

**BOARD OF GOVERNORS  
STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA**

November 16, 2006

**SUBJECT:** Establishment of an Academic Enhancement Program with piloted implementation at the University of Florida.

**PROPOSED BOARD ACTION**

Board of Governors approval to: 1) establish an Academic Enhancement Program and 2) request legislative authorization for the Board of Governors to delegate authority to a University Board of Trustees to implement a new student fee to support the program.

**AUTHORITY FOR BOARD OF GOVERNORS ACTION**

Section 7(d), Article IX of the Constitution of the State of Florida

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The Board of Governors is responsible for achieving excellence through teaching students, advancing research, and providing public service for the benefit of Florida citizens, their communities and economies. In October 2003, the Board of Governors adopted its Master Powers and Duties to include: establishing the mission and goals for the SUS; establishing a long-term plan for the SUS; developing and advocating an annual budget; determining the financial needs of the SUS; developing policies governing student access, enrollment, admissions, matriculation, graduation, articulation, data collection, and delivery of high quality academic programs and services; accounting for expenditures from legislative appropriations; approving the budget of each university; measuring performance and efficiency of each university; and ensuring financial integrity.

The Board of Governors has adopted a strategic plan that includes the following goals: 1) access to and production of degrees; 2) meeting statewide professional and workforce needs; 3) building world-class academic programs and research capacity; and 4) meeting community needs and fulfilling unique institutional responsibilities. The State of Florida is currently operating in an environment of limited financial resources coupled with an ever increasing need for state services and competing priorities. In order to advance the strategic plan, the Board of Governors will have to look for ways to maximize the generation of revenues (state, local, federal, private) linked with the delivery of efficient operations and accountability mechanisms.

One impact of the relatively low level of funding in Florida is that the state has the highest ratio of students to tenured/tenure track faculty in the country. High quality faculty staffing is a necessity to promote the instruction, research and public service missions of the universities and to advance the four goals in the Board of Governors Strategic Plan. Further, the quality of a public university education is the shared responsibility of students, the public, and the Legislature. For these reasons, the establishment of an Academic Enhancement Program is in the best interests of the State of Florida and the State University System. To measure the success of the Program, it is recommended that the Board implement the Program initially through a pilot program at the University of Florida effective Fall 2007.

Implementation at the University of Florida is appropriate given the critical need by the University of Florida to improve its student-to-faculty ratio. Consistent with the goal of building world-class academic and research programs, a goal of the University of Florida Board of Trustees as articulated in their strategic plan, is to elevate the university into the ranks of the top 10 public universities in the country. One critical area in which the University of Florida must focus in order to improve its national ranking is faculty resources. The University of Florida's faculty resources rank is 123rd in the country. Implementation of the Academic Enhancement Program at the University of Florida will allow the University to provide a higher quality educational experience for the students by improving the student faculty ratio and increasing the number of academic advisors.

The Academic Enhancement Program would be supported by a new fee that would be assessed of all new undergraduate students entering the university for the first time during the Fall 2007 term. The University of Florida will be accountable for certain deliverables to be defined by the Board of Governors in consultation with the Legislature.

**Supporting Documentation Included:** None

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**Facilitators/Presenters:** Dr. Mark Rosenberg, Chancellor, and Mr. Manny Fernandez, Chair UF Board of Trustees