



World Class Faculty & Scholar Program Report

Annual report on expenditure information as
required by section 1004.6497, Florida Statutes

Approved by the Board of Governors on
January 24, 2024

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A photograph of a university campus at dusk. In the foreground, a large brick building with many windows is lit from within, showing a warm yellow glow. Behind it, a taller, modern building with a glass facade and a flat roof is also lit. The sky is a mix of purple and blue. In the background, other campus buildings and trees are visible under the twilight sky.

JANUARY 2024

SUMMARY of the STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM of FLORIDA WORLD CLASS FACULTY & SCHOLAR PROGRAM REPORT January 2024

Introduction

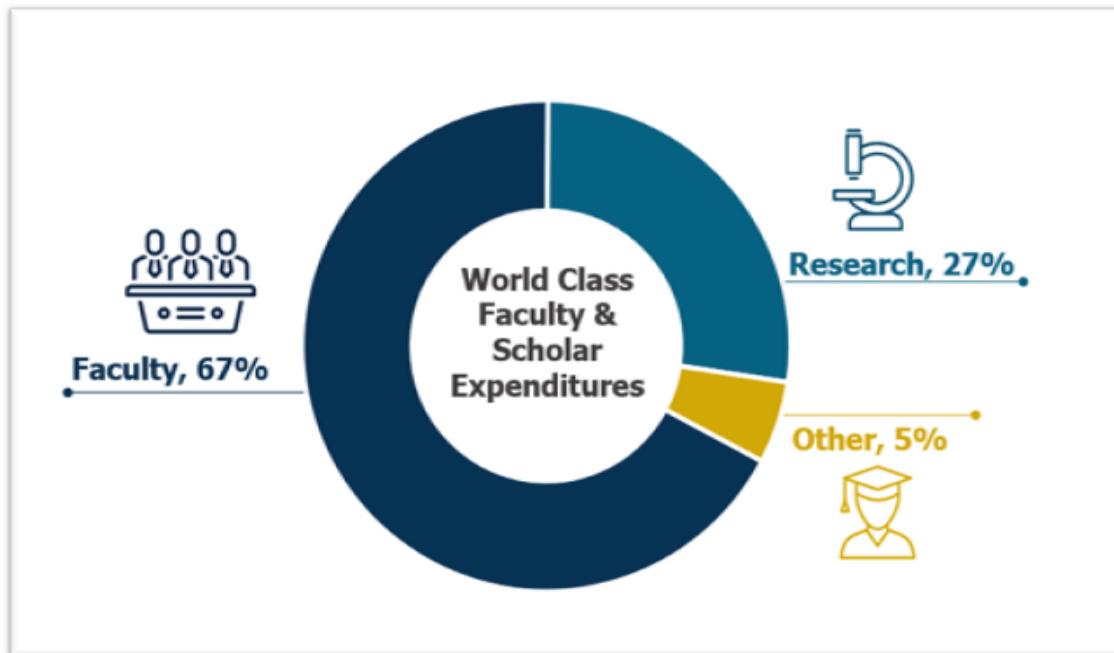
The Florida Legislature established the World Class Faculty and Scholar Program to fund and support the efforts of the State University System (SUS) institutions to recruit and retain exemplary faculty and secure additional research funding. This program intends to elevate the national competitiveness 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 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 System is 5th in the country for public institution research expenditures. Over the past five years, system-wide research expenditures have increased by 26%. The Board of Governors' strategic plan goal for the System for annual research expenditures is \$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 funds (94%) were used to recruit and retain faculty and increase research efforts. The legislature provided recurring funding of \$90.5 million in 2022-23 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, faculty research and commercialization efforts, 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 2022-23.

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 2023.

This program has continued to enhance and improve SUS institutions' efforts to recruit and retain faculty. Of the funds used for faculty recruitment and retention system-wide, 45% were spent on faculty recruitment efforts, and the remaining 55% on retaining existing faculty. In 2022-23, institutions reported recruiting over 150 faculty (FTE) and retaining over 2,600 faculty (FTE) due to this program. The faculty turnover was generally lower (9% 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. Seven institutions reported a 0% turnover rate for faculty hired through this program. These retained and newly hired faculty transferred roughly \$65 million in research funding to the institutions and have more than \$518 million in research proposals under development or review. Additionally, three institutions (FAMU, FAU, and UF) reported that faculty supported through this program collectively received over \$22 million in research dollars. If this trend continues, this program will continue to increase the SUS's research profile and national ranking.

Elevating the National Competitiveness of the State University System

The World Class Faculty and Scholar Program intends to elevate the System's overall national competitiveness through faculty and scholar recruitment and retention. While it is difficult to know this program's exact impact on metrics such as the 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.

- The System's four-year graduation rate has improved from 52% to 62% in the last five years. Exhibit 2 provides details by institution. It should be noted that this is the second 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 2022, this metric remains relatively unchanged for the System, with 88% of undergraduate courses having fewer than 50 students, a change of over two percentage points from the previous 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
	2017-21	2018-22	Fall 2022
FAMU	27.0%	28.4%	89.7%
FAU	49.8%	49.4%	88.5%
FGCU	42.1%	42.2%	90.1%
FIU	59.4%	59.8%	87.0%
POLY	38.2%	41.0%	95.7%
FSU	72.7%	74.0%	90.3%
NCF	55.3%	58.3%	99.5%
UCF	50.0%	54.8%	77.4%
UF*	74.7%	75.3%	90.7%
UNF	48.3%	50.6%	89.3%
USF	62.5%	64.8%	86.7%
UWF	47.4%	47.0%	96.0%
System	61.2%	62.6%	87.7%

*The undergraduate course enrollment data only represents the UF main campus.
 Source: Florida Board of Governors, 2023 System Accountability Plan and institutional responses to the 2022-23 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. For the first time, U.S. News & World Report ranked six SUS institutions in the top 100 public schools in the 2024 rankings, with the University of Florida ranked 6th, Florida State University ranked 23rd, USF ranked 45th, UCF ranked 64th, FIU ranked 64th, and Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University Ranked 91st. In addition, New College of Florida was ranked as the 6th best public liberal arts institution in the country, and Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University was ranked as the best public historically Black college and university in the country. Exhibit 3 lists SUS institutions on the U.S. News & World Report’s top 100 national public university rankings for 2023 and 2024.

Exhibit 3

U.S. News & World Report Public University Rankings – Top 100

SUS Institution	U.S. News & World Report Ranking (Public)		
	2023	2024	1-Year Change
UF	5	6	-1
FSU	19	23	-4
USF	42	45	-3
UCF	64	64	0
FIU	72	64	+8
FAMU	*	91	N/A

Source: U.S. News & World Report Rankings of National Universities, Top Public Schools, 2023 and 2024.

*Indicates an institution was not ranked in the Top 100 during this ranking year.

Specific to research expenditures, the System is ranked 5th among other public systems nationally and has five institutions ranked in the top 100 public institutions for research.¹ The System is also ranked 2nd among university systems in producing utility patents in the country, and five universities are ranked in the top 100 in the world for patent production.² 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.³ This recognition demonstrates the real-world impact of research at System institutions, as technology transfers contribute to the economic growth of the state's economy.

¹ National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, Higher Education Research and Development Survey, Downloaded 12/7/2023.

² Harrity Patent Analytics, *Top College, University, or Institutes Receiving Patents, 2023*.

³ 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, the Florida International University College of Engineering and Computing reported a 19% increase in total research funding year-over-year to \$74.3 million. Florida Atlantic University reports that about 25% of its current pending research proposals are from World Class Faculty and Scholar Program-funded faculty members. 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 \$35.1 million, with an additional \$46 million in outstanding proposals. 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 sought-after new students, faculty, and businesses to 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 increase research efforts. As a result, institutions recruited over 150 faculty who transferred over \$64 million in research funding to Florida in 2022-23. Additionally, faculty supported through this program collectively received nearly \$23 million in research dollars. These successes led the System to enhance national competitiveness relative to quality postsecondary education and research.



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