

Baccalaureate Degree Production

Present Situation: In 2001, Florida ranked 45th among the states in awarding baccalaureate degrees. Among the 10 largest states, Florida is only seventh. By 2012, analysts expect Florida to increase the number of degrees by about 28 percent, not enough to narrow the gap. Without a larger increase, Florida will not move closer to the national average.

Recommendation:

Increase the production of quality baccalaureate degrees to the national average using a creative and diverse delivery system

Pros

- Raises educational attainment
- Raises per capita income
- Serves critical needs for employment, as for nurses and teachers
- Attracts and sustains economic development

In 10 years, Florida should at least reach the national average for awarding high-quality baccalaureate degrees and should sustain or improve that level. This goal will require a concerted effort to award 15,000 degrees annually over and above the increases already expected in public, private, and independent institutions. The increase in production should target critical need areas.

- Increase fiscal resources
- Encourage increased use of 2+2 process
- Implement proven recruitment and retention strategies
- Recover students who have left the system
- Expand joint use agreements and other partnerships among community colleges and public, private, and independent universities
- Approve community college baccalaureate programs in disciplines with critical shortages
- Evaluate the need for establishing additional capacity by new institutions, branch campuses, distance learning, or other mechanisms
- Create a mechanism to publicize and advance efficiencies implemented by institutions

Cons

- In the short run, other priorities may seem more important because of reduced resources
- Florida's labor force also needs to increase the number of workers with lower levels of educational attainment
- Requires sustained commitment for at least 10 years

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