

# Higher Education in Florida: The Special Role of the Independent Colleges and Universities

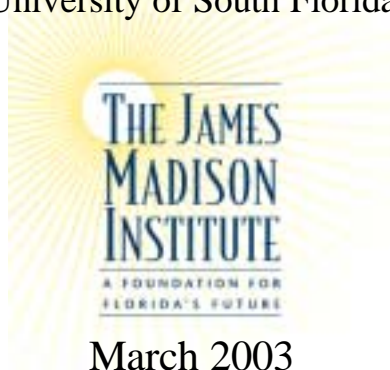
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# **The James Madison Institute**

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## FOREWORD

Among the public policy issues that have occupied The James Madison Institute over its 15 year history, none has been more important or received more attention than education. In the broad realm of education, concerns about postsecondary education have often taken a backseat to those related to K-12. In addition to its 11 publicly supported universities, Florida also has 27 nonprofit, independent institutions of higher education whose programs provide a wide range of services, and these institutions represent a vital element in the educational architecture of Florida. Without the graduates of the independent institutions, Florida's economy, its culture, its government, its attractiveness to visitors from other states and other lands, and its standing among the 50 states would be in serious jeopardy.

The James Madison Institute has had a long-standing interest in education policy. Some months ago the leadership of the Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida (ICUF) and JMI began to explore the possibility of collaborating in a review of the place of ICUF institutions in Florida's educational landscape and the consequences of the state's investment in support of those institutions.

ICUF and JMI have a shared concern with many other organizations and individuals that, in the 2003 Florida legislative session, legislators will be required to exercise greater scrutiny than at any time in recent memory with respect to the allocation of state dollars. Leaders of the ICUF institutions, like those in the publicly assisted institutions, are mindful that legislators must be cost-conscious and that expenditures in all categories must be subject to careful review. Keeping this in mind, leaders of the ICUF institutions believe that continued support for the William L. Boyd, IV, Florida Resident Access Grant (FRAG) program and other allocations to the independent colleges and universities represent sound legislative investments that redound to substantial benefits for Florida taxpayers.

The FRAG program, established in 1979, is a student tuition-assistance program that is not need-based. The statute authorizing the program makes reference to the integral role ICUF plays in higher education and the cost-savings it provides to Florida taxpayers.

The review and analysis reported in this document is designed to present factual information from the programs offered by ICUF institutions and to demonstrate the extent to which the use of such funds inure to the well being of Floridians and the wise use of their tax dollars.

In our analysis and review, we attempt to provide answers to the following question:

- What is the breadth and reach of the ICUF institutions?
- What assumptions might safely be made about the typical student enrolled in the ICUF institutions? Are those assumptions justified?

- What comparisons can be made with respect to the costs of educating a student in an ICUF institution as compared to comparable costs in the State University System (SUS) and the community colleges?
- What comparisons can be made between SUS and ICUF institutions with regard to race and gender ethnicity?
- To what extent are graduates of ICUF institutions filling the broad needs of the Florida workforce?
- What comparisons can be made between SUS and ICUF institutions in terms of graduation rates?
- Finally, and most importantly, should Florida taxpayers view the investment of tax dollars in ICUF institutions as sound policy? If so, what are the implications for continued participation by Florida in providing financial assistance to the independent colleges and universities?

The review and analysis reported here has been undertaken by Curtis Leonard, Executive Vice President and Rosemary Dupras, Editorial Director, The James Madison Institute, with the assistance of Dr. Philip K. Porter, Professor and Director of the Center for Economic Policy Analysis of the University of South Florida, and Dr. Thomas Watson, Policy Associate of the Center for Economic Policy Analysis of the University of South Florida. The primary author has been Dr. Stanley Marshall, Founding Chairman of the Institute and Director of the Education Policy Center.

## INTRODUCTION

This report considers the role of Florida's independent colleges and universities as an element in the state's endeavors in higher education. The 11 institutions that comprise the State University System fill a critical need in undergraduate and graduate education, in research and service, and they enrich the communities that are fortunate enough to house them. The 27 institutions of independent, nonprofit higher education – those that belong to the Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida (ICUF) and are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools – are likewise an asset of great worth to our state. Their graduates fill positions in areas of critical need and, in some cases, achieve honors and distinctions that are unmatched in any Florida institutions, public or private.

Our purpose, then, has been to examine the ICUF institutions, to learn more about their academic offerings, their co-curricular programs, their contributions to their communities, their students and their graduates; and, most importantly, to learn the extent to which they are aided by funds appropriated by the Florida legislature and the uses made of such funds.

We've had access to studies and reports provided by the ICUF office; we've obtained useful information from the SUS offices; we've employed a respected economist from the University of South Florida, Dr. Philip Porter, to help in collecting and analyzing data; and we have, on occasion, relied on our own memories of events and issues in Florida education. All of these, we believe, have given us a good picture of the role of the ICUF institutions and their place in meeting Florida's needs in higher education.

Reduced to the simplest terms, we've tried to answer the question, "Are the people of Florida well-served by the independent colleges and universities, and is the money they receive in tax dollars a good investment for our taxpayers?" This is the question to be considered by a public policy institute – one that is often referred to as a fiscally conservative organization. And it's one we have addressed with concern for both those who receive the benefits of higher education in Florida and those who pay for it.

And finally, a personal note. George Kirkpatrick, former Executive Director of ICUF, was, until his untimely death, a fierce advocate for quality education and for the institutions that comprise ICUF. During his long, distinguished career in the Florida Senate, he represented the University of Florida and was its tireless advocate. Following that career, he worked for the ICUF institutions with equal fervor.

When George and I began, several months ago, to think about ways to advance the cause of quality higher education in Florida – and especially what we might do to secure the place of the independent sector – George raised with me the possibility of The James Madison Institute doing a review of those institutions. Why JMI, I asked? His answer pleased and gratified me. "Because your institution has credibility," he said, "and the people of Florida, including the legislature, will pay attention to what you say."

Well, I hope that's true and that's the perspective from which we've undertaken this study. In the section that follows, you'll see the data we've collected and reviewed and you'll read what we make of those facts and figures. At the end, you'll read the summary of our findings and what we recommend by way of action by the legislature.

George Kirkpatrick has been a force for good government for many years and we believe his suggestion that we undertake this study is an opportunity for JMI to provide a useful service and, at the same time, to make a small contribution to a cause we regard as important to all Floridians. This may be a part of George Kirkpatrick's legacy and, if so, we're pleased and gratified all the more.

*J. Stanley Marshall  
Founding Chairman  
The James Madison Institute  
March 2003*

## **Florida’s Independent Colleges and Universities: Independent Analysis and Review**

In the following sections of this report, we will present the findings from our research and from various sources of background information on ICUF and SUS; and we will provide our conclusions and our recommendations for action by the Florida Legislature.

### **Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida (ICUF)**

The Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida (ICUF), Inc., was formed in 1965 to represent the interests of nonprofit, independent colleges and universities in the state. Today there are 27 institutions represented by ICUF. To qualify for membership in ICUF, Florida colleges and universities must be:

- Independent
- Nonprofit
- State-chartered
- Four year degree-granting
- Accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

ICUF member institutions are listed below:

<b>Table 1. Independent Colleges and Universities</b>	
Barry University	Lynn University
Bethune-Cookman College	Nova Southeastern University
Clearwater Christian College	Palm Beach Atlantic University
Eckerd College	Ringling School of Art and Design
Edward Waters College	Rollins College
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University	Saint Leo University
Flagler College	Saint Thomas University
Florida College	Southeastern College
Florida Hospital College of Health Sciences	Stetson University
Florida Institute of Technology	University of Miami
Florida Memorial College	University of Tampa

<b>Table 1 Cont'd. Independent Colleges and Universities</b>	
Florida Southern College	Warner Southern College
International College	Webber International University
Jacksonville University	

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the body that accredits the state universities, also accredits ICUF institutions. The relevant professional or academic authorities also certify the degrees awarded. The academic programs from ICUF institutions range from liberal arts to engineering.

### **Degree Production**

<b>Table 2. Degree Production July 1, 2000 - June 30, 2001</b>		
	<b>ICUF</b>	<b>SUS</b>
Certificates	200	0
Associates	1,062	0
Bachelor's	12,696	35,724
Master's	6,555	10,766
Doctoral	682	1,221
First professional	1,661	1,245
Total	22,856	48,956

The Florida Postsecondary Planning Commission<sup>1</sup> estimates that Florida's economy will create job openings for 60,000 persons with bachelor's degrees, 8,000 persons with master's degrees or first professional degrees, and 2,200 doctoral degrees in each year from 1997 to 2007. Tables 2 and 3 show the degree production of ICUF and SUS institutions for the academic year 2000-2001; ICUF institutions awarded 26 percent of the bachelor's degrees, 38 percent of the master's degrees, and 36 percent of the doctoral degrees. In all, independent colleges and universities in Florida awarded a total of 21,594 degrees above the associates degree, over 30 percent of the total.

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<sup>1</sup> *An Analysis of the Extent to Which Universities Meet the Workforce Needs of Florida's Skilled Economy*, Florida Postsecondary Education Planning Commission, 2000.

<b>Table 3.</b>		
<b>Percent of Total Degrees Awarded</b>		
	<b>ICUF</b>	<b>SUS</b>
Bachelor's	26	74
Master's	38	62
Doctoral	36	64
First professional	57	43
Total degrees	31	69

Sources: ICUF 2001 Accountability Report, IPEDS Postsecondary Completions (C1).

<b>Table 4.</b>			
<b>Percent of Florida Degree Production by ICUF Institutions</b>			
<b>Area of Study</b>	<b>Bachelor's</b>	<b>Master's</b>	<b>Doctoral</b>
Health	22.2	37.6	25.3
Information Technology	31.9	50.7	74.0
Science/ Engineering	21.2	13.0	10.9
Business/ Management	38.5	64.9	59.3
Education Professions	21.9	33.5	60.3

Source: *An Analysis of the Extent to Which Universities Meet the Workforce Needs of Florida's Skilled Economy*; Postsecondary Education and Planning Commission; December 2000.

In December 2000, the Postsecondary Education and Planning Commission identified the following areas of critical need for preparing tomorrow's workforce for the demands of the marketplace:

- Health
- Information Technology
- Science/Engineering
- Business/Management
- Education Professions

Table 4 shows the percent of Florida's degree production generated by ICUF institutions by level of degree in each of the fields identified as a critical need.

## Availability and Access

Tables 5 and 6 show the location, enrollment, and population of SUS and ICUF institutions.

<b>Table 5.</b> <b>Florida's State Universities:</b> <b>Locations, Enrollments, and County Populations</b>					
<b>Institution</b>	<b>Main Campus</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>2000-01 Enrollment</b>	<b>County Population</b>	<b>Branch Campuses</b>
University of Florida	Gainesville	Alachua	44,480	217,955	
Florida State University	Tallahassee	Leon	33,587	239,452	Panama City
Florida A&M University	Tallahassee	Leon	11,723	239,452	
University of South Florida	Tampa	Hillsborough	33,924	998,948	St. Petersburg, Lakeland, Sarasota
Florida Atlantic University	Boca Raton	Palm Beach	20,944	1,131,184	Ft. Lauderdale/Davie, Jupiter
University of West Florida	Pensacola	Escambia	8,218	294,410	Ft. Walton Beach
University of Central Florida	Orlando	Orange	33,453	896,344	Cocoa, Daytona Beach
Florida International University	Miami	Miami/Dade	30,725	2,253,562	North Miami
University of North Florida	Jacksonville	Duval	12,417	778,879	
Florida Gulf Coast University	Ft. Myers	Lee	3,496	440,888	
New College of Florida	Sarasota	Sarasota	650	335,323	
Total			233,617		

Source: U.S. 2000 Census; 2000-2001 State University System Factbook.

**Table 6.**  
**Florida's Independent Colleges and Universities:**  
**Locations, Enrollments, and County Populations**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Main Campus</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>2000-01 Enrollment</b>	<b>County Population</b>	<b>Branch Campuses</b>
Barry University	Miami Shores	Miami/Dade	8,650	2,253,562	
Bethune-Cookman College	Daytona Beach	Volusia	2,745	443,343	
Clearwater Christian College	Clearwater	Pinellas	654	921,482	
Eckerd College	St. Petersburg	Pinellas	1,572	921,482	
Edward Waters College	Jacksonville	Duval	987	778,879	
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University	Daytona	Volusia	4,803	443,343	
Flagler College	St. Augustine	St. Johns	1,830	123,135	Tallahassee
Florida College	Temple	Hillsborough	537	998,948	
Florida Hospital College of Health Sciences	Orlando	Orange	580	896,344	
Florida Institute of Technology	Melbourne	Brevard	4,249	476,230	
Florida Memorial College	Miami	Miami/Dade	1,985	2,253,562	
Florida Southern College	Lakeland	Polk	2,382	483,924	
International College	Naples	Collier	1,026	251,377	Ft. Myers
Jacksonville University	Jacksonville	Duval	2,049	778,879	
Lynn University	Boca Raton	Palm Beach	2,034	1,131,184	

<b>Table 6 Cont'd.</b>					
<b>Florida's Independent Colleges and Universities: Locations, Enrollments, and County Populations</b>					
<b>Institution</b>	<b>Main Campus</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>2000-01 Enrollment</b>	<b>County Population</b>	<b>Branch Campuses</b>
Nova	Ft.	Broward	18,587	1,623,018	Jacksonville, Orlando, Tampa, Southeastern Lauderdale, Miami, West Palm Beach
Stetson	Deland	Volusia	3,199	443,343	St. Petersburg, Celebration
Ringling School of Art and Design	Sarasota	Sarasota	958	325,957	
Rollins College	Winter Park	Orange	3,553	896,344	
Saint Leo University	Saint Leo	Pasco	8,720	344,765	Gainesville, Key West, St. Petersburg, Palatka
Saint Thomas University	Miami	Miami/Dade	2,295	2,253,562	
Southeastern College	Lakeland	Polk	1,232	483,924	
Palm Beach Atlantic University	West Palm Beach	Palm Beach	2,295	1,131,184	
University of Miami	Coral Gables	Miami/Dade	13,936	2,253,562	Miami/Dade
University of Tampa	Tampa	Hillsborough	3,452	998,948	
Warner Southern College	Lake Wales	Polk	1,001	483,924	
Webber International University	Babson Park	Polk	459	483,924	
Total			95,770		

Source: U.S. 2000 Census; Independent Colleges and Universities Accountability Report 2000.

Tables 5 and 6 illustrate that the ICUF institutions effectively supplement the SUS in terms of availability and access. ICUF institutions are located strategically in both Florida's urban and rural regions.

Figure 1

## Independent Colleges and Universities

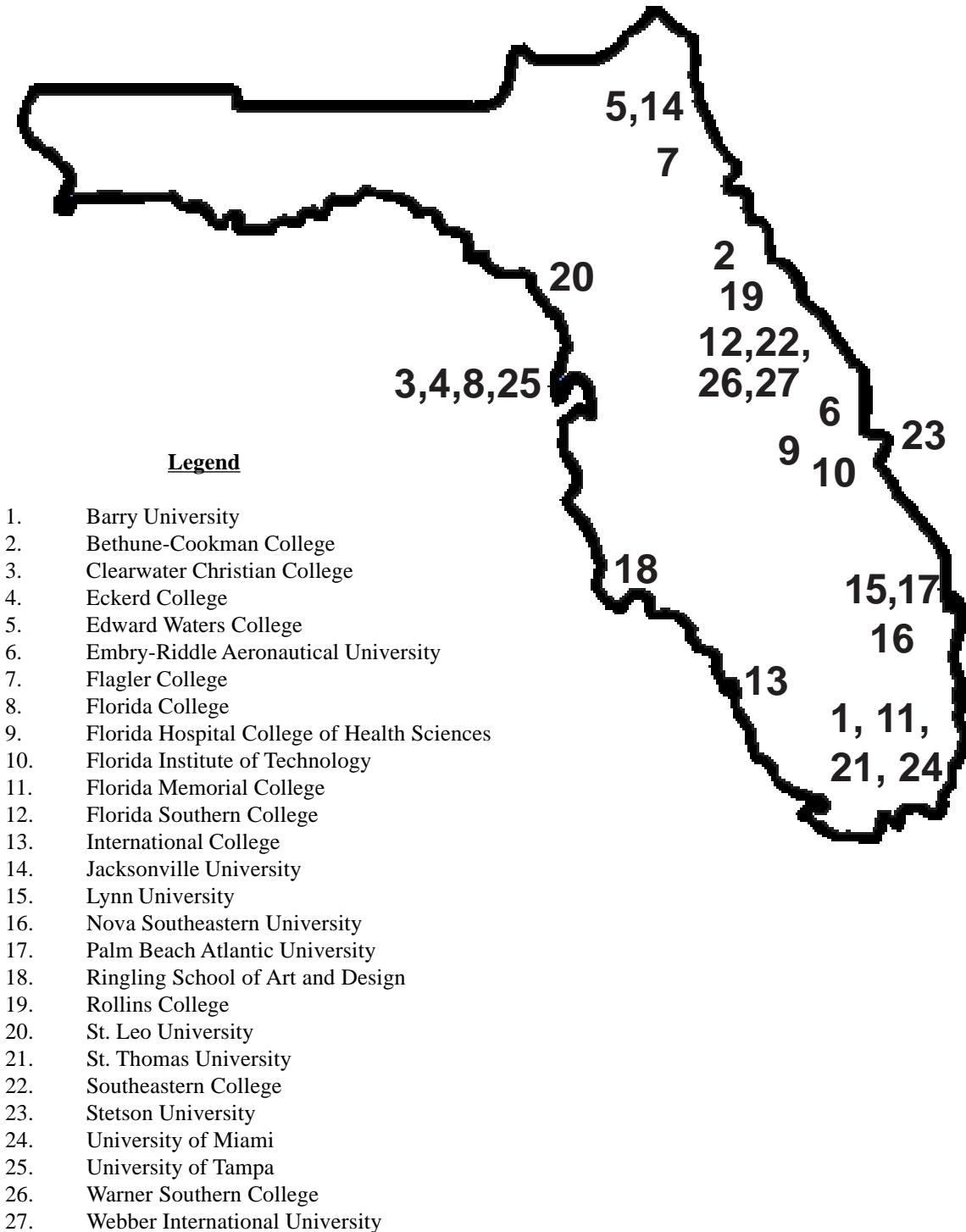
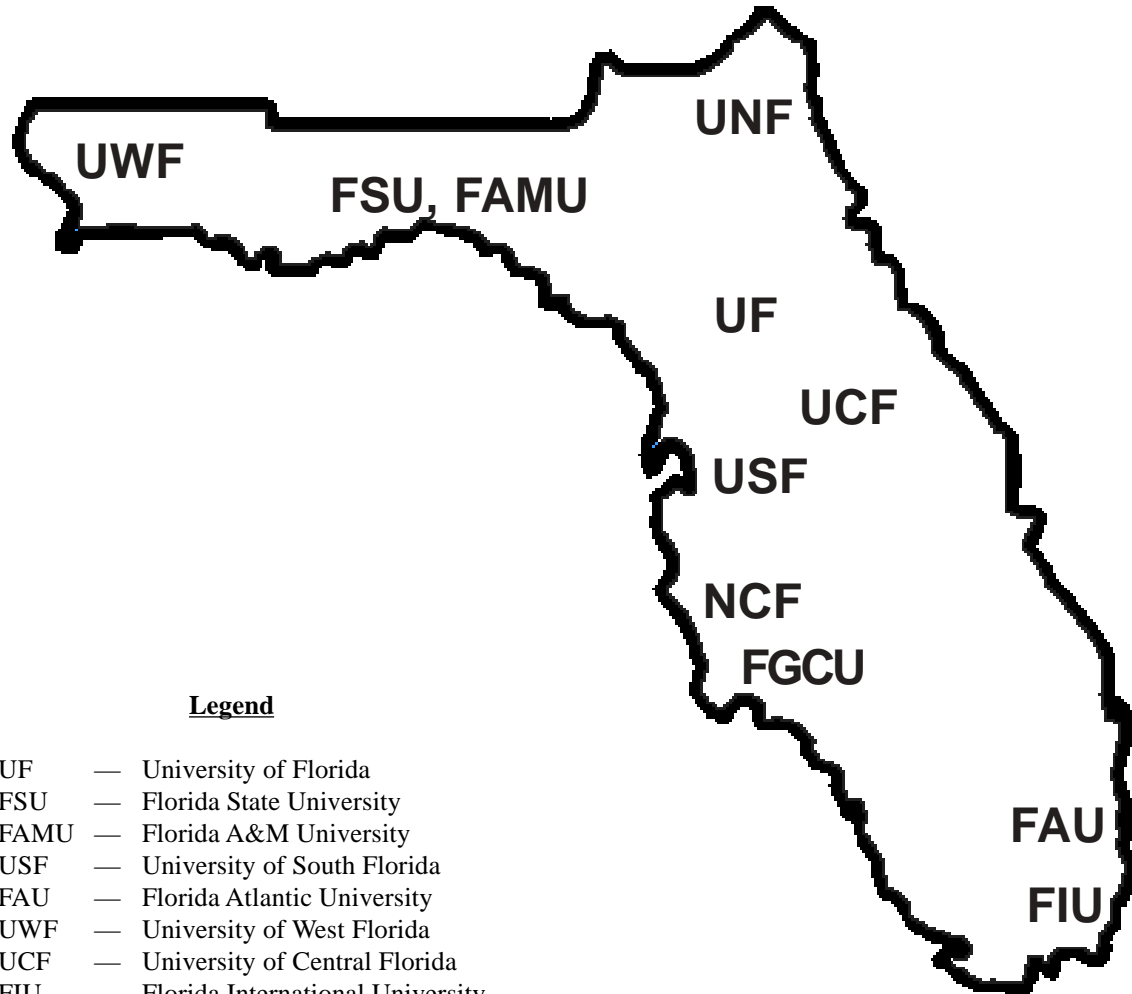


Figure 2

## State University System



### Legend

- UF — University of Florida
- FSU — Florida State University
- FAMU — Florida A&M University
- USF — University of South Florida
- FAU — Florida Atlantic University
- UWF — University of West Florida
- UCF — University of Central Florida
- FIU — Florida International University
- UNF — University of North Florida
- FGCU — Florida Gulf Coast University
- NCF — New College of Florida

## Student Profile

<b>Table 7.</b>			
<b>Academic Performance Indicators of 1994 Florida Public High School Graduates</b>			
	<b>Community College System</b>	<b>State University System</b>	<b>Independent Colleges and Universities</b>
High School GPA	2.86	3.43	3.46
SAT Score	835.6	973.7	977.2
ACT Score*	19.2	21.1	20.2

\* Includes only students with no SAT score.

Source: *Postsecondary Progression of 1993-94 Florida Public High School Graduates: 2001 Update*, Florida Postsecondary Education Planning Commission, 2001

NOTE: *The data provided in Tables 7 and 9 are the result of a statutorily mandated continuing study of the 1994 class of Florida high school graduates.*

<b>Table 8.</b>				
<b>Ethnic Diversity at ICUF Institutions, Fall 2000</b>				
	<b>% White</b>	<b>% Black</b>	<b>% Hispanic</b>	<b>% Other</b>
Undergraduate	57	20	14	9
Graduate	53	17	13	17
Total	54	17	13	13

<b>Ethnic Diversity at SUS Institutions, Fall 2000</b>				
	<b>% White</b>	<b>% Black</b>	<b>% Hispanic</b>	<b>% Other</b>
Undergraduate	61	15	15	8
Graduate	63	9	10	17
Total	62	14	14	9

Source: Accountability Reports from the Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida and the State University System, 2001.

<b>Table 9.</b>			
<b>Gender of First-Time-in-College Students, Fall 1994</b>			
<b>Gender</b>	<b>% Community College System</b>	<b>% State University System</b>	<b>% Independent Colleges and Universities</b>
Female	57.3	57.8	62.4
Male	42.7	42.2	37.6

Source: *Postsecondary Progression of 1993-94 Florida Public High School Graduates: 2001 Update*, Florida Postsecondary Education Planning Commission, 2001

As Tables 7, 8, and 9 illustrate, the student population of the ICUF institutions closely mirrors that of the SUS. The ICUF student population is roughly equivalent to the SUS when measured by high school academic indicators, ethnic diversity, and gender.

<b>Income Range</b>	<b>% Community College System</b>	<b>% State University System</b>	<b>% Independent Colleges and Universities</b>
Less than \$10,000	5.9	4.3	7.5
\$10,000-\$14,999	7.4	5.0	6.7
\$15,000-\$19,999	8.2	6.1	8.5
\$20,000-\$24,999	8.9	7.0	8.9
\$25,000-\$29,999	8.8	7.3	8.8
\$30,000-\$34,999	9.5	7.8	8.0
\$35,000-\$39,999	10.3	8.7	9.1
\$40,000-\$49,999	13.1	12.4	12.4
\$50,000-\$59,999	10.0	11.1	9.3
\$60,000-\$69,999	6.3	8.5	5.6
\$70,000 and over	11.5	21.8	15.2

Source: *Postsecondary Progression of 1993-94 Florida Public High School Graduates: 2001 Update*, Florida Postsecondary Education Planning Commission, 2001

The ICUF population is also similar to the SUS student population with regard to family income. Of particular note, the SUS data given in Table 10 shows a higher percentage of students with a family income exceeding \$50,000, \$60,000, and \$70,000 than the ICUF student population.

- **Resident/Nonresident Status**

<b>Level</b>	<b>SUS</b>	<b>ICUF</b>
Undergraduate	91.1	60
Graduate	82.6	66
Total Enrollment	89	63

Source: SUS data are from the *Florida Division of Colleges and Universities 2000-2001 Fact Book*; also data requested from office of the Education Policy Council for Education Policy Research, Feb. 2003; and ICUF data are from the *Accountability Report 2000*; prepared by Blair T. Atherton, Ph.D.

According to a report from the ICUF office, the percentage of instate students attending ICUF institutions has exceeded 60 percent since 1998, largely due to an overall increase in FRAG allocations.

## Providing Higher Education to Florida Students: Revenue and Expense

Direct appropriations to the state's universities for general operations and capital expenses are easily identified but the state also contributes indirectly to the SUS through its support of student scholarships and loan programs and grants that fund faculty research. In addition, tax advantages and matching grant programs encourage private gifts and the SUS provides a variety of services in addition to classroom instruction.

Revenue estimates in ICUF institutions are easier to calculate. The primary source of revenue is student tuition; however, individual institutions receive public funds from both the state and federal governments and occasionally from other government entities. And, of course, they depend heavily on contributions from corporations, foundations and private individuals and families.

SUS officials estimate the cost of expanding enrollment at the SUS institutions to be \$10,800 per full-time equivalent student (FTE).<sup>2</sup> Thus, if 10,000 new students enrolled in the SUS, the increase in operating costs to SUS would be \$108,000,000. This figure does not take into account other costs, including buildings and land. This estimate is used by SUS officials for planning for new growth.

	Tuition and Fees	Room and Board
<b>SUS</b>		
Resident	\$ 2,690	\$5,246
Nonresident	\$12,029	\$5,246
<b>ICUF</b>		
All Students	\$13,879	\$5,732

Sources: ICUF: Institutional student cost data solicited from individual institutions.  
SUS: *Student Tuition and Fees*; Florida Division of Colleges and Universities Website.

Table 12 illustrates that it costs more for a nonresident to attend an SUS institution than a Florida resident. Out-of-state students pay approximately four times the in-state resident rate. There is no cost differential for ICUF students whether they are residents or nonresidents—the tuition is the same.

The ICUF estimate is an average of tuition and fees and is based on a random selection of ICUF institutions. The SUS estimate is the average of the institutions in the system for full-time resident and nonresident students. All tuition numbers are based on full-time attendance.

<sup>2</sup> "Challenges and Choices: The Master Plan for Florida Postsecondary Education," Postsecondary Education Planning Commission, January 1998.

The average cost to taxpayers for each student enrolled in the SUS has been calculated in several different ways by different education authorities. The average of these different methods is \$12,181.

The average tuition at the SUS institutions is about \$2,700. The net cost to Florida taxpayers is therefore the difference between the two figures: \$12,000 minus \$2,700 or \$9,300 to be provided by taxpayers.

On average, SUS students are enrolled for about 6 years before they graduate.<sup>3</sup> The average for ICUF students is 4.1 years.<sup>4</sup> If the differential cost to taxpayers – SUS vs. ICUF – is \$9,300 per year, the ICUF student saves the state a total of \$55,800. If the ICUF student has received a FRAG grant during the 4.1 years of enrollment, the added cost to the state would be 4.1 times \$2,686 or \$11,012. Thus, the net savings to taxpayers is \$55,800 minus \$11,012 or \$44,788.

<b>Table 13. State Financial Assistance for Students at Independent Colleges and Universities</b>	
Program	Amount
Florida Private Student Assistance Grant	\$ 10,737,529
Florida Resident Access Grant	\$ 79,841,350
Bright Futures Scholarship*	\$ 61,311,600
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$151,890,479</b>

Source: *Florida Legislature General Appropriations Act, Fiscal Year 2002-03.*

\*Based on 28.0% of Florida eligible students attending in-state independent institutions.

ICUF institutions receive financial assistance from a variety of sources. Of the roughly \$152,000,000 provided by the state of Florida, the largest item is the FRAG allocation, approximately \$80,000,000. It is the allocation of greatest concern to most ICUF presidents who believe their student enrollment to be heavily dependent on this source of student financial aid.

Nearly 85 percent of ICUF students qualify for and receive financial aid.

<sup>3</sup> Division of Colleges and Universities, Florida Board of Education, *2001-02 Fact Book.*

<sup>4</sup> *ICUF: A Vital Role in Florida's K-20 Seamless Education System*, April, 2002

## Findings

Certain conclusions stand out in our review of the data presented in the foregoing sections.

- The students who enroll in Florida's independent colleges and universities are similar in terms of their academic indicators (high school grades, standardized test scores, general competence) to those who enroll in the state's community colleges or the State University System. Together, the three sets of postsecondary institutions do a commendable job of meeting the needs of the people of Florida. Any reduction of service by any of the three would have seriously deleterious effects for the state.
- ICUF students are generally similar in ethnic and gender makeup to those who attend the community colleges and the SUS.
- There are, overall, no significant differences in family income between ICUF students and those who attend community colleges and the SUS.
- The location of the 27 ICUF institutions (with operating units at about 180 sites) provides educational opportunities of untold worth to Florida citizens, including many who could not enroll as regular or full-time students.
- In terms of production of academic degrees, the contribution of the ICUF institutions is essential to the well-being of Florida. More than 30 percent of all degrees awarded in 2001 were conferred by ICUF institutions, totaling more than 22,000 degrees.
- Degrees awarded in fields of special needs include education (over 20 percent at the bachelor's level, 60 percent of the doctorates) and similar production in nursing, with even larger numbers in information technology and business management.
- ICUF institutions enroll a smaller percentage of resident students than SUS, as would be expected (63 percent of total enrollment vs. 89 percent). Instate ICUF enrollment increased sharply after the increase in the FRAG allotments in the late 1990s.
- Tuition at SUS institutions averages about \$2,700 a year for Florida residents; at ICUF institutions, tuition is about \$14,000 a year for both resident and nonresidents.
- In the 2001-02 budget, the legislature allocated \$117.9 million for support of ICUF institutions, not including need-based funding for students. The largest amount is the FRAG allocation of \$79.8 million dollars.

- ICUF institution presidents call special attention of legislators each year to the FRAG allocation, believing FRAG awards to be essential for large numbers of students from lower income families. The institutions emphasize the importance of the legislature to fund FRAG at the level (\$3,000 per student per year) committed by legislative action in 1995.
- The authors of this study have concluded that Florida's 27 independent colleges and universities provide an essential complement to the programs offered by the state's community colleges and universities, that the people of Florida are well served by those institutions, and they urge the Florida Legislature to recognize their unique and essential place in meeting the state's obligations to provide quality higher education for our people.

In the 2002-03 academic year, 25,180 students participated in FRAG. If those students had attended a state university, they would have cost taxpayers an additional \$238,983,380. The actual cost of their FRAG awards was \$70,830,388. The cost saving to Florida taxpayers was \$168,152,992.

The point has been made that students enrolled in ICUF institutions cost taxpayers less than those enrolled in the SUS. In years when the money supply is especially tight, those responsible for the allocation of state funds have good reasons to do more than hold the line on ICUF funding, especially FRAG grants to students. There is probably no better time than this year to bring the per-student FRAG allocation to the \$3,000 level envisioned by those who established that goal in 1995.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the information gathered for the review and analysis of the institutions of higher education in Florida, the authors of this report wish to commend Florida legislators who, for many years, have acknowledged the essential role played by the independent colleges and universities.

Florida has built a strong group of independent institutions which, along with the community colleges and the SUS, are a source of pride and satisfaction to all Floridians, and especially to members of the Florida legislature whose foresight and dedication have made possible this notable achievement. And the most encouraging aspect of this is the knowledge that our best days lie ahead.

The authors of this report – on behalf of the officers and staff and the board of directors of The James Madison Institute – respectfully ask the legislative leadership, along with the membership of both houses, to give careful consideration to the following requests.

1. View ICUF institutions as an integral part of higher education in Florida – an element that is no less important to the state and to all of its citizens than the state supported/assisted institutions.

2. Take steps in the 2003 Legislature to advance the FRAG allocation toward the goal of \$3,000 per student. This figure was recommended by the 1999 legislature and the expectation was to achieve that goal at the earliest possible time.
3. Recognize the special and very specific needs of certain ICUF institutions. Inform yourselves fully about such needs and weigh carefully such expenditures against other legitimate state needs, bearing in mind that education institutions may lack the lobbying muscle of other organizations competing for state funds.
4. Visit the campuses of some of the ICUF institutions; talk with the students, meet faculty members, query their presidents. In short, get to know the institutions as most of you know your own alma maters.

### **In Closing . . .**

This study concludes that Florida's ICUF institutions are a uniquely valuable public/private partnership that provides a highly attractive return-on-investment for Florida taxpayers.

The most widely heralded component of state financial support for ICUF institutions is FRAG. The 2003 Legislature has the opportunity to leverage the state's resources by funding the promised FRAG allocation at \$3,000 per student per year.

## Notes