

# “Measuring Up: Florida”

## Accountability for Student Learning Outcomes Staff Recommendations

### Conversations with Accountability and Assessment Experts

Since the last meeting of the Florida Board of Governors, staff to the Board have conversed with higher education executive officers responsible for accountability in Louisiana, Arkansas, South Dakota, North Dakota, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Wyoming, Ohio, Alabama, Nebraska, Idaho, and Kentucky.

In addition, staff to the Board have spoken with the following national experts in the field of accountability and, particularly, the assessment of student learning outcomes:

- Dr. Alexander Astin, Allan M. Cartter Professor of Higher Education and Director of the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California - Los Angeles;
- Dr. Peter Ewell, Vice President of the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems and the Principle Author of Measuring Up;
- Dr. Russell Edgerton, Director of the PEW Forum on Undergraduate Learning;
- Dr. George Kuh, Chancellor’s Professor of Higher Education at Indiana University and Project Director of the National Survey of Student Engagement;
- Dr. Paul E. Lingenfelter, Executive Director of State Higher Education Executive Officers; and
- Dr. Margaret A. Miller, Professor, Curry School of Education, University of Virginia, and Project Director for the PEW Forum on College-Level Learning.

These national experts have listened to and endorsed our recommendation for an approach to gathering information about student learning outcomes. In particular, Dr. Peter Ewell, Principle Author of the national Measuring Up report, had this to say about Florida:

“I like this idea very much. I’ve advocated for a similar approach, but no one has pulled it off yet. You have something good here. It passes muster by the best international standards. Florida could be a leader. No other states are doing it.”

## Staff Recommendations

Staff to the Florida Board of Governors recommend a multi-faceted approach that utilizes the following tools:

1. Existing quantitative accountability measures that directly relate to student learning outcomes. These include passage rates on licensure examinations, numbers of students who enroll in graduate-level programs, and numbers of graduates who are employed and earning at specific thresholds;
2. Required participation of all SUS institutions in the National Survey of Student Engagement;
3. Monitoring and reporting on surveys of employer satisfaction with SUS graduates;
4. Creation of an Ongoing Learning Assessment System that, via process audits and individual learning profiles for each program, adds value, qualitative evaluation, and quantitative measure to Florida's longstanding program review process.

In order to effect this recommendation, the Florida Board of Governors will need to implement policies to ensure that all universities have an Ongoing Learning Assessment System in place that will do the following for each of a university's academic degree programs, as well as its general education program:

- Articulate the program's mission within the context of the institutional mission and the State Board of Education's and Florida Board of Governors' strategic plans;
- Identify program objectives and, specifically, expected student learning outcomes;
- Develop measurement systems to determine how well students are achieving the program's learning outcomes;
- Have external experts in the discipline determine how well objectives have been accomplished, how well students are meeting learning outcomes, and whether those outcomes are deemed appropriate in the discipline; and
- Employ a validation external to the institution and capable of quantification that demonstrates that such an institutional system is being built and used.