

The Governor's Access & Diversity Initiative

Governor Bush is proposing several budget priorities to provide assistance and incentives to recruit minority and underrepresented students to postsecondary education and to retain them after enrollment.

He is also creating an Access & Diversity Commission to:

- Meet jointly with the Board of Governors Student Affairs Committee to evaluate issues of minority student enrollment and to make recommendations to further assist in increasing diversity in our state institutions.
- Advocate for Governor's budget recommendations relating to the rollout.
- Oversee university implementation of a university mentoring program with public middle schools.

Main provisions of the rollout:

- **Need-based aid funding – \$35.8 million increase**
 - Governor Bush will recommend an increase in funding for Florida Student Assistance Grants (need-based aid) of \$35.8 million (36 percent) for a total appropriation of \$134.7 million.
 - This would provide additional need-based aid for an estimated 116,842 students at an average award amount of \$1,152.
 - This is the largest increase in the history of the program.
 - Governor Bush will recommend a \$1 million (5 percent) increase in the financial assistance line item in the budget to support students attending state universities. This increase brings the total appropriation to \$21.2 million.
 - Governor Bush will recommend a \$1.1 million, or 10 percent, increase in funding for independent Historically Black Colleges & Universities, bringing their total funding up to \$12.1 million. The additional funds must be used to provide need-based financial aid.
- **College Board Partnership** (*increase pipeline of college-ready students*)
 - Governor Bush will recommend an increase in funding for the partnership with College Board from \$7.1 million to \$10.1 million (42 percent increase).
 - The additional funds will expand services that improve student college readiness, particularly for minority and at-risk students. Services include AP, PSAT, and SAT teacher training; college admission test preparation; SAT preparation; tutoring programs to help students transition into college; and family information on colleges.
- **Stanley Tate Project STARS Program**
 - Governor Bush will recommend an increase in funding for Project Stars by \$4 million (total of \$10 million), which represents a 67 percent increase to the program. This funding increase will allow all private donations to be matched.
 - The state funds combined with private donations will purchase 2,090 scholarships in FY 2006-07.

- Program provides prepaid scholarships for at-risk, low-income students who remain drug and crime-free, stay in school, and work with a mentor. These scholarships pay for tuition at state universities and community colleges.
- **College Reach Out Program (CROP)**
 - Governor Bush will recommend an increase in funding for CROP by \$1 million for a total appropriation of \$4.2 million. This represents a 31 percent increase to the program.
 - Funds will expand counseling and tutorial services to serve an additional 1,654 students for a total of 10,200 students served. Funds will also expand after-school and Saturday programs by 3,814 teacher hours to increase participation in AP classes, provide transportation to classes for dually enrolled students, and purchase computers to provide access to Florida Virtual School across the 38 CROP postsecondary institutions.
- **First Generation Matching Grant Program**
 - Governor Bush will recommend creating a first generation scholarship program funded at \$6.5 million to match private donations for scholarships for students who:
 - Are Florida residents
 - Meet “first generation” status – neither parent earned associate or higher degree
 - Are accepted in state university – full-time enrollment
 - Demonstrate financial need based upon federal criteria
 - Apply for federal PELL grant
 - Each state university will determine eligibility criteria for this program. This flexibility will allow the universities to maximize the number of students served by this program.
- **President’s Focus on Achievement Mentoring Partnership**
 - Mentoring program targeting middle school students will be created in partnership with Campus Compact, state universities, and Volunteer Florida Foundation.
 - Program will use “Focus on College” curriculum that emphasizes activities that reinforce that higher education is always an option.
 - Volunteer Florida Foundation will provide funds to train Campus Compact mentors.
 - Middle school students will be grouped with local Campus Compact mentor from university to participate in semester-long program that combines activities with information on careers, college life, and how to choose high school courses that assist them in understanding the value of a college degree.