



**FLORIDA JUNIOR/COMMUNITY COLLEGES
STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION**

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Date: February 25, 2004

To: FJCCSGA Executive Board, FJCCSGA members, Council of Presidents, Council of Student Affairs, and FCCAA Executive Board

Re: 2004 FJCCSGA Official Statement of Position

The Florida Junior Community Colleges Student Government Association held their annual state conference in St. Petersburg from February 12th through February 14th, 2004. Over 400 were in attendance at the conference representing the 28 community colleges across the state. Student participated in educational sessions, elected the 2004-2005 executive boards for both state and district levels; and voted their stand on legislative issues that affect students throughout the state. Attached are the results of their stand on the legislative issues for your review.

Sincerely,

Harold Silva
FJCCSGA President

FJCCSGA Statement of Position On Legislative Issues for 2003-2004

Issue #1a-Bright Futures Revisions

During the 2003 Legislative Session, House Bill/1745 was not passed. This bill had the following proposed implications to the merit based Bright Futures Scholarship Program:

- A) A limit is to be placed on the number of credit hours that the Bright Futures Program would pay for.
- B) The Standard Academic Test requirements to be eligible for the scholarship would be raised to 1270 for the Florida Academic Scholarship (pays for 100% of tuition) and 1050 for the Florida Medallion Scholarship (pays for 75% of tuition). The current requirements can be found in attachment #1-A.
- C) The scholarship funding would no longer be tied to tuition and fees and current recipients of the B.F. scholarship are guaranteed the amount they have received in the previous year.

If the bill had passed, recipients would no longer receive a percentage of tuition, but rather a set dollar amount. The majority of recipients of the Bright Futures Scholarship attend state universities. The universities are striving for legislation to remove limits on tuition raises set by the legislation. (PLEASE SEE UNIVERSITY CONTRACTS) The funding for the Bright Futures Program places a hierarchy of priority swayed heavily in the University System direction. Not only are universities receiving funding for forward projected growth; the state also pays tuition of the majority of the students. As the funding for the Bright Futures Scholarship is now, the higher the tuition cost, the higher the amount paid by the state.

Appropriate steps should be taken to make the funding more equitable for community colleges. Right now, the average allocation for a Bright Futures recipient is \$1,744 while the average needs based scholarship allocation is \$923.00. Pursuing legislation similar to HB 1745 would free funds to accomplish a more equitable funding formula.

The students voted in the following way:

- 21.4% Pursue legislation similar to HB/1745
- 14% Oppose pursuing legislation similar to HB/1745
- 44.86% Amend this issue to adhere to suggested policy 1-E (policy is at the end of the issues)
- 18.93% Take no action

If a student decided that an issue was not applicable to their campus or has no opinion on the issue they were allow to abstain from the issue, by choosing the "Take No Action" option.

FJCCSGA supports to amend this issue to adhere to the suggested policy 1-E

Issue #1b-Capital Improvement Fee

The Capital Improvement Fee was established in 1989 by sponsor Steve Wise at \$1 per credit hour for college credit courses. In 1999 as part of the “1688” workforce legislation it was extended to include workforce programs. The fee was originally designed to help fund technology enhancements, capital improvements and equipping student buildings.

A second source of income for building purposes is the Public Education Capital Outlay fund or P.E.C.O., which comes from state funding. The CIF is individual per college and goes directly to the building and renovation funds of the respective college. At this time, the average CIF is \$1.24 per credit hour.

A bill will be proposed to raise the CIF, increasing the fee at no more than \$1 per year to a maximum fee of \$4.76 per credit hour, as this is the value of the fee for the University System. This is to ease the strain placed on facilities funds, especially as these funds are at a 20-year low. Of course, the cap of \$4.76 can be raised by future legislation.

Due to the lack of capital improvement funding, many colleges have had to allocate operational funds to finance the CIF or have had to deter some maintenance altogether. As of right now, the Community College System has not received over 60 million dollars, which is now needed to accommodate maintenance and renovation. The Department of Education is recommending a CIF increase in lieu of a tuition increase for community colleges next year.

Though the increase in fee would be an asset to colleges across the state, the students should reach a decision as to how the fee should be increased if at all; by percentage or dollar amount and in what increments.

The students voted in the following way:

32.38%	Pursue legislation that would place a maximum value of the fee at a dollar amount
22.95%	Pursue legislation that would place a maximum value of the fee at a percentage of tuition
18.03%	Oppose bills that would raise the CIF
14.34%	Amend this issue to adhere to the suggested policy 1-e
11.07%	Take no action*

*If a student decided that an issue was not applicable to their campus or has no opinion on the issue they were allow to abstain from the issue, by choosing the “Take No Action” option.

FJCCSGA supports to pursue legislation that would place a maximum value of the fee at a dollar amount

Issue #1c-Financial Aid

Section 1009.90 Florida Statute of 1970, establishes the states financial aid policy to the effect the “state student financial aid be provided on the bases of need.” Currently 65% of state aid is **not** based on need.

With the recipients of B.F. (merit based) receiving an average grant of \$1,744, recipients of the Florida Resident Assistance Grant (residency and attendance based) receiving an average grant of \$2,214 and the Florida Student Assistant Grant (need based) recipients receiving an average grant of \$923, there is an unbalance in the state allocation for education funding, as these three grants comprise 85% of state assistance. This is a recurring problem as in 2000-2001; only 19% of state aid was based on need and in 2002-2003, only 20% of state aid was based on need.

The legislation claims to recognize the necessity for more “need based” assistance, however their allocation last year did not reflect this. Out of \$399,969,857 available for educational grants last year, merit based received \$218,970,000, which is more than all other assistance programs combined. This fact is quite contrary to section 1009.9 of Florida Statute. At a time when funding is so limited for the community college system, it is imperative that students pursue action by the legislation to amend the current state assistance funding back to its original design.

Access to the community college system is severely restricted when need based grant funds are limited because there are a considerable number of community college students who receive need based aid. The current situation is in direct violation of FS 1009.9.

The students voted in the following way:

- 52.48% Pursue budget increases to the allocations to need-based assistance programs
- 21.07% Pursue legislation to make the state financial aid policy a law
- 25.62% Take no action*

***If a student decided that an issue was not applicable to their campus or has no opinion on the issue they were allow to abstain from the issue, by choosing the “Take No Action” option.**

FJCCSGA supports to pursue budget increases to the allocations to need-based assistance programs

Issue #1d-University Contracts

In the 2003-2004 legislative session, five state universities plan to propose legislation that would increase funding for their FTE for the next five years by statute. FSU, UF, FIU, USF and UCF will propose a bill that would restore this funding to the level it was during the 1999-2000 school year and fix this amount for the next five years (meaning it can not be lowered or raised).

This bill is to provide stability to the university system and provides each university with funds equal to their 10-year average in PECO funding for the 5-year term. Also stipulated in the proposed bill, is wording that asks the state to fund students above the projected enrollment at an undetermined negotiated amount (for growth) and include in the funding provisions for salary increases, new building operations and maintenance and employee benefits.

In addition, the Universities will propose that they be allowed to raise tuition to an undetermined amount, excluding an increase in the first year the bill takes effect.

In exchange for this legislation, the Universities agree:

- To continue to serve their current number of students (no growth unless funded by legislation at the negotiated price)
- To be accountable for the number of degrees produced by the system
- To guarantee job offers to teaching and nursing graduates along with full tuition reimbursement if the students who graduate these programs are not placed
- To not to allow the Pre-paid Tuition Program to be effected by the legislation
- To seek only funding for gifts in excess of \$600,000

State matching is not always in a 1:1 ratio per million. The matching grant ratio is sometimes in a 6:4 per million, meaning for every \$600,000 given, the state matches \$400,000.

Another stipulation of the bill suggests that the Universities can raise tuition to any undetermined amount. Since Bright Futures is coupled with tuition, (if tuition increases, the funding from the state must be increased to cover the percentage of tuition) the Universities can significantly raise tuition after the first year to receive the state funds from Bright Futures, with a relatively low cost to university students who receive B.F. Almost 80% of students who receive B.F. attend a state university, making the funding for the scholarship program lean heavily toward the university system.

The students voted in the following way:

25%	Support legislation to mandate university contracts in the 2003-2004 legislative session
39.58%	Oppose the university legislation to mandate this contract in the 2003-2004 legislative sessions.
35%	Take no action. *

*If a student decided that an issue was not applicable to their campus or has no opinion on the issue they were allow to abstain from the issue, by choosing the "Take No Action" option.

FJCCSGA opposes the university legislation to mandate this contract in the 2003-2004 legislative session.

Issue #2a- Student Government Organizations (SGO) on C.C. Campuses

Student Government Organizations (such as Student Government Associations, Student Advisory Boards, Student Senate etc...) are an integral part of community college campuses, providing a vital link between students, faculty, staff, administration, and the community. The role of SGOs is fundamental as an advocate for student issues, representing individual colleges through leadership building and community service, and providing information relevant to student affairs. Currently, Florida statute requires SGO presence on all state university campuses. While there are differences between university and community college students, the relationship between students, their leaders and the community is similar.

Lacking legislative or rule protection, SGOs could be disbanded as a recognized group without recourse, thus severing the connection between students, administration, and the community. The voice of the students is effectively silenced. The introduction of legislation or a Florida Board of Education rule change requiring an SGO on all community college campus will serve several purposes:

- Maintain a recognized representative body for the student population
- Provide parity with the university system
- Provide institutions with direct access to student representatives, thereby gaining greater insight to student concerns and viewpoints

The creation of a Florida BOE rule mandating an SGO on all community college campuses allows local Boards of Trustees to develop guidelines for institutional SGOs at the local level as opposed to blanket legislation requiring specific structure and practices for all SGOs across the state of Florida. Local control is maintained and institutional individuality is preserved. Although Florida Board of Education rules and guidelines lack the direct force of legislation, institutions generally adhere to some form of Florida BOE (Board of Education) mandates.

The students voted in the following way:

35.8%	Support a BOE rule drafting a policy for the presence of an SGO based on enrollment on all community college campuses
24.69%	Support legislation mandating an SGO on all community college campuses based on enrollment on all community colleges
21.4%	Oppose mandating an SGO on all community college campuses
17.28%	Take no action *

* If a student decided that an issue was not applicable to their campus or has no opinion on the issue they were allow to abstain from the issue, by choosing the "Take No Action" option.

FJCCSGA supports a BOE rule drafting a policy for the presence of SGO based on enrollment on all community college campuses.

Issue #3a-In-State Fees for Florida's Undocumented High School Graduates

Florida Statutes, require all public postsecondary students to be classified as residents or nonresidents for tuition purposes. A student may qualify as a resident for tuition purposes if the student or his/her parents have established an maintained legal residence in that state for at least 12 months immediately prior to the student' applying to postsecondary education. Undocumented students are classified as nonresidents for tuition purposes even if they are long-term residents who graduated from a Florida high school. Undocumented students must meet the residency requirement if they are to be eligible for state financial aid.

Legislation introduced during the 2003 session sought to classify undocumented students, under certain condition, as Florida residents for tuition purposes. Provisions included:

- A. Resided in the state for at least three consecutive years immediately proceeding the date the student received a Florida high school diploma or the equivalent
- B. Attended a Florida high school for at least three consecutive school years during that time.
- C. Files an affidavit stating that he/she will submit an application for permanent residency to appropriate authorities at the earliest opportunity the student is eligible
- D. Lived with his/her parent or legal guardian during the three consecutive school years

Many high school students are long-term residents of Florida, yet are undocumented immigrants. These students attend Florida high schools and obtain a high school diploma or equivalent, with no question as to their or their parents' immigration status. However, after these students graduate from a Florida high school, and attempt to enroll in a public postsecondary institution, they are classified as nonresidents for tuition purposes, meaning they must pay full out of state tuition.

As a result, these Florida high school graduates often cannot afford to continue their education. Without access to postsecondary education, these students have no ability to obtain the skills and training needed for the competitive workforce.

The undocumented students' parents are taxpayers, making it unreasonable to charge students out of state tuition. (Policies to allow in state tuition to undocumented high school graduates have already been enacted in New York, California, Utah, Texas, Oklahoma and Washington [according to the Illinois Government News Network].) This issue does not apply to international students because public schools do not ask for immigration status.

The students voted in the following way:

- 48.56% Support legislation similar to that proposed in 2003, providing residency status to undocumented students who graduate from a Florida high school and fulfill the requirements set forth
- 33.33% Do not support legislation to provide residency status to undocumented students who graduate from a Florida high school
- 10.29% Take no action *

* If a student decided that an issue was not applicable to their campus or has no opinion on the issue they were allow to abstain from the issue, by choosing the "Take No Action" option.

FJCCSGA supports legislation similar to that proposed in 2003, providing residency status to undocumented students who graduate from a Florida high school and fulfill the requirements set forth.

Issue #4a-Acceleration Mechanisms

The State Board of Education is to conduct a study on accelerated mechanisms to include; dual enrollment (DE), advanced placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB). The Council of Presidents is also establishing a group to look into this issue.

IB and AP are funded for school districts over and above their Full Time Enrollment funding, making them more attractive than DE. Colleges are not directly funded for DE, but can count those students who are dually enrolled as part of their FTE, for funding purposes (though no new funding has been realized). School districts however, do receive funding for DE students. Legislation does not want to pay both school districts and community colleges for DE students. The SBOE and COP workgroup will work to form a comprehensive policy that will encourage the earning of college credits in high school and compensate the entities that are providing the instruction.

In the 2003 Legislative Session, Senate Bill 1690/House Bill 1313 was defeated that encouraged the use of accelerated mechanisms. This bill stipulated that funding for dually enrolled students would go to the school district or community college that employed the instructor of the course, but not both. It also established rules for payment to community colleges from school districts whose students are being taught by community college instructors.

A recent study conducted by the FACC and the Florida Association of School Boards found that there are no double payments. The combined payments of the community college and school district did not equate to total cost. School districts who are low on funding will not want to send their students to community colleges, effectively giving away funding for those students.

Several courses of action are available to the students to solve the funding problem for DE students. It would be the responsibility of the students to decide on legislation to pursue what would determine the best steps in resolving the funding problem. Depending on the legislation that is proposed by the separate task forces, the students will need to decide which is the most reasonable to support.

The students voted in the following way:

- 49.6% Support the COP in forming alternate legislation to solve the funding problem for DE students
- 7.66% Support legislation similar to HB 1313/ SB 1690
- 7.66% Encourage the COP to support legislation similar to HB 1313/ SB 1690
- 25% Take no action

If a student decided that an issue was not applicable to their campus or has no opinion on the issue they were allow to abstain from the issue, by choosing the “Take No Action” option.

FJCCSGA supports the COP in forming alternate legislation to solve the funding problem for DE students.

Issue #4b-Baccalaureate Degree

In the 2001 Legislative session, St. Petersburg (Community) College was approved by the legislature to offer baccalaureate degree programs in certain select program areas because of the low number of Baccalaureate Degrees produced by the state. Currently, Florida ranks 47th in the nation in terms of the number of degrees produced per 100,000 people.

In 2002 the SBOE (State Board of Education) authorized Chipola, Okaloosa-Walton and Miami Dade colleges to offer baccalaureate degrees. These colleges are now seeking full accreditation from the Commission of Colleges (COC) as “Level II Degree Granting Institutions.” One of the requirements of the COC for a college to be recognized as a “Level II” is to have an official approval process. This approval process establishes, through statute, the institutions authority to award a higher degree than that of their current standing.

There is no Florida legislation or statute as of this time that recognizes these three colleges (Chipola, Okaloosa-Walton and Miami Dade). In the 2002-2003 legislative session, HB 1511/SB 2626 was defeated. This bill hoped to give statutory recognition to the colleges through an official name change from community college to simply college. There is now a question of how to resolve operational issues for these institutions. Legislation that would grant statutory authority to these colleges, to make appropriate operational policy changes to maintain the requirements of an accredited “Level II” degree granting institution is now needed.

The colleges that are seeking statutory recognition are also in need of funding for these programs. In the 2001 and the 2002 legislative sessions the funding for St. Petersburg College and startup funds for the other three colleges was appropriated as a line item under the allocations for colleges and universities. The line item read “access to baccalaureate degrees at community college”. In 2003 the funding for St. Petersburg College was transferred from the “college and universities” allocations to the community college section of the budget. For the upcoming year, the State Board of Education has recommended a new, separate line item for community college baccalaureate degree programs in the budget of the Florida Commissioner of Education.

To fund the other three institutions’ programs, \$1 million dollars was withheld from the lottery money meant for the community college allocations as a whole. There is a need in some areas for certain BA degree programs, however, if the state continues to allocate funds for these colleges BA programs out of the community college allocation, it may place a burden on an already strained enrollment funding for community colleges. Funding the baccalaureate degrees under community colleges affects the operating budget of the community colleges.

The students voted in the following way:

- 26.75% Support legislation addressing a funding formula that will not fund baccalaureate degrees from the “college and universities” allocations to the community college section and support policy for the colleges in question
- 39.92% Pursue legislation similar to HB 1511/ SB 2626, giving these colleges statutory recognition, including legislation that would restrict funding for these programs from being allocated from community college funds
- 25.93% Take no action

If a student decided that an issue was not applicable to their campus or has no opinion on the issue they were allow to abstain from the issue, by choosing the “Take No Action” option

FJCCSGA supports to pursue legislation similar to HB 1511/ SB 2626, giving these colleges statutory recognition, including legislation that would restrict funding for these programs from being allocated from community college funds.

The following is the:

Issue 1-E – Modification to Bright Futures

In light of the Governor's proposed budget of 105 million new dollars for community colleges, part of which is a 5% tuition increase (attributing 21 million dollars to the total 105 million dollars) and in order to provide an equitable solution to the current funding problem facing community colleges statewide, the issues concerning **Bright Futures**, **Capital Improvement Funding** and **Financial Aid** could be viewed collectively.

Contingent upon the proposed increase in general appropriations to community colleges, the new revenues (or a percent thereof) may be applied to capitol improvement funds (CIF) and Public Education Capital Outlay (PECO) funds, along with a portion to new teacher salaries (through a Board of Education rule). This would allow colleges to provide more facilities and staff for the Bright Futures recipients choosing to attend community colleges in accordance with the revisions described in the next section.

The revisions to the Bright Futures scholarship program would include tuition funding amount changes for the first two years (or 60 credit hours) only. The amount would be an average of community colleges' two-year tuition projected growth. The recipients then have the option to use the scholarship to fully fund community college tuition or attend a university with the community college tuition deducted from the university tuition amount.

If the scholarship student should choose to attend a community college in Florida, Bright Futures would cover the average projected community college cost for the first 60 credit hours. Once the student completes the 60 credit hour requirement and transfers to a four-year institution in Florida, Bright Futures will then pay the university costs in accordance with scholarship requirements.

The second two years of the program (or 60 hours), paid for by the scholarship, will remain at the percent of university cost that the student is eligible for in accordance with the scholarship requirements.

If the scholarship recipient should choose to attend a State University in Florida, Bright Futures would cover the average projected community college cost for the first 60 credit hours, deducting that amount from the university tuition. Once the student surpasses the 60-hour requirement, Bright Futures would then cover the amount of tuition put forth by the scholarship requirements for the remaining 60 credit hours.

CHOICE

This allows Bright Future recipients to decide which institution they would like to attend. Recipients have the choice to attend a community college at a full scholarship (75% or 100%) or to attend a university with the community college scholarship amount (75% or 100%) deducted from their tuition for the first two years.

This plan encourages Bright Future scholars to attend a community college without mandating them to do so.

FJCCSGA will have the ability to decide what dollar amount to support and what percentage will be used for capital improvement funding.

FINANCIAL PRO'S

This plan also caps the amount of Bright Future money spent within the first two years of the student's scholarship. This would create more free revenue in the allocated financial aid budget, as community college tuition is lower than university costs.

As full time enrollment increases, a percentage of tuition costs can be used for capital improvement funding.

Due to the money saved by this plan, more money could be used for need based financial assistance.

For Example –

Average projected community college cost - \$56.00 per credit hour

Student receives 100% Bright Futures scholarship

Student Chooses to Attend Community College

Community College of Choice

State University of Choice

First 60 Credit Hours: \$3,360.00	Second 60 credit hours – Full Tuition Amount at University
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Student Chooses to Attend State University

State University of Choice

State University of Choice

First 60 Credit Hours: Tuition - \$3,360.00 = Cost	Second 60 Credit Hours – Full Tuition Amount Covered
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This solution is not dependant upon the increase in the allocations to community colleges, but if the Florida House of Representatives and Florida Senate do not approve it, the students consider a different means of funding it. Through a 5% tuition increase and increase in the CIF, for the sole purpose of PECO funding, more facilities may be provided to students coming into community colleges due to this solution.