

**POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION PLANNING COMMISSION**

***Challenges and Choices: The Master Plan for  
Florida Postsecondary Education***

***Supplement Number 1***

***Access***



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This first supplement to *Challenges and Choices: The 1998 Master Plan for Florida Postsecondary Education* is designed to focus attention on a critical challenge identified in the Master Plan—Access—with primary emphasis on accommodating growing student demand and improving undergraduate degree attainment. While this is not the only issue addressed in the Plan, it is the one demanding the most immediate attention. Since adoption of the Plan last January, a number of policy actions and analyses have taken place including adoption of sector strategic plans by the Board of Regents and State Board of Community Colleges, development of a feasibility plan for a system of state colleges, analyses of postsecondary facilities utilization and funding requirements, and further examination of projected enrollment growth and factors related to baccalaureate degree productivity. A summary of the status of these activities and their relationship to the issue of access is provided in this document. The recommendations included in this Supplement are intended to build upon these efforts in providing guidance for the work which remains to be done in assuring access to postsecondary education for all Floridians.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The key question raised in the Master Plan was which of the possible delivery responses identified would be most effective in assuring access for growing numbers of students and improving degree productivity.

### Enhance Postsecondary Education Delivery

#### **Recommendations:**

- 1. The theme “Students First” should embrace all future efforts to address the issue of postsecondary access. In view of the social, economic, and technological changes taking place in our environment, the Board of Regents and State Board of Community Colleges should strive to eliminate any systemic, institutional, or geographic barriers to providing qualified students with postsecondary opportunities which will allow them timely access to degree attainment.***
- 2. Joint or concurrent programming involving two and four-year public and independent institutions should be the priority strategy for assuring postsecondary access for the immediate future. Neither a potential state college system nor a process for authorizing community colleges to offer baccalaureate degrees under carefully defined circumstances should be implemented at this time. However, both of these, particularly the latter, represent viable responses which may be initiated at some future date if the joint initiatives are not deemed successful.***
- 3. Until a clearly delineated plan has been adopted by the Task Force on Access consisting of representatives of the sector boards and the Commission for the establishment of future concurrent***

***Joint or concurrent programming should be the priority strategy for assuring postsecondary access for the immediate future.***

*initiatives, the 1999 Legislature should not appropriate funds for construction of new community college/university joint-use projects.*

**Use State Resources  
Effectively and  
Efficiently**

The process and level of state support can affect access directly both in terms of operations and facilities use.

**Recommendations:**

4. *The Board of Regents is to be commended for adopting the institutional mission differentiation outlined in the State University System Strategic Plan. This policy along with the differential funding by level recommended in the Master Plan represent critical components for assuring the efficient and effective delivery of higher education. Commitment to these initiatives should be maintained to give them time to have an effect. The State Board of Community Colleges is to be commended for recognizing in its Strategic Plan that increased enrollment and success can be obtained by improved motivation and performance of K-12 students rather than solely at the expense of other postsecondary sectors. In recent years, the colleges have demonstrated that the number of degrees awarded may be increased in spite of stable or declining enrollments. The access initiative proposed by the colleges should be supported by the Legislature and include performance funding tied to enrollment and graduation of targeted population students, matching support for expanded participation in bridge programs, College Reach-Out, Project STARS, and other initiatives designed to increase K-12 student transition to postsecondary education.*
5. *In view of current Public Education Capital Outlay projections which are insufficient to cover construction needed to accommodate growth and deferred maintenance, additional funding must be identified for this purpose. Postsecondary education facility needs deserve the same level of attention given to our K-12 system by the Legislature this past year.*
6. *The Florida Resident Access Grant continues to be an effective tool for promoting student access and choice as well as a strong dual system of public and independent postsecondary education. The Commission supports increasing the FRAG award to \$3000 and will continue to monitor the costs and benefits of this program to assure that the public investment is justified.*

**Address Tuition and  
Financial Aid Policies**

From a student as well as a state and institutional perspective, price and the availability of financial assistance are major factors affecting access and degree attainment.

**Recommendations:**

7. *As the Legislature and the postsecondary sector boards work to increase tuition levels to the national average, they should also increase the differential between the university tuition and the community college tuition. Included in these deliberations should be an analysis of how tuition pricing of the two postsecondary sectors jointly impact the enrollment patterns of students and the state's Two-Plus-Two system of articulation.*
8. *In light of the annual appropriation and projected growth in the Bright Futures Scholarship Program, the Office of Student Financial Assistance should conduct an annual review of need-based financial assistance programs to determine if they remain adequate to ensure that Florida's academically qualified but financially needy students have access to postsecondary education. As part of this study, OSFA should determine the extent to which students with financial need (\$200 or more) qualify for Bright Futures Scholarships.*
9. *The Office of Student Financial Assistance should annually track the postsecondary enrollment patterns of recipients of the Bright Futures Scholarship. As each cohort of Bright Futures recipients proceeds to the completion of a postsecondary degree, graduation rates should be calculated for recipients in each postsecondary sector.*

**Continually Assess  
Progress Toward  
Increased Productivity**

It is clear that the structure of Florida's postsecondary delivery system will directly determine the effectiveness of the state's efforts to increase both access and production of graduates. The Commission's longitudinal cohort research will provide important data on the progress of students from high school through postsecondary education.

**Recommendation:**

10. *An evaluation of each proposed state action to meet projected enrollment demand should include as specific criteria an analysis of its impact on baccalaureate degree productivity and the impact of the action on the statewide Articulation Agreement and Two-Plus-Two System.*

*The structure of Florida's postsecondary delivery system will directly determine the effectiveness of the state's efforts to increase both access and production of graduates.*





One of the major challenges identified in the *Challenges and Choices: The 1998 Master Plan for Florida Postsecondary Education* was student access to postsecondary opportunities. This supplement is designed to focus specifically on the issue of access to baccalaureate degrees.

Preliminary projections included in the Master Plan estimated an increase of 258,746 headcount credit enrollment between 1995 and 2010. Although recent estimates have been revised downward based in large part on lower high school graduate projections, growth of over 196,000 is still anticipated by 2010.

The Master Plan laid out a number of possible responses to this growth and called for further analysis prior to selecting the most appropriate set of strategies. Since adoption of the Master Plan, the sectors have developed their strategic plans, the issues of a system of state colleges and community college baccalaureate degrees have been addressed in detail, and further analyses have been conducted concerning enrollment projections, facilities utilization, productivity, and joint-use facilities. This supplement to the Master Plan on Access summarizes the results of this subsequent work and presents a recommended course of action for the Legislature and the postsecondary boards.

The following is excerpted from the Access section of the 1998 Master Plan and provides a framework for the remainder of this supplement.

*Though Florida's higher education institutions have been able to accommodate growth in the past, the future will most certainly require innovative ways to serve these increased demands. Florida Gulf Coast University, opened in the Fall of 1997, is the first new public institution in our state in over 25 years. Our public community colleges and state universities serve very large enrollments when compared to other states. Unlike other states, Florida relies heavily on its 2 plus 2 structure (community colleges and state universities) to meet the access needs of its citizens. In addition, our university system has grown in mission and scope to be somewhat similar to the University of California model. Board of Regents staff estimate that six of the nine universities in operation prior to this year will be classified as Carnegie Research I or Research II in 1998. Public four-year baccalaureate institutions are missing in Florida institutions which serve to provide access in other states. The advantages of a "state college system" for providing access versus a "research university model" are lower operating costs, increased emphasis on faculty teaching, a primary focus on undergraduate education, and a limited institutional mission without doctoral programs or a heavy concentration on research.*

*The Commission recognizes that the State must provide additional capacity in higher education and is interested in expanding the ability of students to obtain baccalaureate degrees offered at one location (lessening*

## INTRODUCTION

This supplement presents a recommended course of action for the Legislature and the postsecondary boards.

*the need for a student to enroll at a different location to complete a degree). With these considerations in mind, the Commission has identified the following responses to meet the future postsecondary access needs in our state:*

- *Increase enrollment at each existing SUS institution. This response would simply accommodate a significant portion of the projected enrollment growth by allowing growth at the ten existing universities.*
- *Establish a state college system. This response would entail the establishment of a “middle tier” system of public colleges in Florida that would focus solely on the provision of baccalaureate-level instruction.*
- *Authorize community colleges to offer selected baccalaureate degrees. This response would add upper-level instruction at the community colleges in selected fields leading to the baccalaureate.*
- *Increase the number of joint-use facilities at community colleges and state universities. This response would involve the establishment of additional “joint-use facilities” at community colleges and state universities that would allow students to take both community college and state university courses on site. There are two variations of this response. The first would be based on existing funding and workload practices. The second “modified” version would rely on funding and faculty workload associated with undergraduate teaching institutions.*
- *Increase the state subsidy to in-state students attending Florida private institutions. This response would entail an increase in the Florida Resident Access Grant (FRAG) from its current level (\$1,600 per year) to encourage more Florida residents to attend in-state private institutions.*
- *Increase the use of distance learning and instructional technology. This response would seek to increase access to higher education via expanded use of distance learning and instructional technology.*

*The term “response” rather than “option” has been specifically used here because these are clearly not mutually exclusive ways of addressing the projected enrollment growth. In fact, no single response is likely to be adequate to meet the need. The State will need to use a combination of most, if not all, of these responses to meet enrollment demand. The Commission’s analysis identified potential costs for each of these responses.*

<i>Response</i>	<i>Annual Cost per Additional 10,000 FTE students</i>
<i>Expand enrollment at SUS institutions</i>	<i>\$108.2 million</i>
<i>Expand current joint-use facilities</i>	<i>100.3 million</i>
<i>Create modified joint-use facilities</i>	<i>60.2 million</i>
<i>Establish state college system</i>	<i>76.9 million</i>
<i>Authorize community colleges to offer selected baccalaureate</i>	<i>66.5 million</i>
<i>Increase state subsidy to students in private institutions*</i>	<i>30.0 million</i>

*\*Based on annual Florida Resident Access Grant Award of \$3,000 per student. This figure does not include the cost of increasing the value of all existing FRAG awards (approximately \$32.5 million based on 20,344 recipients in 1997-98 and an additional \$1,600 per award).*

The 1998 Legislature addressed these recommendations with the following proviso accompanying Specific Appropriation 57 in the General Appropriations Act (Chapter 98-422).

*Prior to the release of the remaining unallocated funds in Specific Appropriation 57, the Postsecondary Education Planning Commission shall develop a feasibility plan outlining the actions necessary to create a "middle tier" system for our state. The plan should address governance issues related to implementation of this response to access. This plan should be completed by December 31, 1998, for submission to the Legislature for consideration.*

*The Board of Regents shall prepare a detailed plan for expanding the joint-use model. The plan should address the anticipated number and location, optimal size, instructional loads of faculty, and anticipated funding requests for both operating and capital costs of these joint-use centers (both in total funding and on a per-student basis).*

*The State Board of Community Colleges shall develop a methodology for determining the need for and costs of offering limited baccalaureate programs at selected community colleges. These recommendations should be completed by December 31, 1998, for review by the Postsecondary Education Planning Commission and submission to the Legislature. The State Board shall specifically consider the potential for development of such programs at Miami-Dade Community College, St. Petersburg Junior College, Florida Community College at Jacksonville and South Florida Community College.*

These and related actions and analyses are discussed in the following sections.

## BACKGROUND

Since adoption of the Master Plan in January 1998, there have been a number of actions and analyses with a direct bearing on the issue of access both in terms of accommodating a growing number of postsecondary students and increasing the production of degree recipients. These efforts include work done by the Commission, the sector boards, and the Legislature and include the sector strategic plans, a feasibility plan for a system of state colleges, analyses of postsecondary facilities utilization and funding, and examinations of degree productivity, articulation, projected enrollment growth, and the costs and benefits of the Florida Resident Access Grant. Each of these is discussed below from the perspective of its relevance to access.

## STATE UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN

Adopted in November 1998, the SUS Strategic Plan addresses access in several ways. First it provides for clear delineation of missions for each of the state universities by assigning each institution to the following mission categories adapted from the Carnegie classification system.

Comprehensive (primarily undergraduate and Master's level  
with selected doctoral education)

Florida Gulf Coast University  
University of West Florida  
Florida A&M University  
University of North Florida

SUS Strategic Plan  
provides for clear  
delineation of missions  
for each of the state  
universities.

Research II (an emphasis on graduate education and  
research as well as undergraduate education)

University of Central Florida  
Florida International University  
Florida Atlantic University

Research I (major research universities based on criteria  
of the Association of American Universities)

University of Florida  
Florida State University  
University of South Florida

The SUS Strategic Plan also calls for undergraduate enrollment to be held constant at the Research I main campuses and be allowed to increase at the Research II institutions in accordance with plans approved by the Board of Regents. Comprehensive universities are to be in the forefront of addressing undergraduate demand along with branch campuses and concurrent use facilities of research universities.

The SUS Plan also establishes as a goal increasing first-time-in-college enrollment to include all qualified applicants up to a maximum of 25 percent of the previous year's high school graduating class. Analysis by the Board and the Department of Education indicates that the number of qualified FTIC students will be equivalent to approximately 20 percent of the previous year's high school graduates. The Plan further specifies that there will be no significant increase in out-of-state or alternative admissions.

The State Board of Community Colleges adopted its Strategic Plan in January 1999. Included is a process for reviewing and approving the establishment of baccalaureate degrees responsive to unmet workforce needs. The State Board is committed to working with the state universities and other postsecondary institutions in addressing such needs. However, it recognizes that there may be instances when a stand-alone baccalaureate is required.

According to their Strategic Plan, the Community College System now enrolls about 30 percent of prior high school graduates. The Plan goes on to establish a goal of increasing this to a level of 45 percent. The Plan states:

The way to reach this goal is not by decreasing the enrollments of other sectors of postsecondary education but rather to work with the K-12 system so that :

1. more students complete high school and receive a standard diploma;
2. more students are prepared to continue their education after high school;
3. more students actually go on to further postsecondary education; and,
4. more students are retained and complete either a certificate and/or associate degree.

In response to the directive in Specific Appropriation 57 related to establishment of a state college or middle tier system to provide undergraduate access, the Commission developed and adopted a *Feasibility Plan for a State College System* (December 1998).

While the findings and conclusions of this analysis do not provide a comprehensive answer to the overall issue of access to postsecondary education, they do represent an important component and are summarized below.

## **COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM STRATEGIC PLAN**

Included is a process for reviewing and approving the establishment of baccalaureate degrees responsive to unmet workforce needs.

## **FEASIBILITY PLAN FOR STATE COLLEGE/MIDDLE TIER SYSTEM**

**Guiding Principles** The Commission adopted the following principles for design and development of a system of state colleges.

- A state college system would not be expected to fully accommodate the projected enrollment growth and is viewed as only one of the several responses that the State might use to meet future demand.
- A state college system would be developed through a combination of both existing and new facilities, with initial development taking place through the state's existing system of postsecondary education.
- A state college system would primarily offer education at the baccalaureate level but could also offer a limited number of Master's level courses and programs.
- A state college system would primarily offer degree programs in core areas such as liberal arts and sciences, business, education, and social sciences.
- The criteria for locating the state college system throughout the state would be primarily market driven, focusing on a demonstrated local need and existing local postsecondary opportunities.

**Role and Mission** The Commission adopted the following functions concerning the role and mission of a state college system.

- Providing high quality undergraduate education at an affordable price.
- Offering core programs in the liberal arts and sciences as well as selected professional programs such as business and education.
- Promoting regional and statewide economic development and revitalization efforts.
- Encouraging inter-institutional cooperation as a means of meeting educational needs efficiently and effectively.
- Providing upper-division undergraduate opportunities for community college transfer students.

The Commission considered potential governance structures for a state college system including the following options: establish the colleges within an existing system; establish the colleges as a separate system; or create individual institutions with local governing boards.

While the Commission supports the concept of institutional boards for a system of state colleges, it believes that assigning oversight of such institutions to either existing public postsecondary system would be susceptible to concerns regarding mission creep. The Commission opted in favor of creation of a separate state coordinating board for any four-year institutions that may be established or designated. Such a board would enable development of the unique identity and mission that these institutions would possess. To guard against unnecessary duplication of programs, the Commission suggested that it have a role in program review and approval. This responsibility is not uncommon for similar boards in states with multiple delivery systems such as Texas and Virginia.

The report considered operating, capital, and land acquisition costs for the creation of new state colleges and also addressed the possibility of designating existing campuses to fulfill this role. Initial start-up costs were estimated at \$33.8 million per institution with a first year enrollment of 1,100 FTE. Since \$27.5 million (81 percent) of this estimate is for capital construction (\$17.5 million) and site development (\$10 million), it is clear that using existing campuses with available capacity would greatly reduce costs in the short term.

The Commission supports the use of existing community college and concurrent campuses as the initial sites for any efforts to establish a system of state colleges. The cost estimates for creation of the state college (middle tier) system provide an excellent benchmark against which the cost of other proposed responses to postsecondary access needs may be measured.

These findings and conclusions respond to the request of the Legislature to outline what a system of state colleges would look like in terms of mission, governance, and cost if it were to be established. While the Commission was not specifically directed in proviso to answer the question of whether such a system should be created, this will be addressed in this supplement. There are a number of factors which suggest that establishment of such a system is premature at this time. First, as noted earlier, the recently adopted Strategic Plan of the State University System establishes differentiated missions for each of the institutions and includes four institutions whose primary focus will be undergraduate education. More time is needed to determine the effectiveness of the State University System's approach to increasing baccalaureate access and production.

## Governance

## Cost Estimates

## Final Note

*There are a number of factors which suggest that establishment of such a system is premature at this time.*

Second, initiatives concerning concurrent use facilities involving both public and independent postsecondary institutions are currently being considered by the Legislature. These are discussed in subsequent pages of this supplement.

## FACILITIES CAPACITY AND USE

An important factor in accommodating future access demands is the capacity and utilization of existing facilities available in postsecondary education.

The status of three initiatives related to this issue are described below.

### Facilities Capacity

As a follow-up to the Master Plan and in response to a request by Senator Jack Latvala, the Commission, with the assistance of MGT of America, prepared an **Analysis of Facilities Capacity in Florida Public Higher Education** (December 1998). The analysis provides an overview of public higher education space planning models and examines projected need using both current and previous state adopted standards. In addition, projected need is examined in comparison with selected peer institution benchmarks in other states.

*Almost \$1 billion would be required to address enrollment growth and deferred maintenance in the state university and community college systems.*

Using current standards, approximately 10.7 million assignable square feet costing \$1.82 billion will be needed to accommodate projected enrollment growth over the next five years. In addition, \$443 million in deferred maintenance needs have been identified, bringing the total funds required to almost \$2.3 billion. Based on current PECO revenue estimates and the space utilization standards adopted in 1995, the report concludes that expansion of bonding capacity by almost \$1 billion would be required to address enrollment growth (undergraduate, graduate, and professional) and deferred maintenance in the state university and community college systems. There are a number of factors that can affect this estimate, including the accuracy of both PECO revenue and enrollment growth projections, as well as policy decisions concerning the future delivery of postsecondary education through, for example, concurrent use facilities, public/private partnerships, and distance learning technology. It should be noted that under the space utilization standards in place prior to 1995, projected revenue would be sufficient to cover anticipated enrollment growth and deferred maintenance. This is not to imply that the prior standards were adequate. The analysis indicates that Florida institutions, with few exceptions, generally have fewer assignable square feet per FTE than their peers in other states.

The Legislature's Office of Economic and Demographic Research (EDR) was requested by Senator Latvala to conduct a similar analysis. Their conclusions concerning future need differed somewhat from those of the Commission. Several factors explain this. First, with regard to the State



University System, the Commission study recognizes the space requirements for each eligible student in the SUS, regardless of student level. The EDR report considers only undergraduate students. With regard to community college enrollment, the EDR study assumes no growth over the next five years. The Commission report, completed after the Division of Community Colleges prepared and released its latest enrollment forecast, anticipates enrollment growth of 18 percent over this period.

In the area of space allowances, the EDR study treats the current square feet per student by institution as the de facto state policy. The Commission study is built from the space planning standards (both current and historic) recognized in statute and administrative code.

Finally, the EDR report acknowledges that it does not include deferred maintenance in its estimate of need while the Commission study does consider this issue in calculating cost estimates.

The 1998 General Appropriations Act included the following directive in Proviso accompanying Special Appropriation 57:

**Joint or Concurrent Use Facilities**

*The Board of Regents shall prepare a detailed plan for expanding the joint-use model. The plan should address the anticipated number and location, optimal size, instructional loads of faculty, and anticipated funding requests for both operating and capital costs of these joint-use centers (both in total funding and on a per-student basis). . .*

*The Board of Regents and the state Board of Community Colleges shall include the following projects in their review and analysis of potential projects that may receive funds from the unallocated portion of this appropriation: a Central Florida Community College/UF Joint Use Facility, a Santa Fe Community College/UF Joint Use Facility, and a Daytona Beach Community College/Volusia School Board/Flagler School Board Charter Technical School. This plan should be completed by December 31, 1998, for review by the Postsecondary Education Planning Commission.*

Daytona Beach Community College Flagler and Volusia School Districts	Charter Technical School	\$5,003,610
Central Florida Community College UCF,FSU,FAMU,St. Leo College, and Webster College	Joint-Use Multi-Partner Project (Ocala Campus)	\$4,200,000
Brevard Community College University of Central Florida	Joint-Use Partnership (Palm Bay Campus)	\$1,596,390
Miami-Dade Community College Florida International University	Environmental Science and Criminal Justice Programs	\$4,200,000

*After January 1, 1999, the State Board of Education may release funds for specific projects which have been recommended by the Board of Regents and the State Board of Community Colleges and approved by the Postsecondary Education Planning Commission.*

At its January 22, 1999 and February 19, 1999 meetings, the Commission considered and approved funding from the \$15 million for joint projects identified pursuant to Specific Appropriation 57. The following projects were reviewed and recommended jointly by the State Board of Community Colleges and the Board of Regents:

In a related action, a task force has been established by the Chancellor of the State University System and the Executive Director of the Community College System to develop a plan to make it easier for Florida residents to obtain a college degree through the development of concurrent-use campuses across the state. These campuses will generally be located at community colleges, which will offer lower-division course work, with one or more state universities offering upper-division instruction leading to a baccalaureate degree. The Commission has been invited to participate on this task force, which should complete its work by this fall.

### **Proposed Legislation**

*The bill would involve public and independent, Florida and non-Florida, postsecondary institutions in providing baccalaureate degree access.*

Senator Donald Sullivan has filed Senate Bill 664 creating a site-determined baccalaureate degree access program for consideration by the 1999 Legislature. The bill would involve public and independent, Florida and non-Florida, postsecondary institutions in providing baccalaureate degree access in areas underserved by four-year institutions. Funding equivalent to that provided for upper-division instruction in the SUS would be awarded to programs reviewed and approved by the Postsecondary Education Planning Commission.

### **BACCALAUREATE DEGREE PRODUCTION**

The Commission has consistently stressed the importance of attainment of educational objectives, in this case baccalaureate degrees, as well as entry level access. The total number of baccalaureate degrees produced by Florida's colleges and universities—both public and private—is well below national averages in relation to the State's working age population. Based on a 1996 national comparison, Florida ranks 46<sup>th</sup> in this regard. Since 1995 the Commission has been conducting a longitudinal study of students in Florida's postsecondary delivery system to identify factors that either impede or accelerate the progress of students toward attainment of a baccalaureate degree. Based on high school students who graduated in 1993-94, the analysis is examining the data based on gender and race/ethnicity, pre-college and college academic accomplishment, academic ability, institutional differences, employment and enrollment load. When available, information concerning educational aspirations, family income,

and extracurricular activities will also be considered. As these students move through the educational pipeline, graduate, and enter the workforce in the next few years, additional information concerning the state's and students' return on investment in postsecondary education will be available.

To help inform further discussion concerning the factors contributing to Florida's situation, the Commission consulted with the editor of Postsecondary Opportunity and also requested the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) to conduct a statistical analysis of degree production in Florida as compared to other states. **A Brief Analysis of Baccalaureate Degree Production in Florida** (December 3, 1998) describes the results of this analysis. The NCHEMS document identifies four predictor variables that, together, explain almost two-thirds of the variance in overall baccalaureate degree production. These include: (1) the state's high school graduation rate, (2) the college continuation rate for those graduating from high school, (3) the ratio of the state's total upper-division to lower-division enrollment (including public and private institutions), and (4) the ratio between the state's total upper-division enrollment and its total number of baccalaureate degrees granted. The report acknowledges the complex interrelationships among these variables that exist, particularly when the influence of background demographic characteristics and the state's overall approach to delivery of postsecondary education are taken into account. However, it goes on to identify policy influences that appear to be primary contributions to the situation in Florida including the relative emphasis placed on public/private alternatives, the relative investment in public community colleges, and overall upper-division capacity. The report summarizes the following options available to seek improvement in the baccalaureate production pipeline.

- **Increasing upper-division capacity.** A major obstacle to increased baccalaureate degree production in Florida appears to be the relatively limited numbers of enrollments in the upper division in comparison to the state's college-aged population. Policy options aimed at increasing such capacity might include:

Developing new open-admission four-year public institutions.

Allowing selected community colleges to offer course work leading to baccalaureate degrees (either on their own or acting as regional centers for four-year institutions).

Modifying the missions of existing four-year public institutions to increase their size, especially at the upper division.

***The total number of baccalaureate degrees produced by Florida's colleges and universities is well below national average.***

Developing incentives for private institutions to increase their enrollments and graduation rates. A capitation approach (such as New York's Bundy Program) in which independent institutions are granted a performance incentive for each baccalaureate degree produced for Florida citizens might be especially beneficial here.

Using technology to deliver baccalaureate course work and/or entire baccalaureate degree programs.

- **Increasing lower-division/upper-division conversion rates.** Results of the analysis suggest the Florida's heavy investment in open-access two-year colleges can be a double-edge sword. On the one hand, it increases access to college to many citizens who might like to eventually attain a baccalaureate degree. On the other, it may create challenges of articulation between community colleges and universities that are hard to overcome, especially, experience suggests, for minority students. Given this situation, some policy options might be:

Aggressively pursuing policies designed to remove remaining barriers to articulation between two-year and four-year institutions. Especially promising here may be developing articulation policies based, at least in part, on assessed competencies rather than courses completed.

Changing admissions standards at selected four-year institutions to increase first-time enrollments and to eliminate the need for articulation for less able students. Indeed, substantial research suggests that attrition among less able (but still college-capable) students is a considerable problem when such students are forced by policy to change institutions in the course of their enrollment.

Allowing (or even encouraging) designated four-year institutions to offer developmental instruction in basic skills as appropriate and as required.

Allowing public community colleges to offer articulable upper-division course work.

Encouraging four-year institutions to develop accelerated baccalaureate programs that enable selected students to complete degrees in three years, attend year-round, and/or to complete substantial portions of their course work at a distance or through technology.

- **Increasing college continuation rates.** While the decision to go to college is in part outside the control of policy, experience in other states suggests a number of options that might be considered:

Encouraging greater use of high school concurrent enrollment options for both two-year and four-year public institutions.

Modifying admissions policies at public four-year institutions (especially for minorities) to emphasize factors known to be related to later college success but that are not captured by admissions tests like the SAT (e.g., the kind of “non-cognitive predictors” used heavily at such institutions as the University of Maryland and the University of Michigan).

The analysis concludes by observing that the fact that Florida is well below average at each stage of the baccalaureate production pipeline, with the exception of graduating upper-division students, suggests that a broad combination of strategies will be needed.

The 1998 Legislature directed the Commission to “evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the 2 + 2 system.” The final report of this assignment, *Evaluation of Florida’s Two-Plus-Two Articulation System* (February 1999), addressed three major issues—admissions, articulation/transfer, and access—with regard to access, tuition and financial aid are identified as significant factors. In addition to reiterating past Commission recommendations concerning setting tuition at reasonable levels while providing adequate assistance for those with financial need, the report makes several additional observations including the need for differentiation between community college and university tuition levels and the need to assess the adequacy of Florida’s need-based programs in light of the projected growth of the Bright Futures Scholarship. The report notes that “Florida’s low university tuition to community college tuition ratio has directly influenced the postsecondary paths and enrollment patterns of high school graduates.” In a similar vein, the availability of need and merit based aid can have a profound effect on students’ enrollment decisions.

It was noted at the onset of this Supplement that overall projected enrollment growth through 2010 has been revised downward by the Commission. This situation is due in part to reductions in the anticipated numbers of high school graduates. The Legislature, Governor’s Office, and others have expressed interest in not only overall growth but how this enrollment should be distributed among the postsecondary sectors.

## **FLORIDA’S TWO-PLUS-TWO ARTICULATION SYSTEM**

*Florida’s low university tuition to community college tuition ratio has directly influenced the postsecondary paths and enrollment patterns of high school graduates.*

## **PROJECTED ENROLLMENT**

To address this question, Commission staff have convened a series of meetings with representatives of the sectors as well as the Office of Economic and Demographic Research to attempt to reach consensus on reasonable growth ranges for each type of institution. The goal is to reach agreement on these projections for use by the Legislature and the postsecondary sectors.

## **COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS OF THE FLORIDA RESIDENT ACCESS GRANT**

The Commission has consistently recognized the significant role played by independent institutions in providing postsecondary education opportunities. In 1998-99, the Florida Resident Access Grant (FRAG) is the largest single appropriation benefiting independent higher education in Florida, expending \$40.9 million to grant approximately 22,000 students a maximum award of \$1,800. Since 1994, the Legislature has assigned responsibility to the Commission for oversight of the cost-effectiveness and benefits of this program (s. 240.147(15), F.S.).

*The State should continue  
to support the FRAG  
program.*

In January 1999, the Commission approved the latest *Cost Benefit Analysis of the Florida Resident Access Grant*. Based on this analysis, the Commission concluded that the FRAG is cost-effective, given the current policies governing public sector tuition and subsidies. The FRAG assists private institutions to compete for students and contributes to both student and institutional diversity. Given the policies in place, the State should continue to support the administration of the FRAG program, as authorized in statute. However, the report does provide several suggestions for calculating the FRAG award level and developing cost comparisons in the future, including revisiting the 40 percent of state university costs on which the FRAG is based and factoring in both community college and capital outlay expenditures. In addition, the report calls for an increased effort in publicizing the FRAG to parents and high school students across the State. Only when students are aware of the FRAG can its potential for expanding student choice and relieving access issues be maximized. The report suggests that future assessments should address this issue by incorporating student interviews and surveys into the analysis.

This first supplement to *Challenges and Choices: The 1998 Master Plan for Florida Postsecondary Education* is designed to focus attention on a critical challenge identified in the Master Plan—Access—with primary emphasis on accommodating growing student demand and improving undergraduate degree attainment. While this is not the only issue addressed in the Plan, it is the one demanding the most immediate attention. Since adoption of the Plan last January, a number of policy actions and analyses have taken place including adoption of sector strategic plans by the Board of Regents and State Board of Community Colleges, development of a feasibility plan for a system of state colleges, analyses of postsecondary facilities utilization and funding requirements, and further examination of projected enrollment growth and factors related to baccalaureate degree productivity. A summary of the status of these activities and their relationship to the issue of access is provided in this document. The recommendations included in this Supplement are intended to build upon these efforts in providing guidance for the work which remains to be done in assuring access to postsecondary education for all Floridians.

The key question raised in the Master Plan was which of the possible delivery responses identified would be most effective in assuring access for growing numbers of students and improving degree productivity.

**Recommendations:**

1. ***The theme “Students First” should embrace all future efforts to address the issue of postsecondary access. In view of the social, economic, and technological changes taking place in our environment, the Board of Regents and State Board of Community Colleges should strive to eliminate any systemic, institutional, or geographic barriers to providing qualified students with postsecondary opportunities which will allow them timely access to degree attainment.***
2. ***Joint or concurrent programming involving two and four-year public and independent institutions should be the priority strategy for assuring postsecondary access for the immediate future. Neither a potential state college system nor a process for authorizing community colleges to offer baccalaureate degrees under carefully defined circumstances should be implemented at this time. However, both of these, particularly the latter, represent viable responses which may be initiated at some future date if the joint initiatives are not deemed successful.***
3. ***Until a clearly delineated plan has been adopted by the Task Force on Access consisting of representatives of the sector boards and the Commission for the establishment of future concurrent***

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Enhance Postsecondary Education Delivery

***Joint or concurrent programming should be the priority strategy for assuring postsecondary access for the immediate future.***

*initiatives, the 1999 Legislature should not appropriate funds for construction of new community college/university joint-use projects.*

**Use State Resources  
Effectively and  
Efficiently**

The process and level of state support can affect access directly both in terms of operations and facilities use.

**Recommendations:**

4. ***The Board of Regents is to be commended for adopting the institutional mission differentiation outlined in the State University System Strategic Plan. This policy along with the differential funding by level recommended in the Master Plan represent critical components for assuring the efficient and effective delivery of higher education. Commitment to these initiatives should be maintained to give them time to have an effect. The State Board of Community Colleges is to be commended for recognizing in its Strategic Plan that increased enrollment and success can be obtained by improved motivation and performance of K-12 students rather than solely at the expense of other postsecondary sectors. In recent years, the colleges have demonstrated that the number of degrees awarded may be increased in spite of stable or declining enrollments. The access initiative proposed by the colleges should be supported by the Legislature and include performance funding tied to enrollment and graduation of targeted population students, matching support for expanded participation in bridge programs, College Reach-Out, Project STARS, and other initiatives designed to increase K-12 student transition to postsecondary education.***
5. ***In view of current Public Education Capital Outlay projections which are insufficient to cover construction needed to accommodate growth and deferred maintenance, additional funding must be identified for this purpose. Postsecondary education facility needs deserve the same level of attention given to our K-12 system by the Legislature this past year.***
6. ***The Florida Resident Access Grant continues to be an effective tool for promoting student access and choice as well as a strong dual system of public and independent postsecondary education. The Commission supports increasing the FRAG award to \$3000 and will continue to monitor the costs and benefits of this program to assure that the public investment is justified.***

**Address Tuition and  
Financial Aid Policies**

From a student as well as a state and institutional perspective, price and the availability of financial assistance are major factors affecting access and degree attainment.



**Recommendations:**

7. *As the Legislature and the postsecondary sector boards work to increase tuition levels to the national average, they should also increase the differential between the university tuition and the community college tuition. Included in these deliberations should be an analysis of how tuition pricing of the two postsecondary sectors jointly impact the enrollment patterns of students and the state's Two-Plus-Two system of articulation.*
8. *In light of the annual appropriation and projected growth in the Bright Futures Scholarship Program, the Office of Student Financial Assistance should conduct an annual review of need-based financial assistance programs to determine if they remain adequate to ensure that Florida's academically qualified but financially needy students have access to postsecondary education. As part of this study, OSFA should determine the extent to which students with financial need (\$200 or more) qualify for Bright Futures Scholarships.*
9. *The Office of Student Financial Assistance should annually track the postsecondary enrollment patterns of recipients of the Bright Futures Scholarship. As each cohort of Bright Futures recipients proceeds to the completion of a postsecondary degree, graduation rates should be calculated for recipients in each postsecondary sector.*

It is clear that the structure of Florida's postsecondary delivery system will directly determine the effectiveness of the state's efforts to increase both access and production of graduates. The Commission's longitudinal cohort research will provide important data on the progress of students from high school through postsecondary education.

**Recommendation:**

10. *An evaluation of each proposed state action to meet projected enrollment demand should include as specific criteria an analysis of its impact on baccalaureate degree productivity and the impact of the action on the statewide Articulation Agreement and Two-Plus-Two System.*

**Continually Assess  
Progress Toward  
Increased Productivity**

*The structure of Florida's postsecondary delivery system will directly determine the effectiveness of the state's efforts to increase both access and production of graduates.*