

# World Class Faculty & Scholar Program Report

January 2023



# **SUMMARY of the STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM of FLORIDA WORLD CLASS FACULTY & SCHOLAR PROGRAM REPORT**

## **January 2023**

### **Introduction**

The Florida legislature established the World Class Faculty and Scholar Program to fund and support the efforts of the State University System (SUS) institutions to recruit and retain exemplary faculty and secure additional research funding. This program intends to elevate the national competitiveness of Florida's state universities through faculty and scholar recruitment and retention. Section 1004.6497, Florida Statutes, requires the Florida Board of Governors to summarize information from the SUS institutions on the World Class Faculty and Scholar Program. The statute requires that the report include information on program expenditures, success in recruiting research faculty, the four-year graduation rate, the number of undergraduate courses offered with fewer than 50 students, and the increase in the national academic standing of targeted programs.

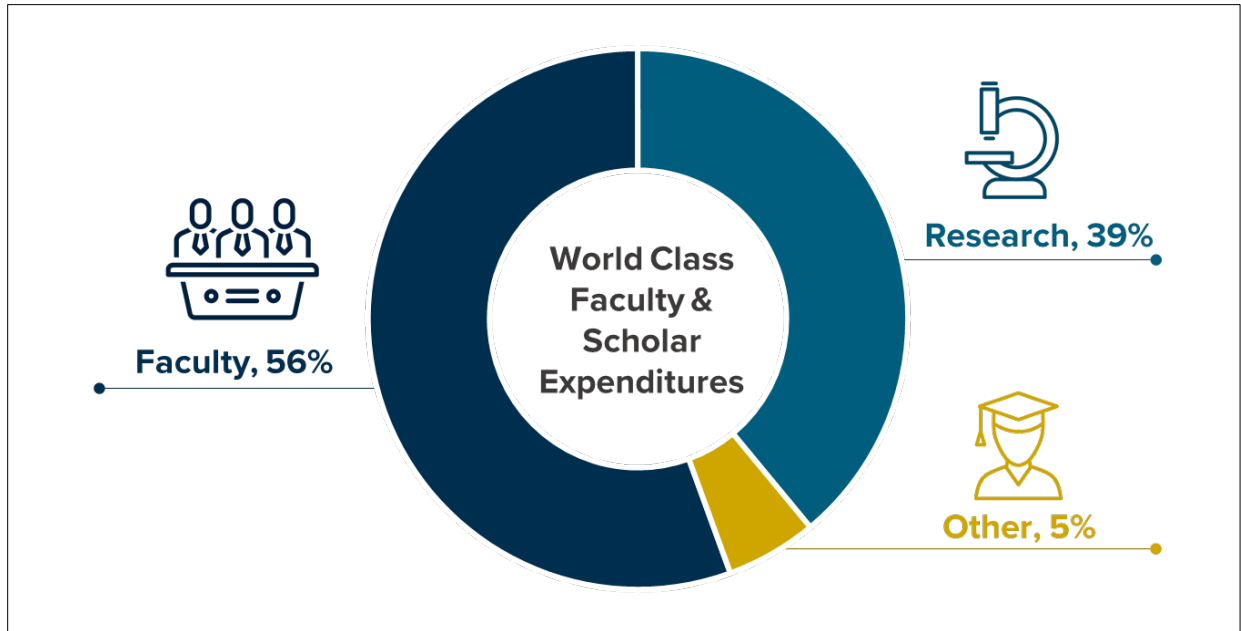
The legislature initially provided recurring funds to SUS institutions for the World Class Faculty and Scholar Program in fiscal years 2017-18 and 2018-19. Section 1004.6497, Florida Statutes, which established the program and the reporting requirements, was signed into law in March 2018. The timing of hiring individuals depends on a variety of factors. In addition, unless individuals bring existing research contracts with them, it could take several years to realize the full potential of research dollars awarded to individuals recruited to the SUS through this program. Other metrics, such as four-year graduation rates and academic program rankings, may also take several years before any advancements are realized as a result of this program.

The State University System continues to make great strides to elevate its national research profile to the top echelon. With support from the legislature and Governor, the SUS is 5<sup>th</sup> in the country for public institution research expenditures, and over the past five years, system-wide research expenditures have increased by 18%. The Board of Governors recently increased the System's goal for annual research expenditures in its strategic plan to \$3 billion by 2025. The World Class Faculty and Scholar Program is one mechanism that provides resources for the System to continue to elevate its research.

## Expenditure Information

While System institutions expended World Class Faculty and Scholar Program funds in various ways, most of the funds (95%) were used to recruit and retain faculty and increase research efforts. The legislature provided recurring funding of \$90.5 million in 2021-22 to the SUS institutions to support the program. Some examples of faculty recruitment and retention efforts include research-centric cluster hires, awards for outstanding performance, professional development, and overall hiring/retention of faculty. Examples of research efforts include instruction and research infrastructure enhancements, student research initiatives, and postdoctoral fellowships. Exhibit 1 provides an overview of how SUS institutions spent or allocated the funds for the World Class Faculty and Scholar Program in FY 2021-22.

### Exhibit 1 Most World Class Faculty and Scholar Funds Supported Faculty and Research



Source: Florida Board of Governors staff analysis of data provided by SUS institutions on the World Class Faculty and Scholar Program, fall 2022.

In a short amount of time, this program has enhanced and improved SUS institutions' efforts to recruit and retain faculty. System-wide, institutions expended 44% of the funds spent on faculty recruitment efforts and the remaining 56% on retaining existing faculty. In 2021-22, institutions reported recruiting approximately 88 faculty (FTE) and retaining over 1,400 faculty (FTE) as a result of this program. The faculty turnover was generally lower (13% or less) for faculty hired through this program compared to the faculty turnover rate for faculty not funded through the World Class Faculty and Scholar Program; in fact, six institutions reported a 0% turnover rate for faculty hired through this program. These retained and newly hired faculty transferred roughly \$25 million in

research funding to the institutions and have more than \$250 million in research proposals under development or review. Additionally, five institutions (FAMU, FAU, UCF, UNF, and UF) reported that faculty supported through this program collectively received nearly \$36 million in research dollars. If this trend continues, this program will continue to increase the research profile and national ranking of the SUS. The System includes many universities that are relatively young in terms of research, and they will only continue to grow over the next several years.

## **Elevating the National Competitiveness of the State University System**

The intent of the World Class Faculty and Scholar Program is to elevate the overall national competitiveness of the System through faculty and scholar recruitment and retention. While it is difficult to know the exact impact this program has had on metrics such as a four-year graduation rate, the number of undergraduate courses offered with fewer than 50 students, and academic rankings, information for each of these metrics is provided below.

- In the last five years, the System four-year graduation rate has improved from 50% to 61%. Exhibit 2 provides details by institution. It should be noted that this is the first year that the four-year graduation rate is available for students who enrolled at state universities when the World Class Faculty and Scholar Program funding was first received.
- Increasing the number of faculty may also help to reduce class size. As of fall 2021, this metric remains relatively unchanged for the System, with 86% of undergraduate courses having fewer than 50 students. Exhibit 2 provides details by institution.

## Exhibit 2

### Summary of Four-Year Graduation Rates and Undergraduate Courses with Fewer than 50 Students

Institution	Four-Year Graduation Rate		% of Undergraduate Courses with Fewer than 50 Students
	2016-20	2017-21	Fall 2021
<b>FAMU</b>	34.6%	27.0%	92%
<b>FAU</b>	47.5%	49.8%	85%
<b>FGCU</b>	41.4%	42.1%	90%
<b>FIU</b>	49.3%	59.4%	87%
<b>POLY</b>	34.3%	38.2%	99%
<b>FSU</b>	73.8%	72.7%	89%
<b>NCF</b>	53.9%	55.3%	100%
<b>UCF</b>	47.7%	50.0%	76%
<b>UF*</b>	70.7%	74.7%	91%**
<b>UNF</b>	48.3%	48.3%	89%
<b>USF</b>	60.9%	62.5%	86%
<b>UWF</b>	36.4%	47.4%	98%
<b>System</b>	<b>58.8%</b>	<b>61.2%</b>	<b>86%</b>

\*The undergraduate course enrollment data only represents the UF main campus.

\*\*This percentage reflects the fall 2020 term. Current year not available at time of publication.

Source: Florida Board of Governors, 2022 System Accountability Plan and institutional responses to the 2021-22 Common Data Set (CDS) survey.

In national rankings, the System continues to be recognized by U.S. News & World Report for excellence in higher education. Florida has been recognized as the best state for higher education for the past five years. U.S. News & World Report also ranked five SUS institutions in the top 100 public schools in the 2022 rankings, with the University of Florida ranked 5<sup>th</sup> (held position from the prior year), Florida State University ranked 19<sup>th</sup> (held position from the prior year), USF ranked 42<sup>nd</sup> (up from 46<sup>th</sup>), UCF ranked 64<sup>th</sup> (up from 67<sup>th</sup>), and FIU ranked 72<sup>nd</sup> (up from 78<sup>th</sup>). In addition, New College of Florida is ranked as the 5<sup>th</sup> best public liberal arts institution in the country, and Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University is ranked as the best public historically black college and university in the country. Exhibit 3 provides a list of SUS institutions on the U.S. News & World Report's top 100 national public university rankings for both 2022 and 2023.

**Exhibit 3**  
**U.S. News & World Report Public University Rankings**

SUS Institution	U.S. News & World Report Ranking (Public)		
	2022	2023	1-Year Change
UF	5	5	0
FSU	19	19	0
USF	46	42	+4
UCF	67	64	+3
FIU	78	72	+6

Source: U.S. News & World Report Rankings of National Universities, Top Public Schools, 2022 and 2023.

Specific to research expenditures, the System is ranked 5<sup>th</sup> among other public systems nationally, and has five institutions ranked in the top 100 public institutions for research.<sup>1</sup> The System is also the 2<sup>nd</sup> among university systems in producing utility patents in the country and has five universities ranked in the top 100 in the world for patents.<sup>2,3</sup> Finally, the System ranks second in technology transfers, or the sharing of research that leads to innovation, among all public university systems in the nation.<sup>4</sup> This demonstrates the real-world impact of research at System institutions, as technology transfers contribute to the economic growth of state economies.

<sup>1</sup> National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, Higher Education Research and Development Survey, Downloaded 09/01/2022.

<sup>2</sup> Harrity Patent Analytics, *Top College, University, or Institutes Receiving Patents, 2021*.

<sup>3</sup> The National Academy of Inventors, *Top 100 Worldwide Universities Granted U.S. Utility Patents 2021*.

<sup>4</sup> Heartland Forward, *From Research to Renewal, Part 2: States Realizing the Potential of Research Institutions*, October 2022.

## Return on Investment

Funding for the World Class Faculty and Scholar Program has allowed institutions to realize a positive return on investment to the state. Since the program's inception, institutions have received multiple years of support, contributing to the System's ability to attract new research awards. Expenditures associated with these research awards contribute to the state's economy and often result in a positive economic return. For example, Florida International University reported a 51% increase in the annual dollar amount of awarded sponsored research for the College of Engineering and Computing and a 35% increase in the number of principal investigators. These outcomes demonstrate the increased productivity as a result of faculty hired through this program. Additionally, through the state's investment in World Class Faculty and Scholars, the University of Central Florida has experienced an increase in research awards of \$18.7 million, with an additional \$79 million in outstanding proposals, contributing to the institution's national ranking and reputation. Further, the increased research opportunities have spurred innovation that allows institutions to engage in local and regional economic development activities. Finally, faculty associated with this program engage students in undergraduate research, which enhances students' academic experience and better positions them to enter the workforce with applied knowledge and skills. Better-prepared students provide a long-term strategic and competitive benefit to the state. Together, these program benefits strengthen the quality of education offered by SUS institutions, which helps attract highly competitive, new students, faculty, and businesses to the state of Florida.

## Conclusion

The World Class Faculty and Scholar Program has enhanced the ability of SUS institutions to successfully recruit and retain high-quality faculty and support research efforts in a short amount of time. As a result, institutions recruited more than 88 faculty who transferred over \$25 million in research funding to Florida in 2021-22. Additionally, faculty supported through this program collectively received nearly \$36 million in research dollars. These successes put the System on a trajectory to enhance national competitiveness relative to both quality postsecondary education and research.





# STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA







**Board of Governors**  
**State University System of Florida**

200 West College Avenue  
Tallahassee, Florida 32301

Phone: (850) 245-0466

*[www.flbog.edu](http://www.flbog.edu)*