

**State University System  
Student Success Programs  
2008-2009 Budget Need**

**Executive Summary**

The following budget request focuses on state university programs and services intended to increase student success in attaining a high-quality education in a timely manner. The request addresses needs that will fulfill responsibilities to students already enrolled in the System and that will assist the System in preparing the diverse and talented workforce needed for Florida's success in the global economy.

**Student Success Programs - \$113,445,000**

**1. Improved Student Advising, Retention, Graduation - \$82,432,240**

To advance student advising and improve retention and graduation in a timely manner.

**2. Graduate Student Assistant Support - \$15,487,500**

To provide an annual health insurance supplement for qualifying graduate student employees.

**3. Teaching/Research Incentive Program - \$15,525,260**

To award outstanding faculty based on teaching productivity, research excellence, and service to the community.

## **State University System Student Success Programs 2008-2009 Budget Request**

The following request focuses on a series of initiatives and programs intended to increase student success in attaining a high-quality education in a timely manner. The request addresses the major impediments to degree production and the barriers often encountered by select student populations.

- **Student Success Programs - \$113,445,000**
  - **Improved Student Advising, Retention, Graduation - \$82,432,240**
    - Each institution in the State University System has been actively engaged in efforts to improve retention and graduation in a timely manner for all students, particularly students from traditionally underrepresented populations and students in targeted areas, including critical-need areas and high-skill/high-wage areas. Although some identified challenges and barriers to timely degree completion are similar across campuses, others are unique to particular institutions and to specific student populations.
    - Examples of successful initiatives that have been identified for possible expansion or replication at different universities include:
      - Tracking systems with targeted advising that monitor students' enrollment and progression to degree completion.
      - Freshman year experience programs, First-Year Interest Groups, and learning communities.
      - The extension of services designed for at-risk students, including early intervention programs, "summer bridge" programs, increased tutoring, peer mentoring, and supplemental instruction and course re-design for high-risk courses.
      - Providing additional sections of required courses to meet student's needs and expedite their progression to degree completion.
      - The reduction of the use of adjunct instructors in critical general education and "Gordon Rule" courses.
      - Focused efforts on maintaining an inviting, safe campus culture, with specific cultural centers that serve the campus's diverse populations.
      - New sources and amounts of financial assistance to disadvantaged students.
    - Specifically, the First Generation Matching Grant Program is one of the most important initiatives implemented recently to increase the matriculation, retention, and graduation rates for underrepresented students in the SUS. It

is estimated that more than 20,000 students met minimum state qualifications than received the grants last year. Funding for this vital program needs to be institutionalized as part of the state's financing of higher education, rather than relying so heavily on private donations and constant fund-raising. Additional funding and increasing the state match to a 3-1 ratio would increase support for currently enrolled first generation students and provide access for more students, as space allows.

- Institutions will utilize 75% of their funds to address advising, retention, and graduation issues. The balance of the funds may be used at the institutions' discretion for other student success programs and should focus on improving student/faculty ratios.
- **Graduate Student Assistant Support - \$15,487,500**
  - Graduate assistants provide the foundation for much of the state universities' cutting-edge research and provide valuable and competent assistance to faculty in teaching laboratory skills and beginning undergraduate courses. To produce more graduates from advanced degree programs, particularly in targeted areas, and to achieve the goal of building world-class academic programs and research capacity, the State University System must offer competitive incentive packages to attract and retain the best and brightest graduate students.
  - An annual supplement is requested for health insurance in the amount of \$750 per semester (fall and spring only) for each qualifying graduate research associate, graduate research assistant, graduate teaching associate, graduate teaching assistant, and graduate assistant with an appointment greater than or equal to .25 FTE per semester. For individuals in these categories with an appointment greater than or equal to .125 FTE, but less than .25 FTE per semester, the supplement would be \$375 per semester.
  - In their most recent research, the SUS Student Health Insurance Task Force discovered that all 34 of the AAU public institutions offer a health insurance subsidy for their graduate assistants, with more than 70% covering 100% of the cost.
  - In fall 2006, the SUS employed 13,445 individuals to serve as graduate research associate, graduate research assistant, graduate teaching associate, graduate teaching assistant, and graduate assistant for ten hours or more per week (with 7,205 working 20 hours or more per week).

- This investment will allow the state universities to recruit better graduate students, which in turn will increase the quality and quantity of research performed, and the competence of students and graduates at all levels.
- **Teaching/Research Incentive Program - \$15,525,260**
  - Funding to initiate a Teaching/ Research Incentive Program (TRIP) across the State University System is requested in order to award and retain outstanding SUS faculty. Quality faculty members are necessary to educate students for success in the global marketplace and community, and every year the SUS faces the challenge of replacing approximately 1,500 faculty. In the current fiscal climate, it has become more and more difficult to attract the best faculty to the SUS, and an incentive program would assist in that regard. Further, it has become difficult to retain faculty who might move to other universities for better pay, cheaper housing, or lower student-to-faculty ratios. Modifications must be made to traditional compensation programs.
  - One change which has shown to be most promising is incentive pay. This pay system can be a very valuable tool in restructuring our pay system to one which will reward individuals and teams who are making the greatest contribution to the academic enterprise of the State University System. The salary goal for the SUS faculty is to provide salary resources such that each university's faculty all-ranks average salary is competitive within its peer group within the upper quartile of AAUP public institutions. Salary comparisons continue to demonstrate that the SUS faculty rank below many of their peers. The size of the individual gaps vary widely, but there is a marked tendency for the gap to grow with the number of years of SUS service, particularly in years there are no state salary increases.
  - An incentive program developed to award and retain outstanding SUS faculty based on the criteria of teaching and research excellence and productivity has the advantage of being adaptable to each campus according to institutional mission while maintaining a student-centered undergraduate focus. For example, criteria may include the extent to which undergraduates are engaged in meaningful research, internal teaching awards received, number of courses taught, number of large courses taught, number of students taught and advised, etc. Each institution would be expected to develop criteria and guidelines for its program, with eligibility continuing through future years until all qualified faculty have received awards which, ideally, would be increases to the base salary.