

**STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA
BOARD OF GOVERNORS
February 21, 2013**

SUBJECT: Online Education

PROPOSED BOARD ACTION

Consider recommendation of the Strategic Planning Committee regarding online education.

AUTHORITY FOR BOARD OF GOVERNORS ACTION

Article IX, Section 7, Florida Constitution; Subsection 1009.24(15)(f), Florida Statutes

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The 2012 Legislature provided funds to the Board of Governors to obtain the services of a consulting firm that would study online education in Florida. Through a competitive bidding process, the contract was awarded to The Parthenon Group. Parthenon's report, Postsecondary Online Expansion in Florida, and its Detailed Fact Base were submitted to the Board Office on November 16, 2012, and presented to the Strategic Planning Committee on December 17, 2012. After Parthenon's presentation of the report, national experts discussed policy issues the Committee - and ultimately the Board - would need to consider in expanding online education. A panel of representatives from the State University System, the Florida College System, Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida (private, regionally accredited, nonprofit institutions based in Florida), private for-profit institutions, and the business community provided additional thoughts and information on those policy issues.

The Committee determined that it wanted to develop a plan using a combination of institutional collaboration and lead institution to expand the provision of online courses and programs, building on the strengths of existing institutions while giving consideration to the establishment of a high quality, accredited, online university.

As a follow-up to discussions regarding data on December 17, the University of Central Florida presented information on data collected related to distance learning, and staff from the Florida Virtual Campus (FLVC) presented an overview of the Distance Learning Catalog, its strengths and weaknesses, and FLVC's plans for improvements.

The Committee met again on February 13 to hear presentations from the University of Florida regarding the process for developing an online course or program, services available for online students, and how the university ensures its online courses are of the highest quality. After discussion, the Committee recommended that the full Board:

1. Use the Strategic Plan preeminence metrics to designate the university which would create a separate arm to provide online degree programs of the highest quality, and that funds be requested of the Legislature to support such an effort. The preeminence metrics would be those passed by the 2012 Legislature and approved by the Board for use in the 2012-2013 university workplans. Further, the selected university would create an innovation and research center to (1) ensure the State is a leader in the development of cutting-edge technology and instructional design for the online programs and (2) conduct research that would help strengthen online degree programs and the success of online students.
2. Direct the Chancellor to form a systemwide work group that would report back to the Strategic Planning Committee and continue to work with our colleges and universities and the other delivery systems to determine ways in which services and online degree programs, including market-based job analyses, can be better coordinated to ensure State and student needs are being met in a cost-efficient and effective manner.

The Board will consider the Committee's recommendations.

Supporting Documentation Included: None

Facilitators/Presenters: Governor Rood