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Chancellor’s Message

As we conclude the 2016 legislative session and move into April, the Board of Governors’ office is in the process of assessing our successes as well as preparing for the future. That’s why we’re dedicating this update to workforce development, with a special focus on taking the relationship between our universities and businesses to the next level. It is only by collaborating with our partners in the business community that we can ensure the best outcomes for our students, maximize the State University System’s potential as an economic engine, and stoke the kind of innovation that will make Florida a hub of discovery and invention.

Marshall M. Criser III

Governor Rick Scott’s Degrees to Jobs Summit

Governor Rick Scott is hosting a Degrees to Jobs Summit May 25-26 at Universal Studios in Orlando, Florida. The summit will bring together stakeholders in Florida’s higher education sectors and many of the job creators who are responsible for the state’s economic growth. It provides an excellent opportunity to engage in a dialogue with the business community on what we can do to better prepare our students for entry into high-skilled, high-wage jobs.

The state’s economy will continue to grow if we produce graduates who are ready to take on the challenges required of a highly skilled workforce. Staying abreast of the changing needs of Florida businesses and ensuring that Florida businesses are equally aware of the caliber and competencies of our students ensures that collectively we can make Florida a leader in job growth and productivity. The Summit provides the ideal forum for this exchange of ideas and information.

Senator Negron’s Education Tour

With an eye toward the 2017 and 2018 legislative sessions, Senate President-Designate Joe Negron is embarking on an education tour of the State University System April 18-21 to learn from students, faculty and administrators about the changes they think are needed to take Florida’s universities to the next level. The discussions will center on how to best support each institution in its work to achieve academic distinction and will be designed to help Senator Negron shape his policy priorities as he pushes to elevate Florida’s 12 public universities from good to great. Tentative times are as follows: Monday, April 18th - UWF 9:00-10:30, FSU 3:00-4:30, FAMU 5:00-6:30. Tuesday, April 19th - UNF 9:00-10:30, UF 12:30-2:00, UCF 4:30-6:00. Wednesday, April 20th - FPU 9:00-10:30, USF 12:00-1:30, NCF 3:00-4:30. Thursday, April 21st - FGCU 9:00-10:30, FIU 1:00-2:30, FAU 4:00-5:30.
Think Florida: A Higher Degree for Business

The University of West Florida and Navy Federal Credit Union are engaged in a unique partnership, with UWF offering onsite and online classes for employees of the fast-growing Pensacola-based business. The partners presented on their collaboration during the Board of Governors’ March meeting, as part of the Think Florida: A Higher Degree for Business campaign.

The relationship between UWF and Navy Federal Credit Union is mutually beneficial, providing professional development opportunities for Navy Federal Credit Union employees and professional skills training opportunities for students of the university. Navy Federal Credit Union was recently recognized by Fortune Magazine as a “Top 100 Company to Work For” and is expected to more than double its 4,000 employees by 2020.

Navy Federal Credit Union has hired dozens of interns from UWF, with at least 70 percent converting to full-time employees. By combining forces, UWF and Navy Federal Credit Union are providing exciting career pathways for students and new opportunities for Floridians.

University Highlight: University of Central Florida’s Proposal to Governor Scott’s “Ready, Set, Work” Challenge

This month’s “Ready, Set, Work” Challenge highlight is the University of Central Florida. UCF is committed to ensuring that 100 percent of graduates in their two most popular degree programs, psychology and nursing, will obtain full-time employment within a year of graduation. Many initiatives are in the process of being developed in order to respond to the Governor’s challenge.

The first of many programs to be implemented is a UCF Ready, Set, Work Taskforce. The task force, established in January 2016, will be comprised of 20 representatives across the campus who will be tasked with reviewing and enhancing ways to inform students about majors, careers and salaries. Career readiness practices will also be reviewed by the task force.

UCF is developing new student career plans that include career exploration, majors, salaries and employability information that will be provided during new student orientations. In addition, First Time In College students will be required to complete the UCF “MyPlan”, which allows students and alumni free access to career planning services, including Career Assessment Tests. Academic advisors in areas such as First Year Advising and Exploration will include career curriculum in advising sessions. Housing and Residential Life will include career conversations between resident assistants and residential students. Finally, every newly admitted student will receive major, employment outlook, and salary information.

These initiatives will help to ensure students are equipped with the information they need to make strategic and informed major and career decisions.

“We are ready and we are set to provide an outstanding education for our students, which prepares them for the workplace and for a meaningful career.”

- John C. Hitt, UCF President and Marcos R. Marchena, Chairman UCF Board
University of South Florida’s STEM Summit

On March 30, the University of South Florida hosted a STEM Summit addressing the growing STEM skills gap and workforce needs. The Summit, held at the Center for Advanced Medical Learning and Simulation in downtown Tampa, featured discussion by distinguished panelists including Marshall Criser III, Chancellor of the State University System of Florida; Mindy Grossman, CEO & Director of HSN, Inc.; Rick Homans, President & CEO of the Tampa Bay Partnership; Brian Lamb, President & CEO of Fifth Third Bank (North Florida) and Vice Chair of the USF Board of Trustees; and USF student and Udall Scholarship Recipient Steffanie Munguia. Dr. James Wynne from the IBM Watson Research Center in New York and a courtesy professor in the USF Institute for Advanced Discovery & Innovation delivered the keynote speech.

STEM careers are among the most rapidly growing, highly demanded and highly paid professions. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, there will be an expected 1.2 million STEM jobs available in the United States by 2018. However, having the skilled workforce to fill the abundance of available jobs remains a challenge. The STEM Summit brought together experts in science and technology, leaders in education, and business and industry professionals to engage on how to better connect university research with private industry and to discuss solutions for addressing workforce shortages as “Baby Boomers” retire. The Summit also provided an opportunity for students to present their research in STEM fields on topics that ranged from the environment, to cancer and pharmaceuticals.

To help women in STEM professions build meaningful networks and recognize opportunities within high-tech fields, The Florida Polytechnic University Foundation and the University’s Women in STEM Program recently launched their Inaugural Women in STEM Lunch & Lab. Joined by Board of Governors’ member Wendy Link, the sold-out event featured keynote and nationally recognized speaker, Dr. Pamela McCauley, Director of the Ergonomics Laboratory at the University of Central Florida, who emphasized the importance of creating a culture of collaboration, support and ambition for women in STEM. Additionally, she emphasized strategies for retaining women in STEM fields, noting the high turnover rate.

Florida’s universities have a mission to foster technology-rich, applied interdisciplinary learning for all students. Focusing on women, whom are traditionally underrepresented in STEM fields, maximizes collaborative resources and solidifies a strong workforce pipeline for Florida. Florida Polytechnic University hopes to make the Women in STEM Lunch & Lab an annual event.

This month Governor Rick Scott signed into law a $4.7 billion budget for Florida’s 12 state universities, allocating a historic $500 million toward performance-based funding. In addition, the Legislature passed House Bill 7029 which, if signed into law, will codify the Board’s performance-based funding model.

Simply stated, performance-based funding works. It has already resulted in positive outcomes for our students through improved retention and graduation rates, and by increasing the number of degrees awarded in areas of strategic emphasis for the state. We are grateful to the Legislature and Governor Scott for their commitment to higher education and improving student outcomes.
Welcome, New Trustees!

New Appointees

⇒ Greg Britton (UWF)
⇒ Michael Carrere (USF)
⇒ Darleen Cors (FGCU)
⇒ Dr. Malcom Dorman (FAU)
⇒ Ret. Adm. Philip Dur (FPU)
⇒ Joseph Fogg (FGCU)
⇒ Wilfred Gonzalez (UNF)
⇒ Kevin Hyde (UNF)
⇒ Mori Hosseini (UF)
⇒ Leonard Johnson (UF)
⇒ Stephen Joost (UNF)
⇒ Henry McCance (FPU)

⇒ Carol Moore (FGCU)
⇒ Cliff Otto (FPU)
⇒ Belvin Perry Jr. (FAMU)
⇒ Marc Sarnoff (FIU)
⇒ Bob Sires (UWF)
⇒ James Stikeleather (USF)

Reappointments

⇒ Abdol Moabery (FAU)
⇒ Russell Priddy (FGCU)
⇒ John Ramil (USF)
⇒ Mark Bostick (FPU)
⇒ Jay Patel (UWF)

Florida A&M University Graduate Bernard Kinsley, an entrepreneur and retired Xerox executive, recently shared with the university his private collection of African-American artifacts, one of the largest in the world. The exhibit, sponsored by Toyota, includes rare, original and historic documents, manuscripts, photographs, sculptures, paintings and letters, and was on display at the campus’s Foster-Tanner Fine Arts Gallery until March 25.

Did U know?

Florida State University biology professor Hengli Tang and scientists from Johns Hopkins and Emory universities recently made a major breakthrough in understanding the Zika virus, demonstrating for the first time that the virus is directly targeting brain development cells and stunting their growth, suggesting a link to birth defects.

To provide better training for doctors and soldiers, University of Central Florida professor Greg Welch is using a $148,000 military grant to create and improve scientific research with portable versions of a robot that responds to human interactions, called human surrogates. By building six robots and letting them roam in public places, such as shopping malls or school campuses, the robots are exposed to a multitude of realistic human interactions that enable them to respond to a greater number of inquiries.