

## **Plan to Expand Scholarships & Financial Aid to Improve Student Recruitment & Retention**

Through our Office of Financial Aid & Scholarships, a variety of existing and new strategies are being employed to increase non-loan-based financial aid and scholarship support to undergraduate students that will reduce the students' net cost of higher education and increase the 4-yr graduation rate. We have created a new holistic approach to expanding student financial services whereby we have increased the amount of financial counseling, expanded the financial knowledge of our academic advisors to assist students, and have increased the amount of financial aid workshops and materials we offer. These strategies, along with others we are currently developing, are all aimed at helping decrease the stress students experience when they are paying for their college education. Additionally, we have taken a comprehensive approach in re-purposing and re-aligning all existing funding sources as well as been proactive in raising new funds that will further support student recruitment and retention which will help to improve our four-year graduation rate.

At the beginning of the 2018-19 AY, Florida Gulf Coast University invested 1M new institutional dollars to support our comprehensive financial aid packages. These are recurring funds that were a part of our new Student Success Initiative. For the 2019-20 AY these funds, along with existing scholarships and grants, will be used to expand financial aid support to help students earn at least 30 credit hours during the entire calendar year (Fall, Spring, Summer). With respect to our specific financial aid awards, we will continue to offer our President's Gold & Silver merit-based, in-state scholarships to high achieving high school students. We also offer a similar program for our out-of-state students called the Blue & Green Scholars and Directors Awards. With these merit-based awards, students must complete 30 credits a year and maintain at least an overall 3.0 GPA. If students maintain these criteria, we guarantee the scholarship for up to four years. We have also implemented two new Transfer Student Scholarships starting in Fall 2018: Eagle Transfer Gold and the Eagle Transfer Strategic Major Incentive - which is designed to attract transfer students pursuing STEM and Programs of Strategic Emphasis. We have also expanded the number of scholarships offered to Collegiate High School Associate in Arts degree graduates (similar to our ACE program) which will also help improve our four-year graduation and retention rates. In addition to the scholarship packages we offer, we have created an Academic Retention Fund to help students persist through their academic program of study. These funds are strictly used to help students stay in school and not withdraw due to financial hardships they may encounter during the year. Lastly, we will also continue to emphasize the benefits of *SOAR in 4* to incentivize students to complete their degrees within 4 years. Below is a summary of our institutional aid programs and their criteria for the 2018-2019 AY (Summer, Fall, and Spring):

1. FGCU Summer Grant
  - Need-based grant for students enrolled in 6 credits
2. Summer Bridge Scholarship
  - Funds students in Step Ahead program 100% for 6 credits

3. Florida Bright Futures - Academic Recipients
  - eligible for 100% tuition & fees if enrolled in at least 6 credits
  
4. Florida Bright Futures - Medallion Recipients
  - eligible for funding if enrolled in at least 6 credits; FGCU is funding \$77 per credit
  - For Summer 2019, State of Florida will begin funding these recipients
  
5. Transfer Student Scholarships (funded by FGCU):
  - Eagle Transfer Gold
    - \$3,000/yr (up to 2 years), 3.5 ≥ GPA
  - Eagle Transfer - Strategic Emphasis Major Incentive
    - Designed to attract students pursuing Programs of Strategic Emphasis (e.g. STEM, Education, Health, Gap Analysis)
    - \$500/semester (up to three semesters); Add on to the Eagle Transfer Gold Scholarship
  
6. In-State Student Scholarships:
  - President's Gold
    - \$5,000/yr (up to 4 years), 3.9 ≥ weighted GPA, and 1320 rSAT or 28 ACT
  - President's Silver
    - \$3,000/yr (up to 4 years), 3.5 - 3.89 weighted GPA, and 1220 rSAT or 25 ACT
  
7. Out-of-State Student Scholarships:
  - Blue / Green Scholars
    - \$15,000/yr (up to 4 years), 3.9 ≥ weighted GPA, and 1320 rSAT or 28 ACT
  - Blue / Green Directors
    - \$10,000/yr (up to 4 years), 3.5 - 3.89 weighted GPA, and 1220 rSAT or 25 ACT

**Summer 2018 Scholarships & Grants Awards (Existing and New \*)<sup>§</sup>**

Program	Students	Amount
FGCU Summer Grant *	1282	\$1,213,575
Summer Bridge Scholarship *	127	\$149,727
FL Bright Futures Academic	260	\$382,973
FGCU Summer Bright Futures Medallion	369	\$197,813

<sup>§</sup> - Please note that Summer 2019 Awards have not been determined yet; we will use Summer 2018 as a basis to establish allocation with a 1-2% increase

**Fall 2018 – New Scholarship Award**

Program	Students	Amount
Transfer Scholarship	97	\$245,871

### **Fall 2018 & Spring 2019 Admissions Merit Awards (ongoing) \***

<b>Program</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Amount</b>
President's Gold	430	\$2,082,734
President's Silver	903	\$2,597,592
Blue & Green Scholars	70	\$1,012,500
Blue & Green Directors	187	\$1,815,000

*\* We are currently assessing the ability to extend these awards for these students for the Summer 2019 term*

In addition to the scholarships and grants discussed above, we will significantly expand (e.g. more than double) the number of Eagle Collegiate High School Scholarships offered in Fall 2019. These scholarships are aimed to greatly increase the number of collegiate high school graduates attending FGCU. In Fall 2019, we anticipate awarding ~ **175 students with a \$5000 scholarship (for the year) totaling more than \$875,000.**

Lastly, FGCU continues to expand our partnerships of matched-gift fund programs with external philanthropic foundations to find alternative pathways to support our students. For example, we have developed a strong partnership with the South West Florida Women’s Foundation’s Earn 2 Learn Program which supports student success through a structured gift-matching program that is employment based. The second is through creation of a Boys & Girls Clubs Scholarship in collaboration with the Lautenbach Family Foundation.

### **Recruitment of Talented Students**

- Our Office of Undergraduate Admissions has enhanced its strategy to focus on increasing the number of applicants who view FGCU as their preferred choice / #1 choice. We are using institutional data as well as data from a third party to target specific regions of the state to increase the number of applications received. We believe this will help lead to greater persistence of enrolled students (i.e., decrease the number of students in good academic standing who transfer-out and will increase the 4-yr graduation rate).
- We have also focused more on increasing the number of talented and highly motivated students through: 1) expansion of our Honors College, 2) more active recruitment of dual enrolled high school students, and 3) targeted merit-based financial aid. When combined, we believe these strategies will result in enrolling more higher-achieving students that have higher grade point averages, graduate in four years, and contribute to increasing the university’s overall 4-yr graduate rate.
- The creation of an enhanced transfer articulation program for current and future Florida SouthWestern State College graduates (Destination FGCU) and the establishment of a new degree completion program (FGCU Complete) for those throughout Southwest Florida who started but never completed a bachelor’s program.