

World Class Faculty & Scholar Program Report

January 2021



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

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Introduction

The Legislature established the World Class Faculty and Scholar Program to fund and support the efforts of the State University System of Florida (SUS) institutions to recruit and retain exemplary faculty and secure additional research funding. The intent of this program is 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 national academic standing of targeted programs.

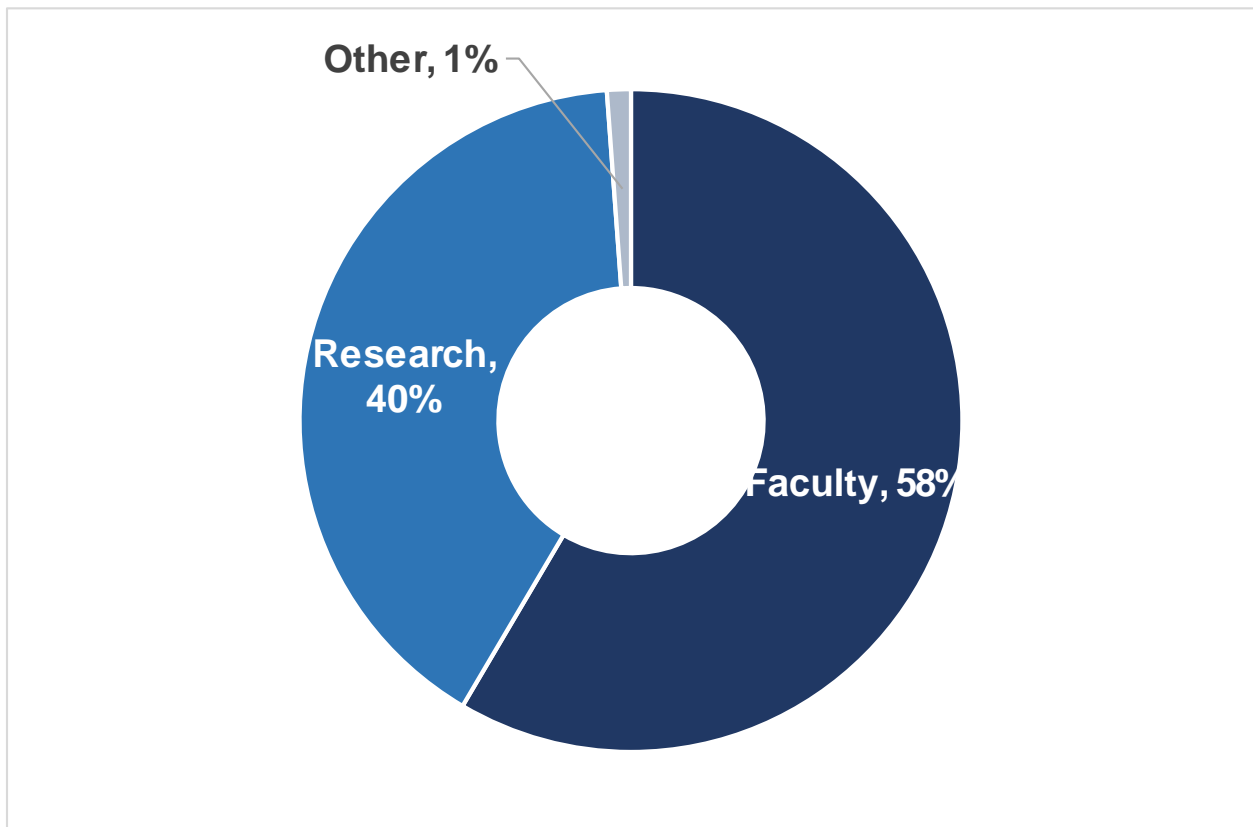
The Legislature originally provided recurring funds to SUS institutions for the World Class Faculty and Scholar Program in fiscal years 2017-18 and 2018-19. However, section 1004.6497, Florida Statutes, which established the program and the reporting requirements, was signed into law in March of 2018. Therefore, the program is still relatively new, and recruiting faculty and/or research scholars can often take a considerable amount of time. 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 who are 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 related to this program are realized.

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 has risen to 4th in the country for public institution research expenditures, and since 2010, system-wide research expenditures have increased by 38%. 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 expenditures of the World Class Faculty and Scholar Program varied in how these funds were utilized, most of the funds (99%) were used to recruit and retain faculty and increase research efforts. The Legislature provided recurring funding of \$90.5 million in 2019-20 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 commercialization efforts, 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 2019-20.

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 2020.

In a short amount of time, this program has enhanced and improved SUS institutions' efforts to recruit and retain faculty. In 2019-20, institutions reported recruiting approximately 217 faculty (FTE) and retaining over 3,000 faculty (FTE) as a result of

this program. These faculty transferred roughly \$37.7 million in research funding to the institutions and have more than \$323 million in research proposals under development or review. 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 still too early to see how this program has impacted metrics such as a four-year graduation rate, the number of undergraduate courses offered with fewer than 50 students, and academic rankings, baseline information for each of these metrics is provided below.

- In the last five years, the system four-year graduation rate has improved from 45% to 55%. Exhibit 2 provides details by institution. It should be noted that the four-year graduation rate is not yet 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 should also help to reduce class size. Again, it is not yet known how all the hires from the World Class Faculty and Scholar Program have affected this metric. However, in fall 2019, the System has improved on this metric, with 86% of undergraduate courses having fewer than 50 students, an improvement from 84% in the prior year. 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
	2014-18	2015-19	Fall 2019
FAMU	22.5%	27.7%	88%
FAU	33.9%	37.4%	83%
FGCU	28.8%	35.7%	88%
FIU	38.9%	42.8%	82%
POLY	36.6%	39.5%	100%
FSU	71.5%	69.5%	90%
NCF	55.7%	57.9%	100%
UCF	45.7%	46.3%	76%
UF*	67.3%	70.9%	90%
UNF	38.6%	44.6%	89%
USF*	58.6%	59.4%	87%
UWF	31.3%	34.8%	93%
System	52.7%	55.1%	86%

* This data only represents the UF main campus and the USF-Tampa campus.

Source: Florida Board of Governors, 2020 System Accountability Plan and institutional responses to the 2019-20 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. While the organization did not publish a state ranking for the most recent year, Florida was previously recognized three years in a row as the best state for higher education. U.S. News & World Report also ranked five SUS institutions in the top 100 public schools in the 2021 rankings, with the University of Florida ranked 6th (up from 7th the prior year), Florida State University ranked 19th (from 18th), USF ranked 46th (from 44th), UCF ranked 77th (up from 79th), and FIU ranked 95th (up from 105th). In addition, New College of Florida is ranked as the 6th 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 (up from 2nd). Exhibit 3 provides a list of SUS institutions on the U.S. News & World Report top 100 national public university rankings for both 2020 and 2021.

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

SUS Institution	U.S. News & World Report Ranking (Public)		
	2020	2021	1-Year Change
UF	7	6	+1
FSU	18	19	-1
USF	44	46	-2
UCF	79	77	+2
FIU	105	95	+10

Source: U.S. News & World Report Rankings of National Universities, Top Public Schools, 2020 and 2021.

Specific to research, the System is the 4th largest public System in terms of research expenditures, and the System has five institutions ranked in the top 100 public institutions for research.¹ The System is also the leading producer of utility patents in the state and has five universities ranked in the top 100 in the world for patents.²

Conclusion

While the full effects of the World Class Faculty and Scholar Program are not yet known, the 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 200 faculty who transferred nearly \$38 million in research funding to the State of Florida in 2019-20. These successes put the System on a trajectory to enhance national competitiveness relative to both quality postsecondary education and research.

¹ National Science Foundation Higher Education Research and Development Survey (HERD), November 13, 2019, Table 67.

² *Top 100 Worldwide Universities Granted U.S. Utility Patents 2019*, The National Academy of Inventors.



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