Manny A. Fernandez, Chair,  
Board of Trustees, University of Florida*

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# CHAPTER 2

## **DEFINING “DEMAND” FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**

The Access Task Force takes a broad view of the term “access” and its implications for public policy in Florida. The Task Force believes that the state’s need for improved access goes beyond the opportunity to enter the postsecondary education system. In fact, the Task Force is committed to the concept that the state must focus on its citizens being able to successfully complete quality postsecondary education programs if its workforce is to have the knowledge, skills, and abilities that will be necessary to prosper in the emerging global economy. The priority of this project is on access to postsecondary education for Floridians; however, the Task Force recognizes that it is also important to the state’s economic development to encourage and support graduate enrollments of out-of-state and international students.

Florida faces a significant challenge in continuing to expand its economy in this era. Its residents’ level of participation and success in postsecondary education trails the nation. At the same time, Florida’s population among potential postsecondary education participants, including recent high school graduates, 18 to 24 year olds who are not recent high school graduates, and individuals aged 25 and older, continues to grow.

While colleges and universities in Florida have experienced significant growth over the past decade, much of this expansion has resulted from increased numbers of recent high school graduates and not from changes in the rates of college participation and degree attainment. Continued growth is projected based on current participation rates for Florida’s postsecondary education system over the next 10 years for recent high school graduates, 18 to 24 year olds who are not recent high school graduates, and individuals who are 25 years and older.

Conservative estimates that assume no change in enrollment or policy patterns over the next 10 years suggest that Florida can expect 48,374 students above current enrollment levels to enter postsecondary education sectors (Exhibit 2-1). If, however, increases in demand are realized through population or policy changes, projections indicate postsecondary education enrollment increases of more than 138,000 students. These differences demonstrate that changes in population or policy can result in significant increases in the number of students seeking an education after high school.

The state’s elected and appointed leaders face a major challenge in continuing to provide quality educational experiences to a student population that is expected to be approximately 15 percent greater. As formidable as the challenge to expand to meet such growth seems, the ultimate challenge is likely to be even greater. The enrollment projection is based on relatively conservative

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### **Access Task Force Member Quote:**

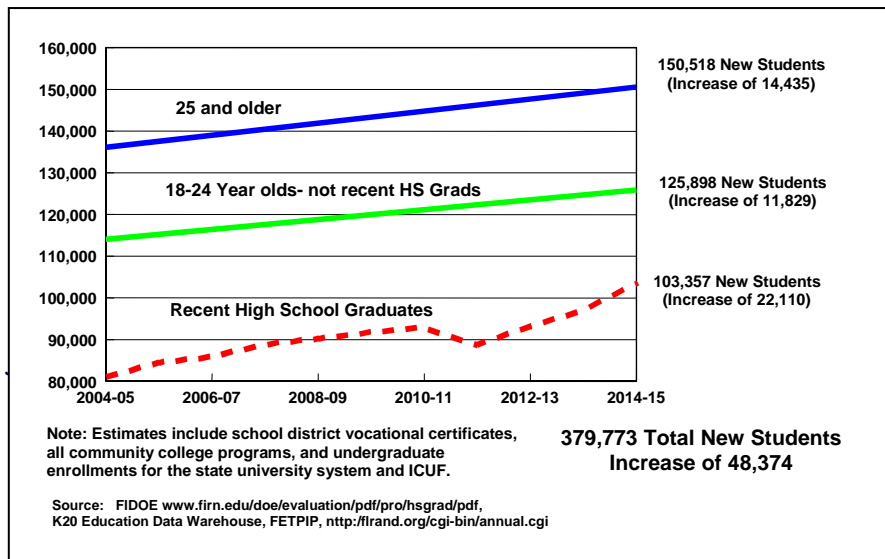
*The demand for postsecondary education will increase dramatically during the next 10 to 30 years, and Florida must be ready to serve the needs of those individuals who will be looking for choices. A broad range of solutions is required to address the growing need for training and preparation for tomorrow's workforce. The Task Force advocates choice, innovative partnerships, financial aid opportunities, and articulation to assist all sectors of higher education, public and private, to provide opportunities and solutions for Florida's students.*

*~ Nancy Bradley, Chair,  
Board of Trustees,  
Central Florida College*

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assumptions of constant rates of college participation among the three primary pools of students. Given that college participation rates in Florida have increased in recent years and that the Access Task Force is committed to improving the rates of college participation even further, the number of new students to be accommodated may be even greater than projected.

**EXHIBIT 2-1  
DEMAND FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION IN FLORIDA IS  
PROJECTED TO INCREASE BY A MINIMUM OF 48,000 STUDENTS  
BETWEEN 2004-05 AND 2014-15**



*Conservative estimates that assume no change in enrollment or policy patterns over the next 10 years suggest that Florida can expect 48,374 students above current enrollment levels to enter postsecondary education sectors.*

*If, however, increases in demand are realized through population or policy changes, projections indicate postsecondary education enrollment increases of more than 138,000 students.*

*These differences demonstrate that changes in population or policy can result in significant increases in the number of students seeking an education after high school.*

For over a decade, Florida policymakers, educators, and business and industry leaders have expressed concern that the low production rate of well-educated residents lessens the state's competitive position in the nation, as well as the world. Numerous state-level reports and plans have called for setting a goal to increase production of postsecondary education degrees and completions to at least the national average over the next decade. Efforts by the Council of 100, Enterprise Florida, Inc., and the Florida Chamber of Commerce Foundation have attempted to redefine Florida's economic future to meet the workforce needs in high-demand areas such as teaching, nursing/health occupations, information technology, and engineering. In their reports, such as "We Must Do Better" (Council of 100), "Economic Reports" (Enterprise Florida, Inc.), and "New Cornerstone" (Florida Chamber of Commerce Foundation), these leadership groups call for expanding opportunities, ensuring quality, and aligning resources to develop the intellectual infrastructure to enable Florida to shift from an industry mix dependent upon low-skill, low-wage jobs to being a strong competitor for high-skill, high-wage jobs in the global economy.

The Access Task Force recognizes that a significant expansion in the capacity of the state's postsecondary education delivery system will be needed to accommodate the natural, population-based growth and the growth that is expected to come from desired increased rates of student participation and demand. In addition, the Task Force believes that state policy can influence institutions to offer, and individuals to complete, quality programs in high-priority, targeted areas that provide vital services and are critical to the state's success as a competitor in the global economy.

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***Access Task Force Member Quote:***

*The Task Force has played a pivotal role in involving all higher education providers in the structure of proposals to enhance access to higher education in the State of Florida. The results of this initiative promises to have a profound impact on the economic health of the state, as well as the prosperity of our population. I am honored to have been a part of the Access Task Force.*

*~ Rhea F. Law, Vice Chair,  
Board of Trustees,  
University of South Florida*

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## **CURRENT EFFORTS TO LINK DEMAND AND SUPPLY**

# **CHAPTER 3**

In 2005, the Florida Board of Governors (BOG) and the Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Education (DCCWE) completed strategic plans for their sectors and institutions. This chapter presents a review of the strategic plans in relation to Access Task Force goals to increase associate degree and certificate completions, baccalaureate awards, and access to high-priority programs. This review is followed by Exhibit 3-1, which provides an overview of the BOG and DCCWE strategic plans. Projected program completions and enrollment figures and efforts to increase access to high-priority programs from the Community College System and the State University System strategic plans are presented to demonstrate ways in which public institutions are addressing future student and workforce demand.

A review of the BOG and DCCWE strategic plans, in relation to Access Task Force goals, is summarized below:

- ◆ ***The BOG and DCCWE developed their strategic plans from the perspective of their sectors.*** There is no statewide master plan for postsecondary education to which the sectors could refer while developing their plans. Both strategic plans considered statewide student demand and the needs of the economy when setting goals for enrollments and program completions for the next decade.
- ◆ ***The BOG and DCCWE strategic plans are “goal oriented.”*** Both the BOG and DCCWE set goals for the next decade for enrollments, program completions, and addressing demand in specific high-priority programs. Goals for high-priority programs were developed by identifying fields that provide vital services for the state and/or attract economic growth.
- ◆ ***The BOG and DCCWE strategic plans set goals for the future, but do not include specific information regarding the implementation of mechanisms to reach their goals.*** Both the BOG and DCCWE have established working groups to address the implementation of programs, policies, and efforts to meet their goals. The working groups involve state-level and institutional representatives, and their work is ongoing. For example, the BOG Economic Development Committee has been charged with reviewing the targeted program list for possible updates, and the BOG Student Affairs Committee is

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### ***Access Task Force Member Quote:***

*The State University System of Florida is committed to providing access to the highest quality education available. The future of Florida depends on our ability to provide such access so that our citizens, throughout their careers, can enhance their knowledge and skills to remain competitive in the global economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.*

*~ Carolyn King Roberts, Chair, Florida Board of Governors*

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addressing the perceived decline in enrollments for selected minority populations. The DCCWE has established a task force to address Bachelor's of Applied Science issues.

- ◆ ***The BOG and DCCWE strategic plans seek additional funding to achieve their strategic planning goals.*** The BOG Strategic Planning Committee is identifying challenges in reaching strategic planning goals, and how those challenges should be addressed. The BOG has requested full funding of its enrollment funding formula, in addition to requesting increases in its Legislative Budget Request for Engineering, Nursing, and Education programs. The DCCWE also has requested full implementation of its funding model from the Legislature to support its efforts to prepare Floridians to meet the needs of the business community.

***Support and incentives, as well as accountability benchmarks to measure progress, are needed to enable and encourage the realization of these goals.***

The goal-oriented strategic plans provide a framework for addressing demand for postsecondary education in terms of student participation and economic need. Efforts to identify the manner in which institutions will contribute to achieving these goals are ongoing. In addition, support and incentives, as well as accountability benchmarks to measure progress, are needed to enable and encourage the realization of these goals.

**EXHIBIT 3-1**  
**SUMMARY OF THE STRATEGIC PLANS FOR THE FLORIDA BOARD OF GOVERNORS AND DIVISION**  
**OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND WORKFORCE EDUCATION**

	State University System	Community College System
<b>Planning Approach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— BOG set goal to reach national average in baccalaureate degree production.</li> <li>— BOG assumed continuation of SUS historic share of bachelor's degrees (66%).</li> <li>— BOG established goal to produce higher share of degrees in targeted program areas.</li> <li>— SUS institutions submitted plans related to BOG goals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— CCS appointed a task force of faculty, staff, trustees.</li> <li>— Task force provided the vision for framing goals and initiatives.</li> <li>— Task force and CCS coordinated planning efforts with DOE mission &amp; goals, &amp; K-20 strategic imperatives.</li> <li>— Division staff synthesized goals into 8 Priority Goals.</li> <li>— Each goal includes initiatives and success indicators.</li> </ul>
<b>Bachelor's Degrees Granted/Planned</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— 42,680 in 2003-04 (actual)</li> <li>— 57,638 in 2012-13 (planned)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— 243 in 2004-05 (actual)</li> <li>— 1,799 in 2015-16 (planned)</li> </ul>
<b>Bachelor's Degrees Enrollments/Planned</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— 207,718 in 2003-04 (actual)</li> <li>— 278,864 in 2012-13 (planned)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— 2,355 in 2004-05 (actual)</li> <li>— 3,478 in 2006-07 (planned)</li> </ul>
<b>Associate's Degrees Granted/Planned</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— 31,897 AAs in 2004-05 (actual)</li> <li>— 5,264 ASs in 2004-05 (actual)</li> <li>— 57,852 AAs in 2015-16 (planned)</li> <li>— 15,905 ASs in 2015-16 (planned)</li> </ul>
<b>Targeted Workforce Programs Degrees/Awards Granted/Planned</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— 23,299 degrees/awards in 2004-05 (actual)</li> <li>— 33,629 degrees/awards in 2012-13 (planned)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— 5,703 degrees/awards in 2004-05 (actual)</li> <li>— 29,622 degrees/awards in 2015-16 (planned)</li> </ul>
<b>Educator Preparation Institutes Completions Planned</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— 22,000 completions in 2015-16 (planned)</li> </ul>
<b>Targeted Programs/Priority Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Critical needs: education and health care</li> <li>— Emerging technologies: mechanical science &amp; technology, natural science &amp; technology, medical science &amp; technology, computer science &amp; technology, design &amp; construction, electronic media &amp; simulation</li> <li>— High-wage/high-demand.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Enhance workforce development programs in community-specific need areas.</li> <li>— Increase community college Registered Nurse completions.</li> <li>— Increase production of competency-based alternative certified teachers through Educator Preparation Institutes (EPIs).</li> <li>— Facilitate baccalaureate access through policies which maintain a local community focus.</li> </ul>



# CHAPTER 4

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR TASK FORCE STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT**

During a series of deliberations that spanned seven meetings, members of the Access Task Force:

- ◆ Received testimony related to the development and the structure of postsecondary education in Florida;
- ◆ Reviewed data on past growth and likely future demand for expanded enrollment levels; and
- ◆ Considered a wide range of potential strategies intended to improve student access.

The Task Force was impressed with the complexity of the issues at hand and the commitment of all stakeholders to be a part of the solution. To guide the development of potential strategies to be recommended, members articulated the following framework of principles.

- ◆ **Strategies to increase access in the future should not be dictated by past policies and actions.** While Florida has many reasons to be proud of its postsecondary education delivery system, the Task Force recognizes that room for improvement remains. The Task Force is willing to challenge conventional wisdom and, when appropriate, recommend new approaches that will serve to enhance access.
- ◆ **Strategies should be developed that improve the state’s current performance on postsecondary participation and respond to its long-term population growth prospects.** The Task Force recognizes that there are various valid approaches for projecting future demand for postsecondary education services in the state, and that these projections differ in relative magnitude but not in direction. The Task Force finds that the preponderance of evidence suggests a significant expansion of degree and certificate production will be required across program levels. Strategies must therefore serve both to increase current demand and to expand capacity for future growth.

### ***Framework of Principles:***

- ***Strategies to increase access in the future should not be dictated by past policies and actions.***
- ***Strategies should be developed that improve the state’s current performance on postsecondary participation and respond to its long-term population growth prospects.***
- ***Strategies should not be so overly specific that they unintentionally tie the hands of legislators and other state policymakers.***
- ***Strategies should avoid “one size fits all” solutions, and must be able to handle diverse students with diverse needs.***
- ***Strategies should be flexible to handle diverse needs across regions.***

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**Access Task Force Member Quote:**

*Residents of Florida who demonstrate financial need to support their access to and completion of postsecondary education opportunities should have appropriate support made available to them. Florida's residents should have access to postsecondary education and training throughout their lives in order to acquire and maintain vocational competence; contribute to economic development; and respond to sociological, technological, and individual changes. A capable and qualified workforce is essential to the advancement of our state and well-being of our residents.*

*~ Rhea F. Law, Vice Chair, Board of Trustees, University of South Florida*

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- ◆ **Strategies should not be so overly specific that they unintentionally tie the hands of legislators and other state policymakers.** Given the composition of the Task Force and the amount of time available to craft its proposals, the Task Force believes its best role is to provide broad recommendations for change and improvement. Staff with more detailed working knowledge of program operations should supplement the work of the Task Force to develop implementation processes as requested by the Florida Legislature, the Florida State Board of Education, the Florida Board of Governors, and other policymaking bodies.
- ◆ **Strategies should avoid “one size fits all” solutions, and must be able to handle diverse students with diverse needs.** The Task Force was impressed with the considerable diversity of student interest and readiness to pursue postsecondary education. The Task Force seeks a package of recommendations that provide targeted solutions that address this diversity of needs.
- ◆ **Strategies should be flexible to handle diverse needs across regions.** The Task Force heard testimony about access strategies that have proven to be highly successful in some regions but less so in others due to differences in both student demand and the composition of postsecondary education providers. Just as recommendations should accommodate students with diverse needs, access strategies should take into account differences in regional capacity.

In conclusion, the Task Force recognizes that it is not empowered to make final decisions. Instead, its role is to make findings and recommendations for consideration by its constituencies, including but not limited to, the Florida Board of Governors, the Florida State Board of Education, and the Florida Legislature. The strategies recommended by the Task Force should reflect the members' collective best judgment about needed programmatic and policy change and not be tailored to avoid political controversy.

## **TWO BROAD ACCESS CHALLENGES FACING FLORIDA**

# **CHAPTER 5**

The mission of the Access Task Force is to explore, consider, and recommend policies for meeting the growing demand for access to quality higher education in Florida by assessing the current and expected capacity of public and private delivery systems and institutions. The Task Force was strategic in its approach to reviewing and assessing need and demand in both the immediate and long-term future of Florida's economy, assessing the capacity of public and private delivery systems and institutions to meet that targeted need, and determining budget and policy strategies to close the gap between demand and supply. The recommendations of the Task Force were developed to address estimates of student demand, influence student and institutional decision making toward targeted areas of economic need, build and improve current supply and capacity efforts, and offer innovative ways to expand supply and capacity.

These recommendations are offered to the Governor, the Legislature, the Florida State Board of Education, the Florida Board of Governors, and the state's school districts, community colleges, and public and private colleges and universities as an active approach for addressing student and workforce demand and access to postsecondary education in Florida.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS TO BUILD DEMAND FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**

#### **1) Increase Participation in Postsecondary Education and Targeted Programs**

- a) Foster Public Awareness and Interest in Postsecondary Education – The Florida State Board of Education and the Florida Board of Governors, in cooperation with the state's business community, should develop and implement a comprehensive public relations campaign to encourage a significant increase in postsecondary education participation beyond historical rates.
  - i) The public relations campaign should encourage participation in postsecondary education and direct Floridians to the FACTS.org Web site to gain knowledge of programs, acquire access to applications, and determine costs and financial support options.
  - ii) The Florida Department of Education should work with school districts to provide students and their families with aggressive advisement to encourage completion of high school courses needed for success in postsecondary education and in the workforce. Further, the Florida

*The mission of the Access Task Force is to explore, consider, and recommend policies for meeting the growing demand for access to quality higher education in Florida by assessing the current and expected capacity of public and private delivery systems and institutions.*

*These recommendations are offered as an active approach for addressing student and workforce demand and access to postsecondary education in Florida.*

#### **To Build Demand:**

***Increase Participation in Postsecondary Education and Targeted Programs***

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**Access Task Force Member Quote:**

*The Task Force took an inclusive view of the individuals to be served—high schools students through adults; the institutions which can best serve them—technical education centers, community colleges, and universities, both public and private; and the programs that help prepare them for the future—traditional degree programs, career/technical programs, distance learning through technology, cooperative agreements among educational institutions, and student financial aid programs. At every decision, the Task Force placed the needs of students first. As a K-12 educator striving to continually improve the quality of education for our high school students, I am excited about the potential increased opportunities for these students after high school!*

*~ Nancy N. Bostock, Chair,  
School Board of Pinellas County*

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Department of Education should work with all schools to ensure that all courses needed for success are available to students.

- b) Enhance Pre-College Awareness – The Florida State Board of Education and Florida Board of Governors should work with school districts, community colleges, colleges, and universities to design pre-college awareness and academic support programs for middle and high school students to increase their interest in and academic preparation for postsecondary education.
- c) Expand CROP Program – The Florida Legislature should increase funding for the College Reach-Out Program to encourage implementation in all school districts and target those funds to schools in which students have traditionally had low high school completion and postsecondary education participation rates.
- d) Fully Implement Online Advising Systems – The Florida State Board of Education should work with secondary schools to maximize Florida’s investment in its online advising system (FACTS.org) by ensuring that as many Florida students as possible benefit from services provided.
  - i) All middle school students should be directed to access the career planning resources of FACTS.org as a component of standard curricular activities.
  - ii) All entering high school freshmen, and students entering thereafter for the first time, should be directed to participate in the “ePersonal Education Planner” (“ePEP”) part of FACTS.org as a component of standard curricular activities.
  - iii) Community college and state university freshmen should be directed to designate a major/pre-major by the time they have earned 24 semester hours of college credit. As evidence, each should participate in the “degree auditing” function of FACTS.org or other comparable institution-based systems.
- e) Revise Financial Aid Programs and Tuition Policy to Target Students and Programs
  - i) The Florida Legislature should revise the Bright Futures Scholarship Program to incorporate a need-based criterion for the Florida Medallion Scholars Award and the Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars Award in the following ways:
    - (1) Establish a set scholarship amount that is not indexed to tuition rates for all Medallion and Gold

Seal recipients. The initial flat amount should be set at the approximate rates in effect for the 2005-06 academic year.

- (2) Incorporate a financial need threshold to target the program to students from low and middle income families.
  - (3) Ensure that all Medallion and Gold Seal awardees demonstrating “need” through the federal financial aid application process continue to receive award amounts that are indexed at 75 percent of tuition rates.
  - (4) Establish a supplemental award amount for students that enroll in a program of study in a critical workforce occupational area (e.g., teaching, nursing, engineering, etc.) such that the total award is indexed at 75 percent of tuition rates.
  - (5) The Florida Academic Scholars Award component of the Bright Futures Scholarship Program should continue to be indexed at 100 percent of tuition rates.
  - (6) The Florida Legislature should ensure that all current scholarships are honored under their current terms and should implement the recommended changes within a time frame that allows families to plan for the potential impact of the reforms.
- ii) The state should continue to support the annual “College Goal Sunday” event to assist low-income students/families in completing federal financial aid applications.
  - iii) The Florida Legislature should allocate the difference in lottery funds awarded for Bright Futures before and after application of need-based requirements in support of the Florida Student Assistance Grant (FSAG).
  - iv) Upon recommendation of the Florida State Board of Education, the Florida Legislature should authorize school district technical centers and community colleges to implement tuition differentiation at the institutional level (both premiums and discounts) to promote student access.
  - v) Upon recommendation of the Florida Board of Governors, the Florida Legislature should authorize state universities to implement tuition differentiation at the institutional level (both premiums and discounts) to promote student access.

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***Access Task Force Member Quote:***

*These recommendations will ensure that Florida has a postsecondary education system that is ready to serve its students today, and prepare its workforce for tomorrow. By developing policies that focus on students, instead of institutions, we ensure the strength of Florida’s economy and a better quality of life.*

***~F. Philip Handy, Chair,  
Florida State Board of Education***

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vi) The College Prepaid Tuition Program should revise contract terms to recognize changing tuition rates:

- (1) The Prepaid College Board should increase required contribution rates for new participants in anticipation of higher tuition charges in coming years.
- (2) The Florida State Board of Education, the Florida Board of Governors, and the Prepaid College Board should engage in conversations to establish future prepaid amounts based on actuarial analysis.
- (3) The Prepaid College Board should ensure that the contracts for all current program participants continue to be honored under their current terms and should ensure that any changes to the Florida Prepaid Tuition Program are made within a time frame that allows families to plan for the potential impact of the reforms.

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**Access Task Force Member Quote:**

*Implementation of these recommendations will lead to increased need-based financial aid, broader availability of online courses at the bachelor's level, increased partnerships between community colleges and public and private universities, and the use of community colleges to offer bachelor's degrees in high-demand areas. I believe that these recommendations will lead to broadening opportunities for Florida residents to achieve bachelor's degrees, and will address shortages in critical areas like nursing and teacher preparation.*

*~ Kenneth P. Burke, Chair, Board of Trustees, St. Petersburg College*

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vii) The Florida Legislature should implement the following regarding the Florida Student Assistance Grant (FSAG) program for Florida need-based students:

- (1) Expand funding and fully fund the FSAG program for students attending public and private institutions;
- (2) Expand the FSAG program for students enrolled in programs tied to critical need occupational areas, including vocational certificate programs; and
- (3) Expand the FSAG program to supplement awards for first-generation college students.

f) Provide Incentives for Students – The Florida Legislature should create strong financial incentives for students to pursue academic programs in critical need occupational areas through appropriately funded student loan forgiveness programs for completers who are placed in related positions in Florida.

- i) Offer student loan forgiveness for completers who are placed in related positions in Florida after completing their program and receiving certification, as appropriate.
- ii) Set student loan forgiveness awards at a sufficiently high level to encourage employment in the field and in Florida (e.g., \$2,500 for undergraduate and \$5,000 for graduate degree holders per year for up to four years).
- iii) Require student loan forgiveness recipients to be employed a minimum number of years in the state of Florida.

- g) Expand Dual Enrollment – State policy and practice should be strengthened and enhanced to maximize the return on investment benefits available to students, families, and taxpayers through dual enrollment opportunities.
- h) Determine Student Incentive Mechanisms – The Florida Department of Education and Florida Board of Governors staff should work with postsecondary institutions to survey and identify reasons why students drop off their educational track and to recommend incentives that might be implemented to improve student recruitment, retention, and graduation.
- i) Address Residency Issues – The Florida Department of Education and the Florida Board of Governors staff should investigate issues and make recommendations related to the classification of student residency for tuition purposes, including but not limited to, issues associated with immigrant students that progress through the K-12 system and continue into postsecondary education.

**2) Motivate Institutional Behavior Toward Access Goals**

- a) Provide a Tuition Flexibility Package Deal – Tuition flexibility should be granted when certain conditions are met:
  - i) The Florida Legislature, upon recommendation of the Florida State Board of Education, should support tuition flexibility packages for school district technical centers and community colleges that tie discretionary tuition limits (i.e., designated percentages above and below state standards) to defined conditions and performance expectations. Packages and conditions should ensure that institutions designate adequate financial assistance for students with financial need and honor existing prepaid contracts.
  - ii) The Florida Legislature, upon recommendation of the Florida Board of Governors, should support tuition flexibility packages for state universities. Packages should ensure that institutions designate adequate financial assistance for students with financial need and honor existing prepaid contracts.
- b) Incentivize and Motivate Institutional Activities – The Florida State Board of Education (for school district technical centers and community colleges) and the Florida Board of Governors (for state universities) should establish and/or recommend to the Florida Legislature incentives to ensure that the following activities occur within their designated sectors and institutions:

***To Build Demand:***

***Motivate Institutional Behavior Toward Access Goals***

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**Access Task Force Member Quote:**

*The Access Task Force has completed a very important set of recommendations regarding the future of postsecondary education in Florida. The private university sector is eager to work with the State University System to improve access in areas of critical need where excess capacity exists in the private system—specifically in education, nursing, and engineering.*

*~ Edward A. Dauer, Member,  
Board of Trustees, University of Miami*

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- i) Publish institutional strategic plans that clearly reflect student growth anticipated in targeted need areas that support economic development, consistent with sector-approved state strategic plans.
  - ii) Establish and enhance joint-use and/or concurrent-use partnerships with public and private institutions to annually increase bachelor degree completion of workforce certificate, Associate in Arts (AA), and Associate in Science (AS) degree transfer students, including areas of limited-access programs.
  - iii) Expand capacity and enrollments in critical need occupational areas.
  - iv) Examine their respective budget models to identify and eliminate inherent funding disincentives for expanding or establishing programs in priority areas.
- c) Ensure Effective Articulation Mechanisms – The Florida State Board of Education, Florida Board of Governors, and Florida Legislature should preserve and strengthen the integrity of Florida’s nationally recognized articulation model.
- i) The Articulation Coordinating Committee (ACC) should work closely with public and private institutions, the Florida State Board of Education, and the Florida Board of Governors to:
    - (1) Monitor public and private institutional implementation and compliance with state articulation, course numbering, and transfer policies, and recommend actions where necessary to enforce compliance.
    - (2) Recommend guidelines, rules, and policy to resolve issues in the articulation of vocational certificate, Associate in Applied Science (AAS), Associate in Science (AS) and Bachelors in Applied Science (BAS) programs (between programs and institutions) to protect student and state investments in coursework and programs.
  - ii) The Florida Legislature should establish performance funding mechanisms for public and private colleges and universities to increase recruitment, enrollment, retention, and graduation of community college transfer students in critical need programs.

## ***RECOMMENDATIONS TO BUILD CAPACITY FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION***

### **1) Support Sector Efforts to Expand Capacity**

- a) Implement Sector Strategic Plans – The Florida Legislature should support the State University System and the Community College System in pursuit of their respective plans to expand student growth and programmatic offerings in targeted workforce and economic demand areas. The plans should address agreed upon levels of demand, need, critical workforce shortages, and specify policies and strategies designed to meet those targets. The plans should require state and institutional accountability mechanisms to monitor the progress of the two systems toward achieving their goals.
- b) Establish Regional Plans – The Florida State Board of Education should require each community college, and the Florida Board of Governors should require each state university, to work together with workforce entities to establish regional plans that maximize access to critical need bachelor degree programs for persons in the region. The plan must provide a general description of geographic access, joint use of facilities, degree sharing, and articulation policy compliance.
- c) Improve Efficiency and Effectiveness – The Florida Board of Governors and the Florida State Board of Education should identify and implement efficiency incentives for institutions for administrative operations and academic programs. Efficiency benchmarks, such as administrative overhead rates and program completion rates, should be established in consideration of benchmarks for the nation and for economically competitive states, current benchmarks in Florida, and desired changes to contain costs and enhance quality and access in high-priority areas.
- d) Regularly Assess Program Mix – Colleges and universities should periodically analyze participation in programs at main and regional campuses to determine if changes are needed in the program mix, level of courses offered, and course scheduling and delivery modes.

### **2) Coordinate State Policy on Access to Bachelor Degrees**

- a) Implement Current State Policy and Newly Adopted Procedures – Current state law authorizing the approval of bachelor degrees granted by community colleges should continue under the following conditions:

#### ***To Build Capacity:***

#### ***Support Sector Efforts to Expand Capacity***

#### ***To Build Capacity:***

#### ***Coordinate State Policy on Access to Bachelor Degrees***

- i) The Florida State Board of Education should work with community colleges to develop and implement plans for baccalaureate programs in applied fields and/or critical workforce areas, and in high-demand fields where state and private universities are unable to satisfy demand, including university limited access programs. The Florida State Board of Education may consider provisions for establishing programs according to discipline, institution, and/or regional area.
- ii) A community college approved to grant a bachelor degree must maintain its primary mission.
- iii) Funding for baccalaureate degrees at community colleges should be supported in the following manner:
  - (1) The Florida Legislature should provide initial start-up grants to community colleges authorized to grant bachelor degrees, as recommended by the Florida State Board of Education.
  - (2) Operational funding for bachelor degree programs offered by a community college should be provided through the approved institution's general allocation.
- b) Fund New Program Start-Up – The Florida Legislature should continue funding support to public and private (when appropriate) institutions for the start-up of workforce programs of study in critical need occupational areas.

***To Build Capacity:***

***Target Facilities and Capital Expense Decisions***

**3) Target Facilities and Capital Expense Decisions**

- a) Maximize Use of Existing Facilities – Ensure the best return on investment of public funds:
  - i) The Florida Board of Governors and individual state universities, and the Florida State Board of Education and community colleges, when developing new campuses, should take advantage of previously developed facilities infrastructure to permit capital investment in an efficient manner.
  - ii) State and private universities and community colleges, where appropriate, should share facilities to contain capital investment and to provide access to baccalaureates through the 2+2 approach.

b) Provide Alternative Funding Mechanisms – The Florida Legislature should consider the following alternative funding strategies to encourage partnerships and expand access:

- i) Authorize local communities to levy facilities-related financial support for their respective community college(s) and/or regional university campus(es) through a local tax referendum (with a sunset provision that permits reconsideration).
- ii) Designate a portion of Public Enrollment Capital Outlay (PECO) funds to support joint recommendations of the Florida State Board of Education and Florida Board of Governors to fund institutional-level agreements that establish community college and state university joint-use workforce program facilities. Provide that each institution must have the facility at the top of its priority list in order for the Florida State Board of Education and the Florida Board of Governors to recommend the joint-use facility at the top of their lists; and that any project jointly recommended by the two state boards receive prioritized funding consideration without impacting the priority lists of institutions or sectors.
- iii) Provide capital expansion funds targeted at building baccalaureate degree opportunities in underserved areas of the state.
- iv) Provide funds for an evaluation of the “standards” used to determine use need for facilities and recommend revisions as necessary to recognize new technologies and interests in expanding joint-use strategies.

#### **4) Maximize Use of Technology**

- a) Expand Distance Learning Options – The Florida Board of Governors and the Florida State Board of Education should direct institutions to actively participate in the Florida Distance Learning Consortium to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness in the use of technology to enhance access to postsecondary education.
- b) Develop and Implement a Plan to Increase Access Through Education Technology – The Florida State Board of Education and the Florida Board of Governors should jointly conduct a comprehensive study to develop and implement an efficient plan to increase access to quality postsecondary education through expanded use of education technology. The comprehensive study

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#### **Access Task Force Member Quote:**

*These recommendations are meaningful and considerate of the needs of all, and they recognize that the gift of diversity also presents certain challenges. It is extremely important to reinforce that community colleges play a significant role in leveling the educational playing field and in propelling the state to where it needs to be in assuring quality and capacity in postsecondary education.*

*Many of the recommendations here are common sense—access can be increased by providing greater incentives to students who have financial need or are seeking degrees in areas of critical need. There are other recommendations, however, such as increasing access through baccalaureate programs in community colleges that may be seen as too radical by others. Over time, this decision will be judged to have been wise and indispensable to the improved well-being of all in higher education.*

*~ Helen A. Ferré, Chair,  
Board of Trustees, Miami-Dade College*

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#### **To Build Capacity:**

#### **Maximize Use of Technology**

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**Access Task Force Member Quote:**

*Technology will evolve so fast in the next few years that we should truly have a technology plan that incorporates distant learning aggressively with the goal of minimizing brick and mortar. Everybody has a plan—we should have ONE plan.*

*~ Manny A. Fernandez, Chair, Board of Trustees, University of Florida*

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should review models used in Florida and other states for technology to provide access to postsecondary education. The plan should not only remove barriers of distance and time, but also barriers related to lack of access to technology by educationally underserved populations in Florida.

- c) Develop Funding Strategies to Expand Distance Learning – The Florida Distance Learning Consortium should implement a broadly participative process to develop recommendations for funding strategies to support a statewide infrastructure for distance learning that meets the state’s access goals for postsecondary education.
  
- d) Adopt a Statewide K-20 Education Technology Plan – The Florida State Board of Education and Florida Board of Governors should collaborate on the adoption of one K-20 statewide education technology plan that consolidates existing plans, maximizes the benefits of new instructional technologies, and incorporates distance learning aggressively with the goal of improving efficiencies and minimizing capital expenditures.

# CHAPTER 6

## CONCLUSIONS

Between June 2005 and January 2006, the Access Task Force explored issues related to demand for postsecondary education based on student participation and the needs of the economy, and considered policy options that would expand educational opportunity, ensure quality, and align resources to prepare Floridians for the future. In developing strategies to be recommended, members built upon the following conclusions.

- ◆ State support to implement the strategic plans of the Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Education and the Florida Board of Governors will most likely be able to accommodate the conservative projections of student access demands.
- ◆ Achieving degree production estimates in targeted programs is essential to help shape the “new Florida economy” goals of the business sectors.
- ◆ Strategies that increase student demand for postsecondary education (such as improved high school student graduation, readiness, and continuation rates; improved postsecondary education retention rates; and improved recruitment efforts) will increase demand beyond conservative estimates.
- ◆ Limited resources require focused and coordinated efforts of all governing boards to ensure effective and efficient accomplishment of strategic goals.
- ◆ The use of student and institutional strategic incentives offers the best solution to closing the gap between demand and capacity, but only if the incentives are meaningful.

In conclusion, the Task Force offers its recommendations to decision-making bodies as an active approach toward improving the state’s capacity to address student demand and access issues and increasing the supply of individuals with skills acquired through postsecondary education. The recommendations offer alternative and innovative policy ideas, with an emphasis on supporting changes in areas that facilitate state economic goals.

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**Access Task Force Member Quote:**

*These recommendations constitute important and effective ways of increasing participation in postsecondary education—thereby enhancing the skills and capabilities of Florida’s graduates and the state’s ability to support a robust and growing economy in the future.*

*~ Robert Taylor, Former Vice Chair,  
Council for Education Policy  
Research and Improvement*

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# APPENDIX

## **Access Task Force Membership List**

<b>Members</b>		
F. Philip Handy	Chair	Florida State Board of Education
Carolyn K. Roberts	Chair	Florida Board of Governors
<b>Members</b>		
Nancy N. Bostock	Chair, School Board	School Board of Pinellas County
Nancy Bradley	Chair, Board of Trustees	Central Florida College
Kenneth P. Burke	Chair, Board of Trustees	St. Petersburg College
Edward A. Dauer	Member, Board of Trustees	University of Miami
Talmadge W. Fair	Vice Chair, State Board of Education	Florida State Board of Education
Manny A. Fernandez	Chair, Board of Trustees	University of Florida
Helen Aguirre Ferré	Chair, Board of Trustees	Miami-Dade College
Rhea F. Law	Vice Chair, Board of Trustees	University of South Florida
Evelyn J. Lynn	Senator	The Florida Senate
Ray Sansom	Representative	Florida House of Representatives
Bob Taylor	Former Vice Chair, CEPRI	Council for Education Policy Research and Improvement
<b>Ad Hoc Member</b>		
John Winn	Commissioner	Florida Department of Education

## **Access Task Force Meeting Dates**

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Meeting Location</b>
Monday, June 20, 2005	Valencia Community College
Tuesday, August 16, 2005	Florida Department of Education
Wednesday, September 14, 2005	Orlando International Airport Hyatt
Monday, October 17, 2005	Florida Atlantic University at Davie
Wednesday, November 16, 2005	Florida Community College at Jacksonville
Wednesday, December 7, 2005	Florida Department of Education
Wednesday, January 18, 2006	Orlando International Airport Hyatt

## **Access Task Force Resources**

Meeting materials and resources used to compile this report are available on the Department of Education, Access Task Force website:

**<http://www.fldoe.org/OSI/atf.asp>**



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