Chancellor Frank Brogan calls on universities to strengthen Florida’s aerospace economy

ORLANDO – Chancellor Frank T. Brogan today challenged the State University System of Florida to create new ways to strengthen Florida’s role in space research and the space industry.

“Florida needs a way to better coordinate research throughout the State University System’s 11 institutions and forge partnerships with the existing aerospace companies in our state,” Brogan said at the Florida Statewide Space Industry Summit in Orlando. “A university-led consortium will work to bring in additional federal research grants and help Florida develop its space industry in the post-Shuttle era.”

Brogan said that a university-led effort is an example of higher education’s role in shaping Florida’s economy in the 21st century as part of the NEW FLORIDA initiative. “We can bring together the talent and expertise to help keep Florida’s space industry on the cutting edge,” Brogan said. “Space is part of Florida’s history. The State University System can help keep space in Florida’s future, too.”

Brogan said a coordinated effort is vital. “The university community, the industry sector and the state’s leadership need to work together to develop a new role for Florida in the nation’s space efforts. America will continue to have a space program. We want to be sure that Florida has a key role in it.”

Brogan said that he envisioned a consortium that can harness the power of talented researchers and business incubators from both public and private institutions across the state. “Public or private is not important – what matters is bringing talent to bear on crucial issues facing Florida. Other states and countries are actively competing for their place in the future of space exploration. A major, comprehensive response by our universities—reaching out to the private sector—will create jobs that will transform Florida.”

The New Florida initiative is a strategic plan by the Board of Governors to use the resources of the State University System to transform the Florida economy. “With this long-term investment in the state universities,” Brogan said when New Florida was announced January 28, “we can slingshot Florida out of the recession and jumpstart the job-rich knowledge economy.”
Governor Charlie Crist has endorsed New Florida and has included $100 million for the initiative in his 2010-11 budget recommendations, the first step in this long-term economic plan. New Florida is supported by the Council of 100 and the Florida Chamber in their recent Closing the Talent Gap recommendations.

The Board of Governors is the constitutional body created by voters in 2002 to guide the State University System of Florida.

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