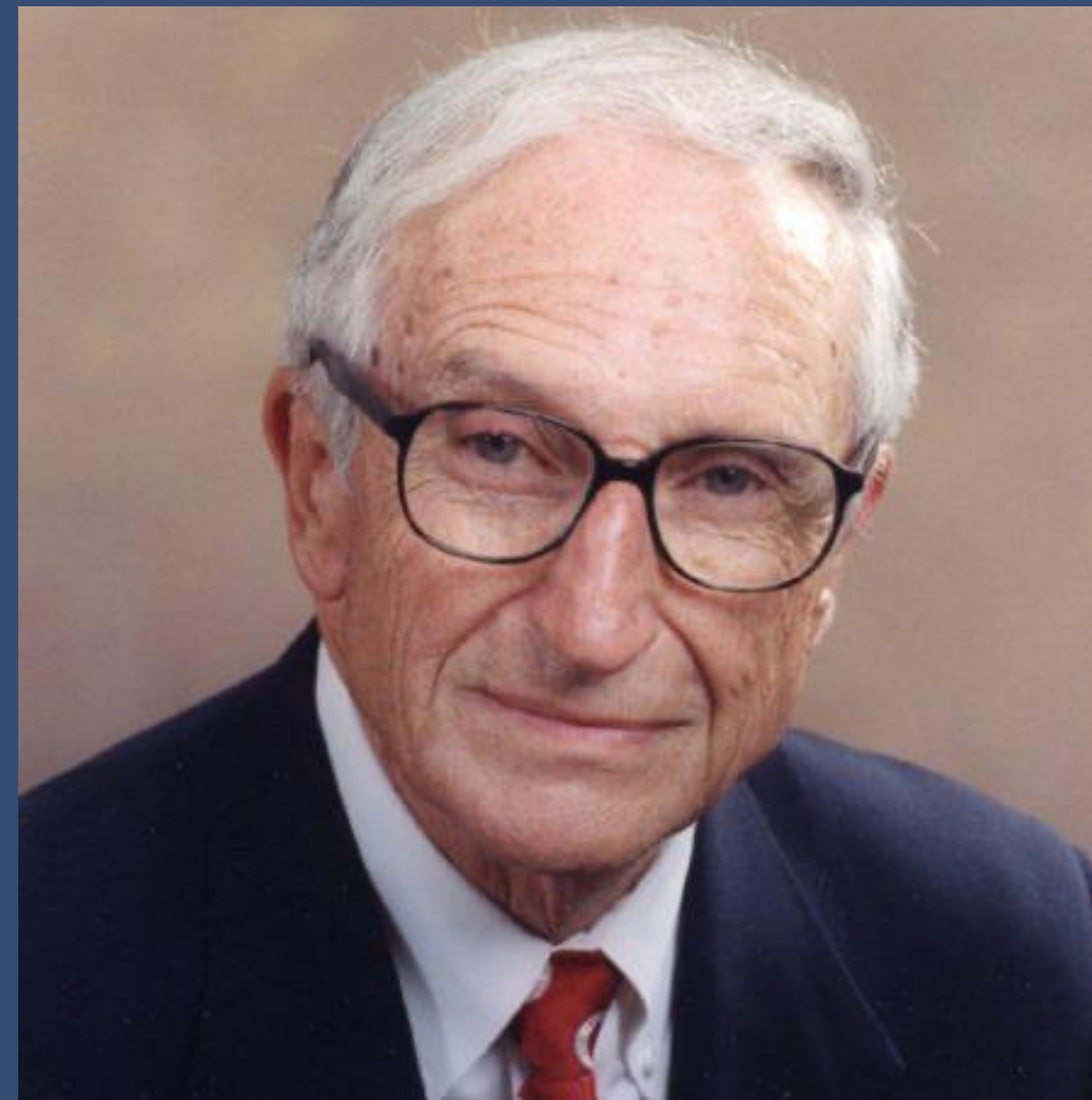
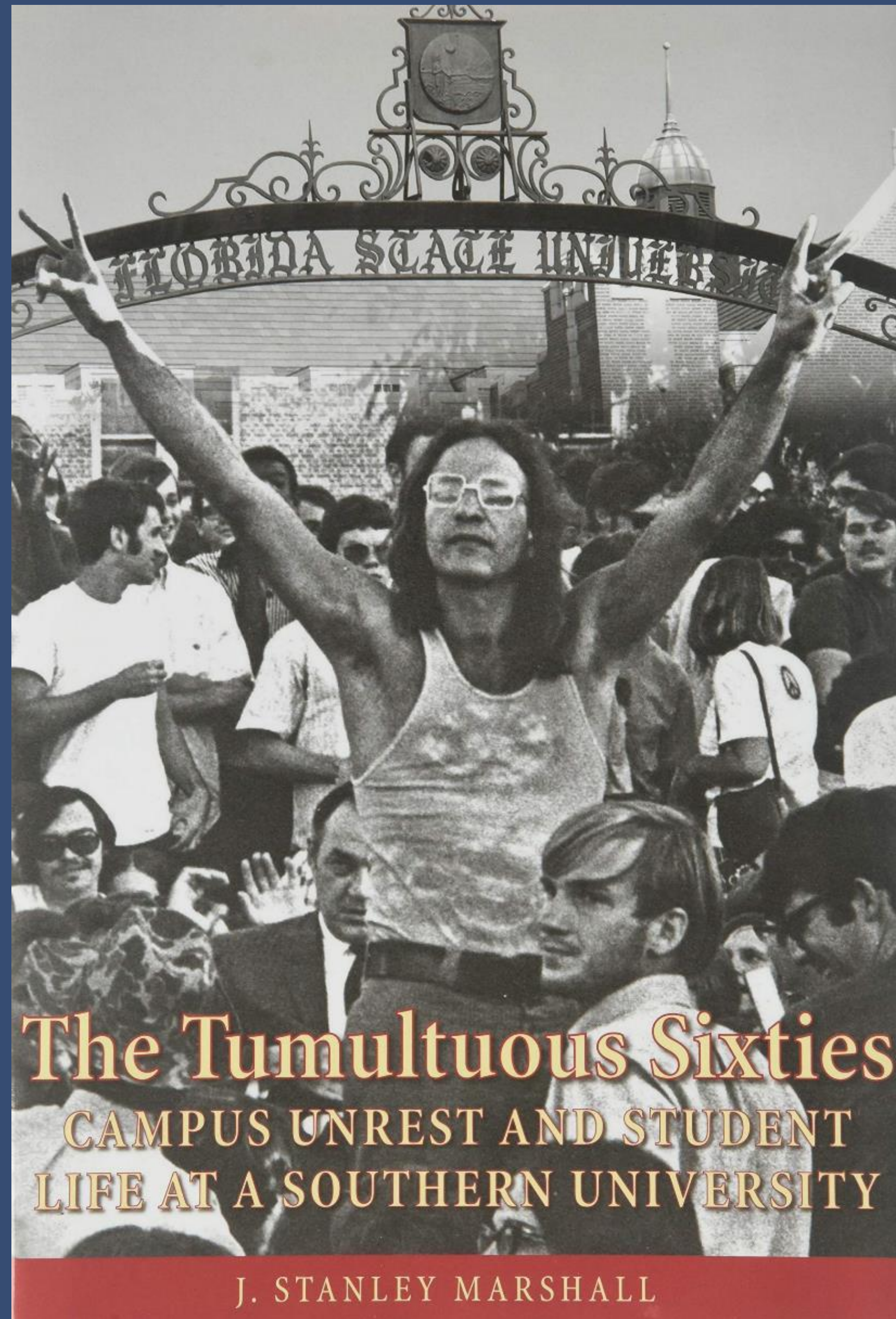
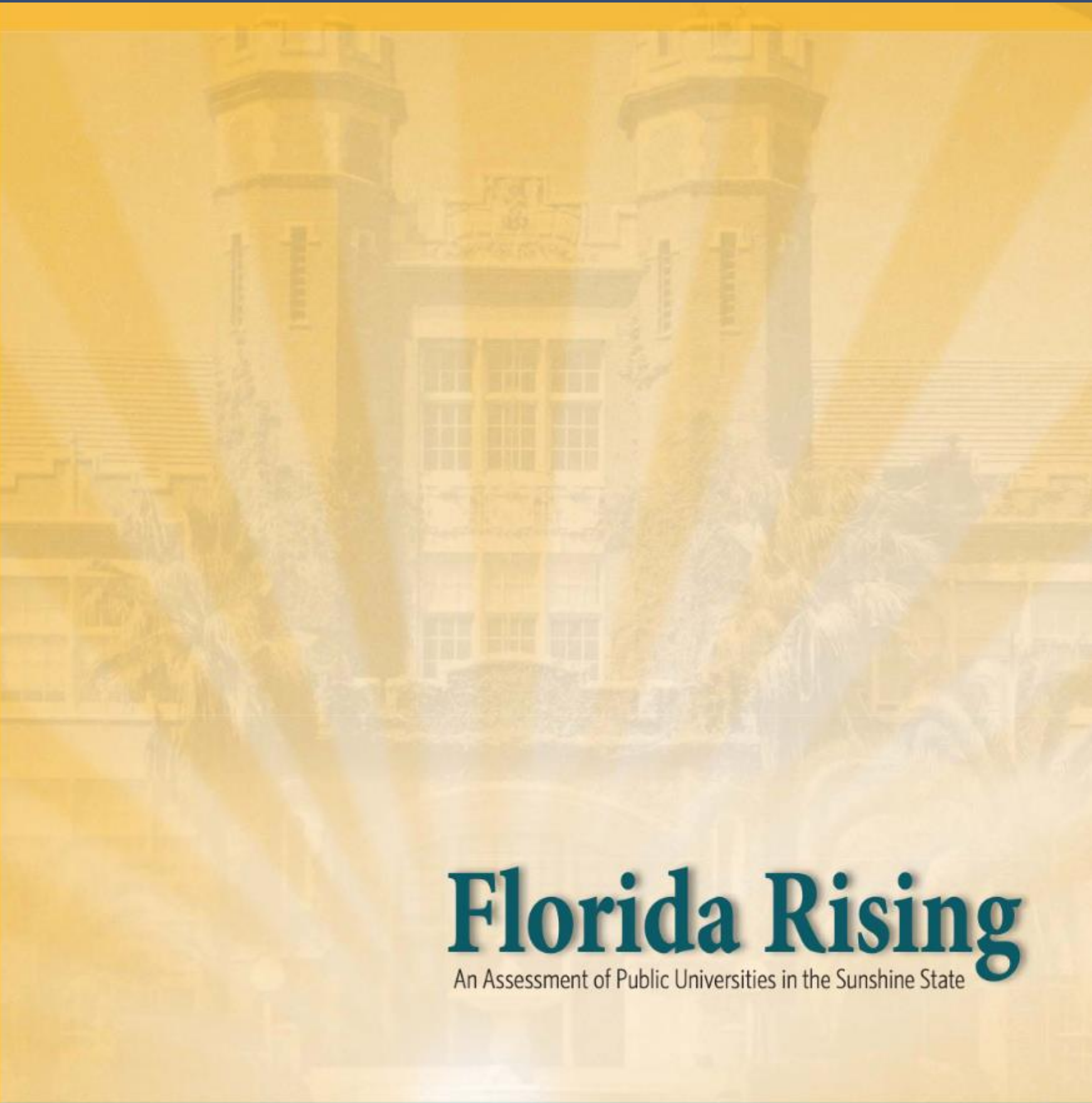


# DR. STANLEY MARSHAL





# Florida Rising

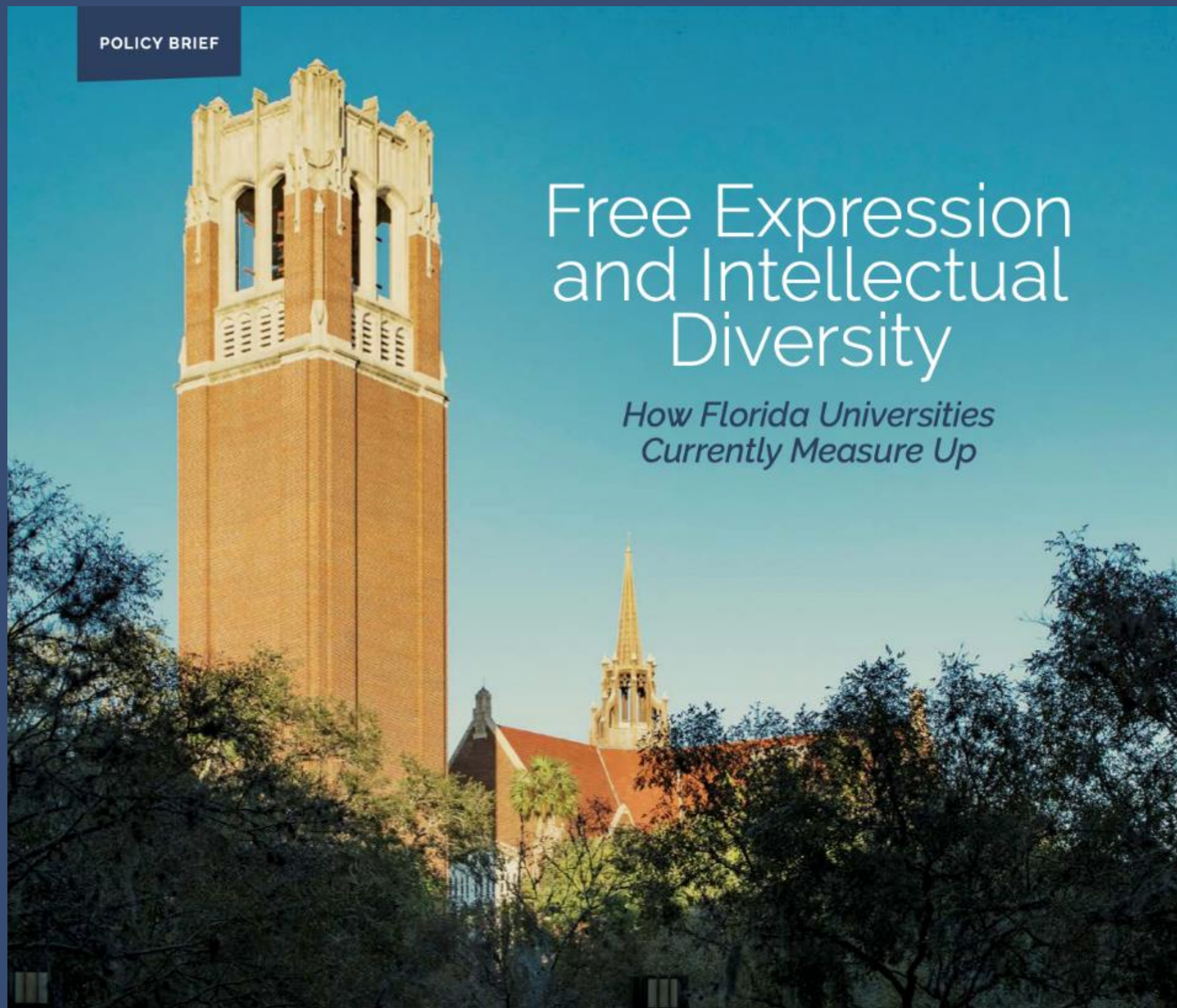
An Assessment of Public Universities in the Sunshine State

American Council of Trustees and Alumni  
with The James Madison Institute



# Free Expression and Intellectual Diversity

*How Florida Universities  
Currently Measure Up*



## **William Mattox**

Director of the J. Stanley Marshall Center for Educational Options

Middlebury College. University of California, Berkeley. Evergreen State. Claremont McKenna. Yale. The list of academic institutions rocked in recent months by (sometimes violent) speech-squelching protests is not pretty. And combined with growing concerns about high student debt and sagging job prospects for many new graduates, these efforts to thwart campus discourse are causing many people – for the first time ever – to question whether higher education is truly worth the investment it requires.





# Combating 'Idea Suppression'

How Florida Universities  
Can Continue their Rise to  
National Prominence



## William Mattox

Director, JMI's Marshall Center for Educational Options

In April 2019, the presidents of all 12 state universities in Florida joined State University System Chancellor Marshall Criser in issuing a statement affirming their commitment to “full and open discourse and the robust exchange of ideas and perspectives on our respective campuses.”<sup>1</sup>

*The Florida Statement on Free Expression*, which won the enthusiastic endorsement of Governor Ron DeSantis, affirms that one of the main purposes of higher education is “to provide a learning environment where divergent ideas, opinions and philosophies, new and old, can be rigorously debated and critically evaluated.”

In addition, the Florida Statement argues that debating ideas and challenging opinions helps students develop intellectual skills and fosters the kind of “personal and scholarly growth” that is central to a university’s mission.

While *The Florida Statement on Free Expression* says little that would have been considered controversial a generation ago, the document is nevertheless very significant in these times because it implicitly acknowledges that the campus climate in American higher education has changed markedly in recent years.

Sadly, many nationally-recognized universities have actively adopted illiberal campus pol-



**TABLE 1:** Campus Free Speech Ratings by the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE)

SCHOOL	2013	2017	2020
Florida State University (FSU)	Red	Red	Green
University of Florida (UF)	Yellow	Green	Green
University of North Florida (UNF)	Red	Green	Green
Florida A & M University (FAMU)	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Florida Atlantic University (FAU)	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU)	Red	Yellow	Yellow
Florida International University (FIU)	Red	Yellow	Yellow
New College of Florida	Red	Yellow	Yellow
University of Central Florida (UCF)	Yellow	Red	Yellow
University of West Florida (UWF)	Red	Yellow	Yellow
University of South Florida (USF)	Red	Yellow	Red

Note: Florida Polytechnic University (FPU) has never been rated by FIRE.



For Florida to continue its rise to national prominence, state university leaders should give priority to:

- (1) improving their official policies so that Florida soon becomes an “all-green-light” state, according to FIRE; and
- (2) conducting annual assessments of campus culture which measure how freely students and professors believe they can express their ideas and opinions on important topics.



# CounterSpeech

