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For Immediate Release:

State University System Responds to USDOE and USDA Letter to Governor DeSantis

TALLAHASSEE, FL (October 4, 2023) — On September 18, 2023, the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) sent a letter to Governor DeSantis asserting that the state of Florida has consistently underfunded Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU). On the contrary, FAMU's operational funding has increased by 37.6% under the DeSantis administration. Chancellor Rodrigues's response to USDOE and USDA can be accessed [here](#).

Under Governor Ron DeSantis's leadership, the State University System of Florida has affirmed its support of FAMU by increasing funding, investing in infrastructure, and expanding access through tuition reduction and student assistance. These investments, under the stewardship of President Larry Robinson, have propelled FAMU into the Top 100 Public National Universities, according to U.S. News and World Report.

"The State University System of Florida is proud to have FAMU, the #1 public HBCU in the nation, as a part of our system," said Chancellor Ray Rodrigues. "During the DeSantis administration, our FAMU students continue to benefit from unprecedented state investments in faculty, classroom operations, housing, and the campus experience. As a result, FAMU will continue to provide an elite education to students for generations to come."

The continued support from the DeSantis administration has resulted in a 44% reduction of FAMU students in debt, a 25% reduction in the average FAMU student loan, and a 31.5% improvement in FAMU's four-year graduation rate. These trends have made FAMU more accessible for all students who want to attend the nation's top-ranked public HBCU. Furthermore, the State University System of Florida approved \$125,000,000 in debt issuance to create a new residential facility to house an additional 700 new beds and a dining hall.

FAMU's success and accessibility are only a snapshot of the State University System's investment in diverse populations. Data for 2021 fall enrollment in post-secondary institutions shows that 42% of Florida's undergraduate students are Black or Hispanic, which is 44.8% higher than the national average. Furthermore, Florida's four-year graduation rate for Black or African American students is 40.8%, 58.1% higher than the national average.

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About the State University System of Florida and the Board of Governors:

The State University System of Florida is a constitutional body led by the 17-member Board of Governors. The System has 12 universities and more than 430,000 students, making it the second-largest public university system in the nation. Florida has held the top spot in U.S. News & World Report for higher education since the inception of the rankings in 2017. Responsibilities include defining the distinctive mission of each institution and managing the System's coordination and operation. The Board appoints a Chancellor who serves as the System's chief executive. For more information, visit flbog.edu or follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).